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Wheatgerm: love is a priority in his race for Eugene mayor

By Michele Matassa
 Of the Emerald

Citing love and quality of life as his main priorities, Jerry "Wheatgerm" Campbell said Tuesday that he is ready to take on the title and the responsibilities of Eugene's mayor.

Wheatgerm appears on Tuesday's ballot with four other candidates for mayor: Michael Gravino, City Council Pres. Brian Obie, George Stathakis and Dave Sweet, who all claim expertise in one or more areas of government and communication.

But it doesn't matter to Wheatgerm that he has no prior experience with government.

"I feel that I have a fiber that runs through me that has an orientation to people that politicians don't have," Wheatgerm said in an interview Tuesday.

He said he has prepared to be mayor by fasting, by killing his ego and by cleansing his soul, which included swearing off all drugs (except for a brief regression to honor the recent arrival of the Grateful Dead).

"It's been a taxing thing," Wheatgerms said, but he's glad he took on the challenge.

"I've questioned my sexuality, my moral values and how much I want to commit to my friends," he said.

"Now I thought I should challenge myself even more. So I thought the best thing to do would be to share my love with the city of Eugene, which has given me so much."

Love and quality of life make up Wheatgerm's platform, so to speak. "If I do take this job, it's like I'm there to serve. I can't fall back on selfishness," he said.

If he becomes mayor, he will "denounce all possessions" to show his unselfishness, he said. "If I don't have any possessions I can't be bought. I would be open like a book.

"If a can kill my ego, I can be like a funnel. I can listen from the bottom of the funnel and do what people want. I'd be like a tabula rosa (a clean slate), with no prejudice or ego.

"Those are images that came to me when I was at the reservoir on acid," Wheatgerm said.

"I buried my clothes in a shallow hold trying to



Jerry "Wheatgerm" Campbell

find a common denominator between man and animal. I clothed myself in leaves and felt I was sheltered by nature. In a sense, government is a shelter for people."

While on the subject of leaves, Wheatgerm took on the controversy about widening 6th and 7th Avenues, which concerned cutting down a line of 100-year-old maple trees.

"What people should be concerned with is not how fast their cars move down the street but the quality of life," Wheatgerm said.

Wheatgerm also spoke out on the Santa Clara issue, saying Eugene should give the area's residents what they want by annexing them onto Eugene.

He called the Hult Center for the Performing Arts the city's most visible problem and said it "symbolizes what's wrong with Eugene." He will hold a press conference at the center Saturday to voice his opinion, he said.

Does Jerry Campbell actually think he'll win the race?

The 30-year-old actor who portrays Wheatgerm in the Eugene-based comedy group On The Edge has described his candidacy as a "shameless plot to have fun and to get publicity." He says he does carry some support, however.

"But that may just be a colored perception," Wheatgerm said.

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