

## Laue gets endorsement after University debate

**■ OUR OPINION:** Laue takes a respectful jump into an endorsement

We were all set to endorse Jim Torrey for mayor (an edit was written Wednesday for this edition) when we belatedly realized the man appeared to be uninterested in University students (at best) and condescending toward them (at worst).

So, Tim Laue, our runner-up pick for Eugene's mayoral race, moves into first place.

Laue has experience as an analyst and consultant to private businesses and non-profit organizations, and he's currently the City Council president representing Ward 1. Laue encour-

ages students to make their concerns known to city government by getting involved with committees that interest them and by voting.

On higher education, Laue said society should stop disinvesting in education and start making "investments in education at every level." On urban growth, Laue said it should be anticipated and allowed, but in such a way that preserves and enhances the environment.

From the environment to ensuring safety for people, Laue told the *Emerald* that promoting more home ownership in the West University area would help people feel more as though they were part of a neighborhood.

## Lee well-suited to bring UO concerns to Council

**■ OUR OPINION:** Lee's experience sets him apart from other candidates

For Eugene City Council Ward 3, Bobby Lee stands out as the best person to represent the University's interests.

He served as ASUO President from '92 to '93 where he managed a student fees budget of \$5 million that funded more than 100 University programs. As an undergraduate, Lee founded the University Alumni Mentor Program, the Multicultural Center and KWVA radio. He was appointed to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education by Governor Barbara Roberts in 1993. He is also on the Planned Parenthood and Eugene

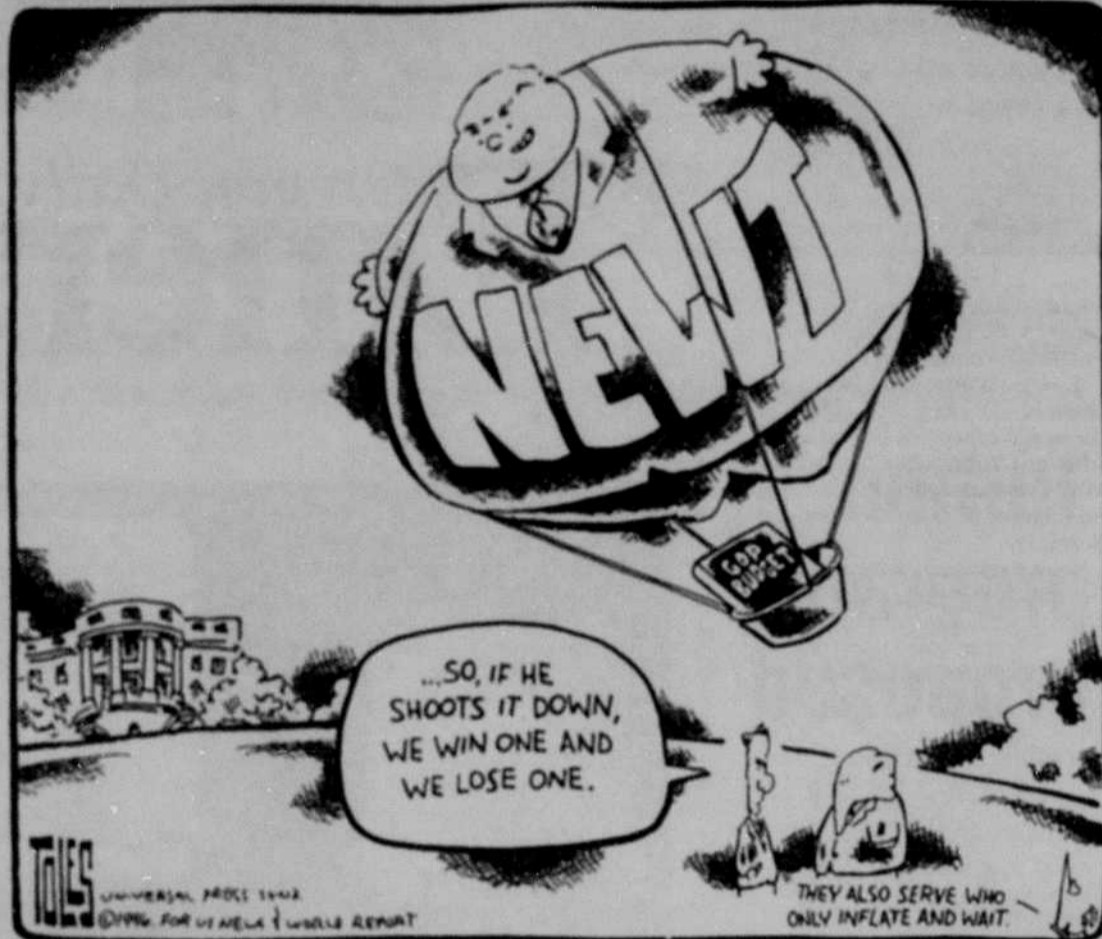
Family YMCA boards of directors.

