

SunSentinel OPINION

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SUN SENTINEL EDITORIAL

It's time for newcomers in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea

The quaint Broward seaside community of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea is known for a laid-back vibe and low-scale buildings that maximize its greatest asset: the beach.

The hyphenated haven has 6,000 year-round residents and a lively, diverse restaurant scene packed into about 1 1/2 miles from end to end.

Last month the town's appeal was featured in a glowing cover story in Southern Living magazine, with its much-traveled readership. "It's always sunny" here, the story says, with just a bit of hyperbole.

In fact, the political tone in town has turned dark and excessively partisan as voters prepare to elect a mayor and two commissioners on March 19. Town elections are officially nonpartisan; everyone can vote. Hyper-partisanship feels wildly out of place amid the basics of fixing sidewalks or regulating signs.

We deplore the tactics of the Broward Republican Party, which sent "voter guide" mailings to voters backing three Republican-registered candidates who are "opposed by liberals who will take the town in a leftist direction."

What hogwash.

The GOP choice for mayor is Commissioner Edmund Malkoon, 49, a real estate agent who owes the town \$7,200 in back property taxes over the past two years, public records show.

The county has attached a tax certificate or lien on Malkoon's home for an unpaid debt of \$3,728 for 2022. He can't sell the house until he pays that bill.

Yet, incredibly, the GOP's own propaganda mailing calls Malkoon a champion of "fiscal responsibility." Don't fall for it, voters.

"I have had a bit of a hard time," Malkoon told the Sun Sentinel. "I will say it is temporary and my intention is to take care of this tax certificate very soon."

Malkoon voted in September to increase the town tax rate. Nobody who taxes his own neighbors should be a tax debtor. Lauderdale-by-the-Sea deserves better.

Mayor: Ann Marchetti

Alongside Malkoon in the race for mayor is Commissioner Alfred "Buz" Oldaker, 65, a property manager. Oldaker is clearly the preferable of the two. Highly protective of the town's lack of debt, he has an MBA in finance and eight years of governing experience. He's an advocate for parking alternatives such as more golf cart spaces.

But voters should choose the third candidate, newcomer Ann Marchetti, 59, a public health consultant and coalition builder with a fresh outlook, energetic demeanor and decades of experience in the private sector and as an advocate at the state level in Illinois, Massachusetts and elsewhere.

Marchetti, who relocated here while vacationing in 2007, has been active in the Chamber, Garden Club and other groups and would be the second woman mayor in the town's 75-year history.

During the pandemic restaurant owners hired Marchetti to speak for them on outdoor dining, landscaping and parking issues. She said seven restaurants paid her \$2,000 a year each. Her two rivals pejoratively refer to her as a "paid lobbyist for the restaurant industry."

That's part of Marchetti's crash course in petty, small-town politics. But she's a natural leader who's well-prepared, and she has our recommendation.

Seat 3, District 1: Howard Goldberg

This open seat features two longtime residents with New York roots, Howard Goldberg (born in Brooklyn) and John Graziano, an Albany native.

Goldberg, 72, a 15-year city resident, is a real estate agent and Chamber of Commerce chairman. Graziano, 79, is a longtime civic volunteer who ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 2020.

Goldberg is the superior candidate. He has a stronger grasp of issues such as the town



In Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, the Sun Sentinel Editorial Board recommends two newcomers: Ann Marchetti for mayor and Howard Goldberg for the town commission. COURTESY

budget and managing short-term rentals. In a joint online candidate interview Graziano was frequently the aggressor, accusing Goldberg of using the Chamber and his real estate business to promote himself.

Unlike Graziano, Goldberg opposed the commission's unanimous vote to extend town manager Linda Connors' contract for three years with a raise to \$221,000 a year, even as the election creates a possible City Hall shakeup. Goldberg also opposed the commission's decision to raise fees for residents using town-owned tennis courts.

Our main concern with Goldberg is his repeated use of the pronoun "I" in our online interview, as he extolled his accomplishments. If he can remember that "we" is a far more effective pronoun on a collegial body, he can be an effective commissioner.

