

A strong 'aye' for Bartels, but flip a coin in other EWEB race

Editor's note: Today, the Emerald begins its editorial endorsements for candidates and ballot measures on the May 23 primary election ballot. In addition to endorsements, a primary election supplement will appear Friday, May 19.

One of the most promising candidates in the primary election this year is John Bartels, candidate for the Eugene Water and Electric Board for Wards four and five. It is refreshing to see someone of Bartels' knowledge and pragmatism seeking the EWEB seat, and we give him our wholehearted support.

Bartels has exhibited a broad and specific knowledge of energy issues — issues the EWEB will be faced with in the near future. He opposes nuclear power plants, supports conservation, alternative energy source exploration and development, and in general has one of the most comprehensive grasps on regional energy issues of any candidate. He has worked as a journalist, as a congressional aide to Jim Weaver, and as an organizer of a group called the Power Research Group, and in each of these positions he has built an impressive background in energy issues. Bartels is easily the best

choice for EWEB Wards 4 and 5.

Bartels' opponent, Thomas Teutsch, has a likable personality, but has a conservative approach to energy issues at a time when bold new leadership is needed. We have little doubt that Teutsch is sincere in his interest in the EWEB, but he is outclassed by Bartels.

The other EWEB race this year presents a more difficult choice. Jack Craig, a former state legislator and something of a perennial candidate, is challenging Calvin Schmidt, incumbent EWEB at-large position holder. Schmidt now represents a conservative element on the board, but we are not ready to say he should be replaced by Craig. Although we feel Craig has good intentions, we don't think he has the political savvy and depth of knowledge to warrant an endorsement.

On the other hand, Schmidt lacks the willingness to show bold leadership on the board. He is knowledgeable on energy issues, but seems content with the status quo; an attitude that disturbs us in light of the importance of selecting the right path for Oregon's and EWEB's future.

For the EWEB at large position, we prefer to make no endorsement.

opinion

Stop CWIP subsidies

Submitted by Paul Williamson
of Oregonians for Utility Reform

For those of you who are waiting for the sound of superheated, multimillion dollar machinery melting through Columbia bedrock to herald the first nuclear power plant failure in Oregon; it is high time to retune your senses.

The first nuclear power plant catastrophe occurred in 1975 when the process of funding new plants quietly slipped its mooring in the capital market, and accelerated into an upward spiral of consumer subsidy in a captive market.

This took the form of the Public Utility Commissioner granting Portland General Electric the right to bill its customers for part of the initial cost of the Trojan nuclear plant, before the plants power was even available to them. Both PGE and Pacific Power and Light have since applied the same process to cover investment in Pebble Springs, the proposed site of Oregon's next two new N-plants, even though the twin reactor site has received neither state nor federal building permits.

Since all Oregon utilities have monopolies within their service areas, and the utilities using this radical form of investment (called CWIP for construction work in progress) are not required to itemize it on the consumers' monthly bill, this makes unwitting nuclear boosters out of most Oregonians regardless of their individual politics, or professed lack thereof.

Only Private Utilities are allowed this form of funding, which excludes Eugene Water and Electric Board customers, but takes in nearly everyone else in the state (80 percent of Oregon's power needs are supplied by private utilities).

The negative impact of CWIP funding on Oregon consumers is manifold.

It is a direct disincentive to apply less costly conservation measures, since new nuclear plants are built on the projected demand of present inefficient energy use, so consumers will be billed for present excesses regardless of whether they choose to become more conservation minded in the future. This is doubly ironic because as the plants under construction drive up the price of power long before they go on line (lead construction time on an average N-plant is 15 years), consumers may be forced to cut back on demand to the point where the plants are unneeded by the time their power is available.

CWIP funding also discourages utility management from applying an economy of scale to their own growth by freeing them from the normal checks and balances of the capital market. Consumer subsidy takes the liability out of new nuclear power plant construction (traditional investors fled long ago over poor bond ratings) and guarantees the utility a fixed rate of return on their investment.

While the utilities are presently ranking in nearly 12 percent annual return on these projects for their part of the bargain, the new consumer-investors can expect around 2.5 percent return over a 40 year period, according to Oregon Environmental Council spokesman David Hupp.

Congressman Jim Weaver has predicted that the nuclear industry will collapse under the weight of its own prohibitive costs. For this likelihood to ever be tested, we need to end consumer subsidy of the industry now.

