

Capitol Notebook:

It's On – SDPB begins October debate series

By Bob Mercer
State Capitol Bureau

For voters who want to be better informed about their choices in the Nov. 4 elections this year, South Dakota Public Television is one place to check Thursday nights this month.

SDPTV hosts the three candidates for governor in a 60-minute forum this Thursday starting at 8 p.m. CT / 7 p.m. MT.

The show will be simulcast live on the Internet at www.sdpb.org.

It will re-broadcast on South Dakota Public Radio's midday program Friday at noon CT / 11 a.m. MT and will be repeated on TV at 1 p.m. CT / noon CT Sunday.

Stephanie Rissler will be in the moderator's chair again for all four of the shows in the South Dakota Public Broadcasting debate series.

We asked the veteran journalist a few questions in advance of her return to the political stage this week.

Q: How do you select your questions?

A: Debate partners SDPB, AARP South Dakota and the (South Dakota) Newspaper Association ask their members to submit questions, which we've been collecting over the past few weeks.

From the list of questions submitted from all three organizations – as a group, we decide which questions to ask.

Q: Do the candidates know from you/SDPB in

advance the general topics that will be covered?

A: No, the candidates do not know the questions or even the topics that will be asked.

Q: How many years have you been hosting debates and have you noticed any changes?

A: I have produced debates for SDPB since 2000. I have not noticed any major changes in the years I've either produced and / or moderated debates.

Some years attract more attention than others. All of the candidates seem to be appreciative of the opportunity and are well prepared and understand the rules and format when they arrive.

Because of the increase in the number of candidates, both during our primary debates and regular debates, we have noticed it lowers the number of questions we are able to ask during the debate.

SDPB has made adjustments, for example during the primary debate when we have five U.S. Senate Candidates, we opted to run a 90 minute debate rather than a 60 minute debate. We've done this in years past too. All debates in October will run 60 minutes.

AT A GLANCE

Here are the dates for the four SDPB debates this October:

Oct. 9 – Governor candidates Republican incumbent Dennis Daugaard, Democrat

Susan Wismer and independent Michael Myers.

Oct. 16 – U.S. House of Representatives candidates Republican incumbent Kristi Noem and Democrat Corinna Robinson.

Oct. 23 – U.S. Senate candidates Democrat Rick Weiland, Republican Mike Rounds, independent Larry Pressler and independent Gordon Howie. (Democratic incumbent Tim Johnson is retiring.)

Oct. 30 – Three statewide contests for Public Utilities Commission, attorney general and secretary of state and three ballot measures will be covered.

All four start at 8 p.m. CT / 7 p.m. MT on TV and Internet (www.sdpb.org). They will be aired on public radio the next day at noon CT / 11 MT and repeat on TV the following Sunday at 1 p.m. CT / noon MT.

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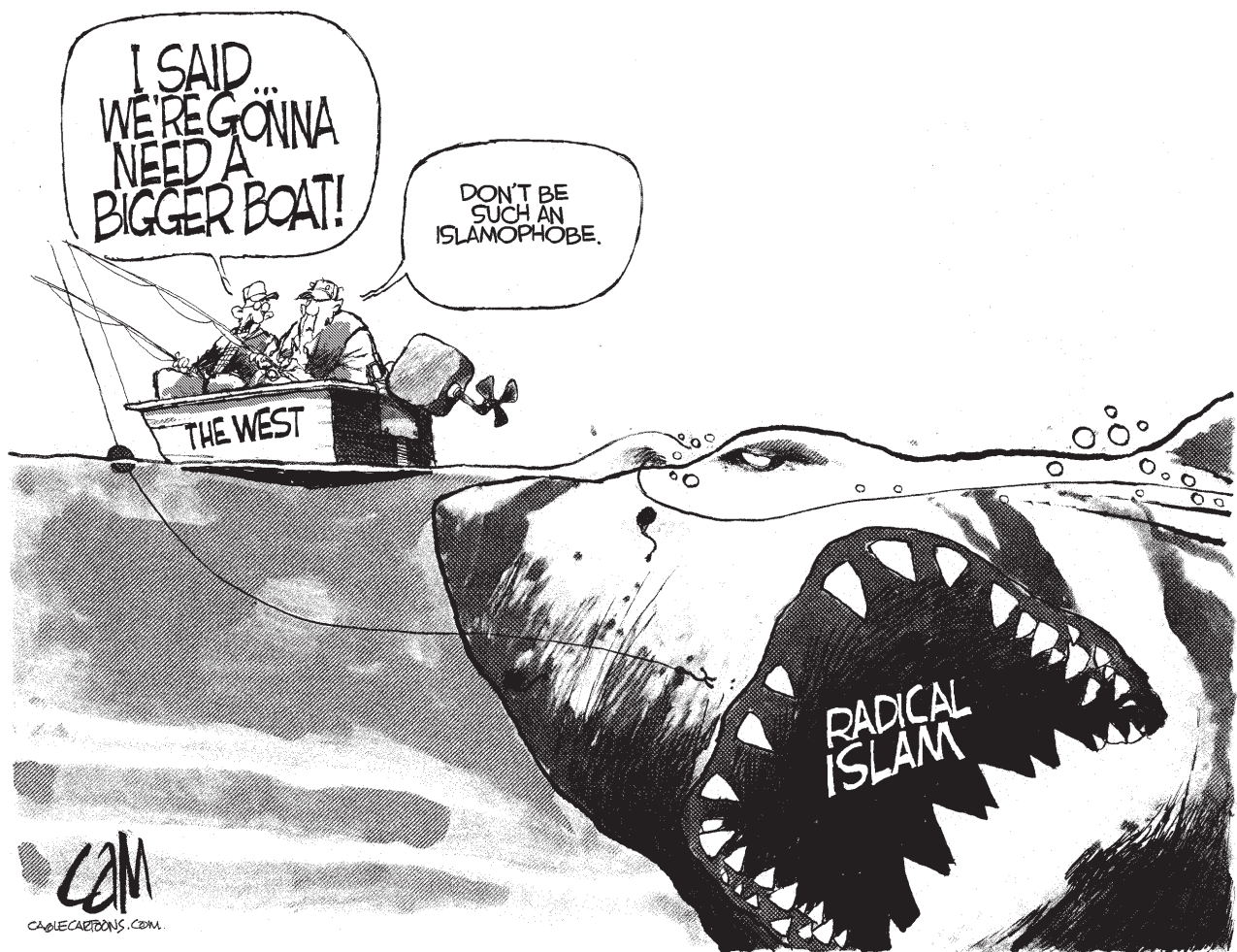
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Ribbon Cutting Celebration!

The Old Lumber Company Grill & Bar held a ribbon cutting on Thursday, Oct. 9. The Old Lumber Company Grill & Bar is committed to satisfying their customers with great food and excellent service. They offer a wide variety of delicious dishes for lunch and dinner.

Whatever you're in the mood for, you can find it with the friendly folks at the Old Lumber Company Grill & Bar. They cater and host events no matter how big or small. They are located in downtown Vermillion at 15 Court Street. Visit www.oldlumbercompany.com or email info@oldlumbercompany.com. They can also be reached at 605-658-9663.

They would love to be your pre and post game headquarters for any sporting event.

They are open Monday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 a.m. Owner/Manager Chad Gunewaldt and Manager Tiff Hrdlicka and their team invite you to stop in.