Seat 4, District 2: No endorsement

A second open seat pits Kenneth Brenner, 56, a retail store operator and longtime resident, against Richard DeNapoli, 46, a lawyer, certified financial planner and chief trust officer. DeNapoli is also chairman of a nonpartisan county soil and water conservation board.

A fixture in Republican circles, DeNapoli says he had no involvement in GOP mailings calling rivals "leftists" and promoting a mayoral candidate who won't pay his property taxes. The signers of the mailings are DeNapoli supporters: outgoing Mayor Chris Vincent, county GOP Chairman Chris Marino and former Chairman George Moraitis.

After careful consideration of both candidates, we make no endorsement in this race.

DeNapoli has a far stronger business background, but he is a partisan activist and enthusiastic Donald Trump supporter, and DeNapoli's allies have injected partisan politics in this election to a troubling degree. If DeNapoli wins, he should put all partisanship aside. That won't be easy.

Brenner operates Interior Digs, a business on Commercial Boulevard. He's well-informed on town matters but failed a basic transparency test. Because his personal assets are in a trust, he said, he lists no assets or debts on a state-mandated Form 6 financial disclosure form, leaving many unanswered questions.

"I have a disability," Brenner said, declining to elaborate. "This is my reality."

We asked Brenner to provide an attorney or accountant who advised him to leave Form 6 mostly blank. He has not done so.

Republicans filed an ethics complaint against Brenner over his incomplete Form 6, which the Sun Sentinel considers an effective tool against potential conflicts and self-dealing in city government.

We urge Lauderdale-by-the-Sea voters to do their homework on both men and use their best judgment.

The Sun Sentinel Editorial Board consists of Opinion Editor Steve Bousquet, Deputy Opinion Editor Dan Sweeney, editorial writer Martin Dyckman and Editor-in-Chief Julie Anderson. Editorials are the opinion of the Board and written by one of its members or a designee. To contact us, email at letters@sun-sentinel.com.

ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

Inside the Supreme Court as argument made to ban Trump from the Colorado ballot

I watched the oral argument in the Colorado ballot case, *Trump v. Anderson*, from a bench seat in the courtroom. The proceeding was a timely lesson in the nation's legal rituals, ones that blend distinctive habits — including an officious marshal who kept hushing spectators long before the proceeding started — with decisions designating winners and losers and defining the rights of all Americans.



By Michael McAuliffe

The massive marble columns in the Supreme Court's only courtroom hold up an ornate ceiling filled with colorful plaster rosettes. Just below the ceiling is a band of figures and objects representing the grand legacy of legal thought and lawgivers throughout the ages.

Spectators who looked around to see that impressive scene, as I did, might have missed a less visible, but critical, aspect of the day's events — how a close assessment of the Supreme Court's oral arguments in the charged case supports (even if just a little) one's faith in the judiciary.

The Court's reputation has suffered greatly over the past several decades. Many citizens now assume the Court is as polarized and ends-oriented as any other public institution. One longstanding criticism is that the justices — in their questions and statements during the arguments — appear to already hold a view or a position on a case's issues. That shouldn't be a surprise; by the time of the argument, the case has been briefed by the parties (and any non-party submissions), those filings have been analyzed in each justice's chambers by a battalion of law clerks, and the justices have evaluated the case based on their previous experiences in life and the law. Simply, the justices have not arrived at the arguments with a blank page in their hands or heads.

In this case, the justices' sharp, informed engagement during the session — with each other and the advocates — was telling. With Chief Justice John Roberts acting as facilitator, each justice (in order of seniority) asked questions or opined about the issues. When Justice Ketanji Jackson, the newest justice and one carrying the label of committed liberal, asked some pointed questions that reflected doubt about the ability of an individual state to strip a federal candidate's name off a ballot based on the 14th Amendment, the room's atmosphere changed with the realization of unmet expectations.