Oregonians for Utility Reform is a group that is actively engaged in a petition drive that would put the question of whether CWIP funding should be continued on the November Ballot. We need around 28,000 more signatures to realize this goal. An organizational meeting will be held at 2:30 and 7:30 this Thursday in the EMU. We urge you to attend.

Letters

I must admit, however, that I was distressed with the article that appeared on the sports page of the Wednesday, May 12, issue. It is unfortunate that the article did not focus on the purpose of the games and the number of people, both competitors and volunteers, who made the games a success. I am in no way trying to belittle the "struggle" that Mr. Faller has had in his quest for wheelchair athletics at the University of Oregon. I cannot, however, condone the use of Oregon Wheelchair Games as a personal advertisement of a single individual. This is totally unfair to the large number of wheelchair athletes at the University and those, both in the University and the community at large, who have had "significant" influence in the development of wheelchair athletics in the Eugene/University of Oregon/Springfield area.

S. Harold Smith, Ph.D.
Chairman, Steering Committee
1978 Oregon Wheelchair Games

For Craig

Eugene is fortunate to have an EWEB candidate the caliber of Jack Craig. As a Lane Transit District board member, neighborhood association president, and state legislator Jack has worked long and hard to preserve Eugene's livability. As an EWEB Commissioner, Jack will direct his skills and experience to the problems of rising energy costs and depleting energy resources.

Jack knows we can reduce future energy demand by over one-half if we weatherize existing homes and develop energy efficient construction standards. He believes in charging lower rates to those who conserve.

With Jack Craig's leadership EWEB will begin to use its financial capability and technical expertise to make everyday use of solar energy a reality here in Eugene. Jack knows we can not continue to rely upon costly and environmentally damaging thermal power sources.

Jack will see that EWEB prevents public agencies and private individuals from poisoning our water supply with herbicides. Jack also knows we can not continue to degrade our environment in our search for energy.

Jack Craig does not have the same access to campaign funds as his opponent. Jack is not supported by those who profit from Eugene's uncontrolled growth.

Unlike his opponent, Jack can not try to buy this election. What he can and is doing is speak to the issues and to you, the voter.

I urge all who believe the future can be more than just a repeat of our past mistakes, to elect Jack Craig EWEB Commissioner at-large on May 23rd.

Jon Silvermoon
(Chairperson,
Energy subcommittee,
Metropolitan Area Planning
Advisory Committee)

For Bylund

After attending the May 8 meeting of the Lane County Equalization Board and Assessor Kenneth Bylund, I was surprised that the reporter from the Register-Guard wrote his news story only in terms of the conflicts between Bylund and the Board.

Actually, a considerable part of the meeting was spent in explaining the special technical problems that had been involved in the property-tax assessments for the Springfield area.

Bylund was asked why he had reduced the property-value figures. His reply was that he had received about 1,500 letters of protest about the property-tax increases and that this made him suspect that there had been some faulty assumptions (in the Oregon Statutes) which had produced excessive assessments.

There have been accusations that Bylund made the reductions in Springfield in order to get votes from there. The real reason seems to be that Bylund prefers to discover and correct any mistakes that have been made, rather than bull-doze his way through and fail to deal fairly with the citizens of the county.

Personally, I have a lot more confidence in the person who is willing to recognize mistakes and proceed openly to correct them, as Bylund does.

Robert Leeper
2760 Agate St., Eugene

Letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters and opinion columns containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Letters and opinions must be typewritten, using 65 character margins, and should be triple-spaced.

Letters

MEChA erred

I have written to explain the appearance of our organization's name in two display ads, which appeared Wednesday and Thursday (May 10 and 11), which saluted Israel's 30th anniversary. I deeply regret that our name appeared and had made a request to the Emerald to have our name removed.

I personally admit that I did give approval to the ad that appeared. I did not properly consult the other members of our organization, who later showed disapproval of our name appearing. The Chicano Student Union sympathizes with oppressed people in our land and in other countries. The appearance of our organization's name in those ads, were indeed errors.

Ramon Herrera
Junior, CSPA-Journalism
Director, Chicano Student Union

Wheelchair woes

I would like to thank the Emerald for the coverage it gave the recently held Oregon Wheelchair Games.

