

# Kittredge assumes sewer seat despite row

By Mike Sims  
Of the Emerald

Bill Kittredge, director of the University Office of Student Advocacy, became a Lane County lay representative on the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission Aug. 9.

Kittredge was appointed to a three-year term on the MWMC in June by the Lane County Commission, which selected him from a list of six applicants. He replaces Gary Wright, who applied for reappointment after seven years on the panel.

County commissioner Peter DeFazio praised Kittredge as a "longtime watchdog and critic" of the MWMC. "(The MWMC) operates without much public scrutiny, which is part of its problem," DeFazio said. "Hopefully, Bill will bring some scrutiny to bear on the commission."

DeFazio expressed a belief that the MWMC is composed of "get along-go along" types of people, and said, "Bill is definitely not that sort of person."

Chris Larson, MWMC chair and Springfield city councilor, expressed a similar opinion of Kittredge, but not in favorable tones. Larson called Kittredge "an obstructionist... unable to cooperate with people."

Larson disagreed with the manner in which Kittredge voiced protests against MWMC operations. In April 1983, when the commission took charge of Springfield sewage disposal, it raised monthly user fees from \$4 to \$10.50. Kittredge subsequently informed the city of Springfield and the Springfield Utility Board in writing that he was withholding payment of his monthly sewer bill in protest against the rate hike and what he deemed to be mismanagement of the regional wastewater program.

Kittredge says that after an auditing firm issued a document which substantiated many of his claims against the

MWMC, the city of Springfield essentially ignored his refusal to pay the monthly sewer fee.

In June, the city of Springfield notified Kittredge that it had turned over his account to a collection agency. Kittredge then made good on nearly 11 months worth of overdue sewer bills.

The city of Springfield and the SUB handle billing and other administrative affairs for the MWMC.

"It doesn't bother me as much that he didn't pay his bill as that he wasn't more open about it," Larson said. "It seems to me that if you were making a public statement of that sort, you'd want it to be more public."

Kittredge said he intends to serve on the MWMC with an eye toward the public. He hopes to make several changes that will facilitate public knowledge of MWMC operations, as well as encourage public input on commission policy.

"I think it's imperative that the citizenry be given a full accounting of the commission and its operations," Kittredge said.

Another credibility problem for the MWMC rises, Kittredge said, because of the panel's usual meeting time: 7 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. "That isn't the most convenient time for working citizens," Kittredge said.

He also noted that the commission set aside a period for public comment at the end of the meeting agenda. Kittredge said he will try to change both circumstances, as well as suggest that meetings be held at various sites throughout the community, in hope of drawing more citizens into the process.

Kittredge said he applied for the commission seat with the "full support" of ASUO Pres. Julie Davis. He says he doesn't think his appointment to the wastewater commission will interfere with his duties as director of the University student advocates office.

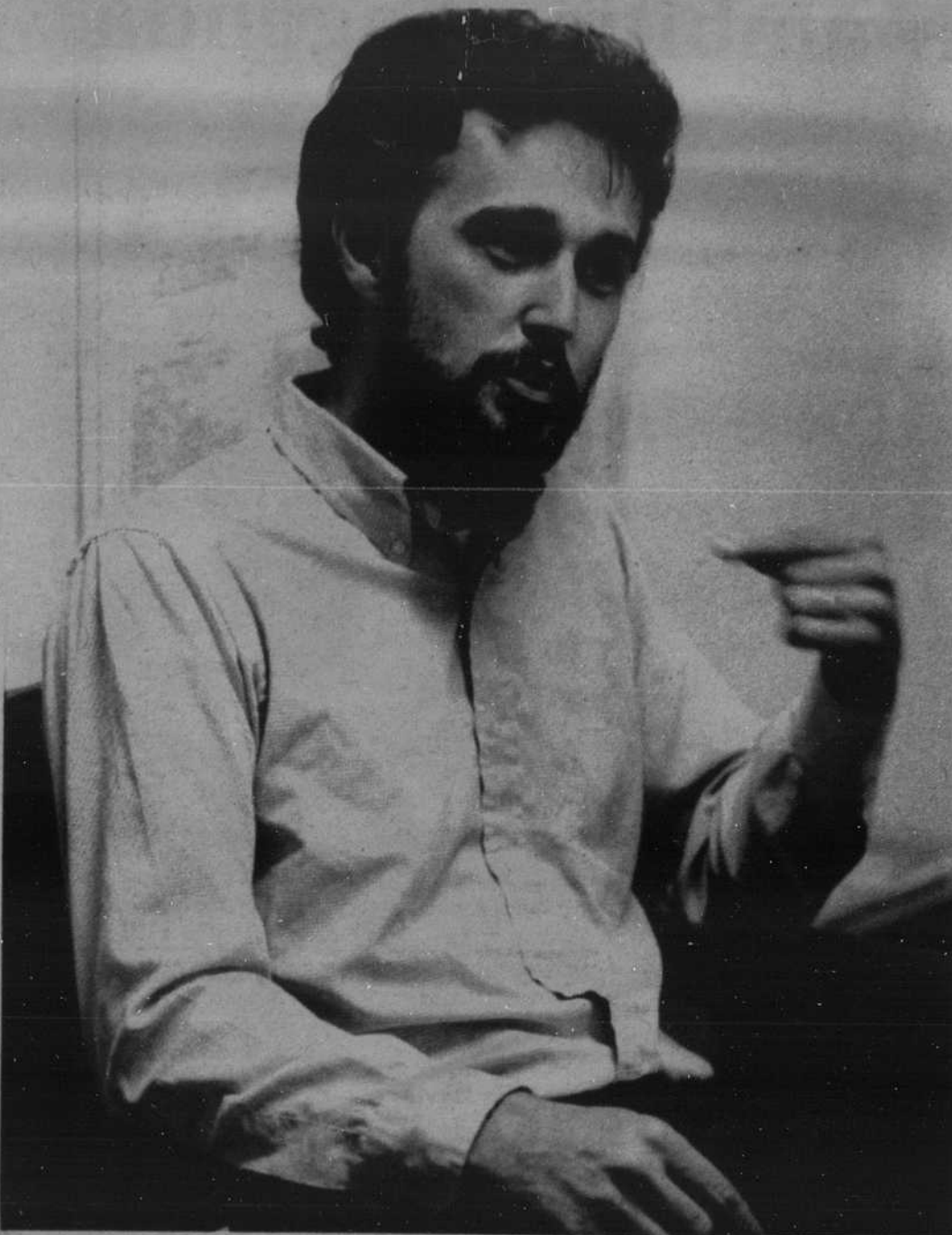


Photo by Michael Clapp

Bill Kittredge, director of the student advocate office, was appointed to the Metropolitan Wastewater Management commission this summer.

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