Justice Elena Kagan's equally skept-

ical comments of Colorado's position further dampened some spectators' hopes for an explosive debate. The deflation was a useful reminder that — while judges and justices can and do disappoint — the public engages in results-oriented reasoning and predictions as much as, or more, than the judges they criticize.

The Supreme Court's central courtroom isn't made for casual ignorance of protocol and practice. Donald Trump was absent, but this may be the one place where even he might have been forced to follow a civility code. The Court would not have taken kindly to antics or political performances from a litigant (whatever the party's position or stature) while in their physical domain.

After the oral argument ended, Trump characterized the proceeding as "beautiful." Whether he listened to the event or not is a mystery. More likely, he was informed that the Court almost surely would reverse the Colorado Supreme Court and keep him on the presidential ballot.

Oddly, the Supreme Court's analysis in the ballot case will have little to do with Trump. The decision will reflect, correctly or not, the justices' interpretation of a contorted, imprecise constitutional provision that prohibits insurrectionists from holding offices. The decision almost surely will not address the factual record of two lower courts finding Trump engaged in insurrection.

To Trump, a court proceeding's validity entirely rests on its outcome. That's exactly the wrong approach in a rule-of-law system. The legal system's integrity depends on process. In the ballot case, the deliberative process appears to match the Supreme Court's impressive physical setting.

When the Court's decision is announced in Trump's favor, don't accept his expected pronouncement that it exonerates him for his actions on Jan. 6, 2021. It won't. The decision, however, will mean that voters will have a choice. The ballot choice, not the ballot case, will be about Trump more than anything or anyone else.

Michael McAuliffe is a former federal prosecutor. He also served as the elected state attorney for Palm Beach County, Florida. Currently, he is a practicing lawyer, an adjunct professor at the College of William & Mary's Law School and a senior lecturing fellow at Duke University's School of Law.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sun Sentinel columnist Fred Grimm ("Republican legislators protect Florida's confederate legacy," Feb. 10) ridicules those who support Senate Bill 1122, and much of the criticism was directed toward the Senate Republican majority.

Grimm's soliloquy style of merging Republican methods of governing and the preservation of history irks me. He argues by using mean-spirited characterizations of people who have opposing opinions. In lieu of criticizing their opinions or their party's opinions, he should make a case for supporting his own convictions.

The great state of Florida was always a very strong one-party Democratic state up until the late 1990s, and Democratic governments were the ones who built the hundreds of Confederate monuments. But now, Grimm castigates Republicans for wanting to keep them. Twisted thinking.

This should not be about Democrats and Republicans and their diehard opinions; nor should it be about the Confederates and the Yankees. Rather, it is all about history and the truth being left alone.

Without detailed history, we would be like a baby without parents. This country is what it is because of its history, and good or bad, you cannot change it. To what degree do you want to remember history? It should not be tinkered with.

It is your opinion and it should be left at that, without a need to tear down anything.

Edward Ross, West Palm Beach

Republican revisionism

In Fred Grimm's salty and well-aimed column about the revisionist history float-

ing through the Republican supermajority in Tallahassee, he wrote that lynchings of African Americans in Florida were "occasional."

Actually, the historical record clearly shows that, per capita, Florida had among the most lynchings in the nation. Despite the state's comparatively low population at the time, it had the reputation during the first half of the 20th century of being the most vicious anti-Black state in the country.

Publications for Black readers in the 1920s advised them to avoid Florida if possible, and if not to exercise extreme care any time they entered the state.

Florida was a national disgrace then, and the Legislature and Gov. Ron DeSantis are national disgraces now.

W. Rick Garr, Fort Lauderdale
(Editor's Note: Tuskegee Institute reports 4,743 known lynchings in the U.S. between 1882 and 1968. Florida ranked sixth among states with 282.)

Sheriff Tony's future

The elected sheriff of Broward County has lied on numerous government applications, including a driver's license renewal for the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles application and applications for police work.

This information about the county's chief law enforcement officer has been known and widely publicized for months, if not years, and yet Tony remains in office.

Can anyone explain why this is? Is the sheriff of Broward County above the law?
Stacie M. Kiner, Hypoluxo