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Weather

**Snowmass
Village, CO**

40 °F / 4 °C

Overcast
at 11:53 PM



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November 01 - November 07, 2006

Opinions

Sun Endorsements

The next two years in the Village will be at least as important as the past two years. So it's critical that we have a leadership group in place that remembers for whom we are doing all this upheaval. Is it the citizens, the business owners, the developers? All of the above, we say, but keeping in mind whose interests must be served first and foremost is going to be a delicate juggling act.

Mayor Douglas "Merc" Mercatoris is well-equipped to lead Snowmass during this critical phase. While ill health at the start of his first term caused Merc to stumble right out of the blocks, he has recently demonstrated the kind of backbone and strong will that many expected of him all along. If he is armed with some stronger lieutenants, we believe Merc in the next two years can help negotiate the best possible outcome for the citizens while giving a fair treatment to the community's many investors.

Councilman Arnie Mordkin must be retained in office in order for the mayor to have his best chance at success. Always inquisitive, Mordkin does his homework and has been known to drum up some obscure factoid or history about a project that may just impact its outcome. Mordkin knows he'll never win a popularity contest – his blunt and at times officious manner guarantees that – but putting personality aside, he deserves your vote on November 7.

Our second choice for Town Council is newcomer Reed Lewis. Council needs some new blood, and Lewis has some good ideas, though it's still unclear whether he is willing to make the kind of hard decisions that will be necessary in the coming months. Certainly Lewis stood tall when he challenged his own landlord over what he thought were unsavory practices and coercion. Let's hope he demonstrates the same resolve as an elected official.

Councilman Bill Boineau, one of the town's most ardent volunteers and an all-around good guy, should be congratulated for being a prime impetus behind the new pool and recreation center and for advocating more raw water storage. Boineau's input has also been valuable in areas concerning construction, and his long history as a firefighter has paid dividends there.

The race for Pitkin County Commissioner has been inspiring this year, as both races are extremely tough to call. In District 1, Tim Mooney really found his voice as a member of the City of Aspen P&Z, cutting his teeth regularly on key development issues. Here's hoping that he'll toss the proverbial hat in the ring the next time around as it's "by a hair" that we recommend Patti Clapper, who gets the nod for her lengthy experience in the job. Clapper is thorough, sometimes to a fault, but you can't fault her sincerity or work ethic.

Two excellent candidates are also vying for the District 2 seat. While Jim True is sharp-as-a-tack and seasoned as a county commissioner, perhaps the better choice to fill Mick Ireland's seat is Rachel Richards, whose proposed solutions to the many county issues seem best aligned with Snowmass interests.

For County Sheriff, we choose incumbent Bob Braudis, whose unwavering leadership over the years is laudable. We respect his decision to seek treatment – even if it was cloaked under another name. His opponent has made this a race to remember, but for many of the wrong reasons.

The race for State Senate District 5 between Gail Schwartz and Lewis Entz is clear cut, and not just because Schwartz is a hometown girl. Her ideas about everything from the environment to education to water are so superior to her opponents' (especially for residents of the Western Slope) that it's really no contest. Schwartz knows the local landscape oh-so-well thanks to her time spent as a housing development officer and on education boards. She can also be a unifier for this disparate district. Vote for Gail Schwartz.

On an absolutely frigid January day, Congressman John Salazar ventured to Snowmass Village to discuss transportation issues with staffers and a handful of elected officials. Salazar was well-versed in most issues; he wasn't afraid to pose questions about the others. John Salazar has served us well as our District 3 representative and deserves your vote.

In the race for governor, we have to recommend Bill Ritter, as it's high time for a change in leadership. As Gail Schwartz noted in last week's Snowmass Sun, Colorado is now 49th in education funding despite all of the affluence and well-educated populace. Of course there are many other important statewide issues, and we need a leader who will look hard at making some changes that benefit more than just big business.

In contrast, we propose staying the course on Referendum 1A, which involves dedicated property taxes for the Healthy Community Fund. Vote yes for 1A and 1B, which reauthorizes county open space and trails program funding for 10 years.

Just in case you are wondering, only a handful of folks (we hear five in total) will vote on the Snowmass Village General Improvement District measure. It's a Base Village question that involves only Base Village interests who will decide at what level to tax themselves.

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