As a member of the Higher Education 2010 committee, Lee has developed educational policies for Oregon's colleges and universities.

Lee believes that economic progress in Eugene shouldn't be discouraged, but that ecosystems should and must be protected. He plans to work to balance growth with environmental responsibility.

Lee's experience will also help him in his plans to take University interests to city government.

"Without the University, Eugene would not exist," Lee told the *Emerald*. "Students are the fuel for the local economy."



## AmeriCorps program should be saved

Fifteen years ago this spring, I impulsively promised a college education to 61 East Harlem sixth graders, if and when they graduated from high school. The only catch: 75 percent of the youngsters were projected dropouts. To make my promise meaningful, I began a year-round educational program that, with ongoing personal involvement, encouraged the youngsters to stay in school and aspire to higher education and fulfilling careers. I called the program "I Have a Dream" (IHAD), and the kids "Dreamers."

It turned out that all over America other individuals felt the same way I did. Today, more than 160 "I Have a Dream" projects in 28 states serve more than 15,000 children, mostly the minority poor. Each project, with the support of volunteers, provides its Dreamers with a program of educational, social and cultural activities from elementary school through high school — with the guarantee of tuition support for college or vocational school.

Each of our projects is locally administered, locally funded and tailored to the needs of its Dreamers. We believe that personal, individual action is the key. In short, the "I Have a Dream" Foundation is exactly the sort of private-sector charity that opponents of AmeriCorps, the new national service program, say they believe in. A success story like ours proves, they say, that government should have nothing to do with volunteerism. It proves that AmeriCorps is a waste of money. Worse, it may even harm charities by undermining America's great tradition of citizen volunteers.

Two years of IHAD/AmeriCorps collaboration proved otherwise. IHAD's AmeriCorps members have had a dramatic impact on our program in the 15 cities where they work. They teach, tutor, run after-school programs, organize

community service projects and help Dreamers stay away from gangs and drugs and do better in school. They serve as responsible role models for a generation that needs real heroes. Since AmeriCorps came on board, Dreamers have been studying harder and scoring higher. They also have built playgrounds in vacant lots, fed the homeless and comforted the elderly. And the members' high-profile efforts have helped us attract more than 3,000 new volunteers from the Dreamers' communities. Other national service organizations report similar dramatic benefits from AmeriCorps.

Fortunately, Congress appears to have overcome efforts in the House and the Senate to kill AmeriCorps and is voting to provide the funds necessary to continue the program. AmeriCorps is not an example of the government's telling the private sector what to do and how to do it. AmeriCorps members help disadvantaged kids finish high school and go on to college: that isn't liberal or conservative. It's smart. Nor is it a gimmick. The Council on Educational Development estimates that the average dropout adds a lifetime burden on the community of \$300,000. What value should we place on AmeriCorps, whose members have directly helped to keep thousands of Dreamers in school and on a positive track to productive citizenship?

Congress created AmeriCorps as a partnership between the private and public sectors. It works. In just its first year, more than \$91 million was contributed to AmeriCorps programs, including \$41 million from private businesses and foundations. Moreover, talking about AmeriCorps' budget alone fails to address the private money that AmeriCorps brings into the communities in which its members work. A team of conservative economists has calculated that

### COMMENTARY

Eugene M. Lang

every dollar invested in AmeriCorps returns at least \$1.60 to \$2.60 in direct, measurable benefits — findings confirmed by the General Accounting Office.

AmeriCorps also provides some of the same societal benefits as military service. It builds an ethic of citizenship and civic duty. It helps young people from disadvantaged backgrounds gain work experience and finance a college education. For the more privileged, it provides real-world experience to supplement the "ivory tower" environment of college. And in our increasingly multicultural world, it gives those in their formative years the experience of working closely with people from all segments of society. Our AmeriCorps teams embrace all racial and economic backgrounds, working together every day with a remarkable spirit of community.

I'm a fiscal conservative. But when a new initiative works as promised, when it is proven cost effective, when it promotes our core values, then it should be preserved. AmeriCorps is such a program. Republican Gov. Bill Weld recently had a valuable piece of advice for a Congress grappling with tough choices on the budget: "I have one word of caution: AmeriCorps. It is the baby that should not be thrown out with the bathwater. AmeriCorps is one of the most intelligent uses of taxpayers' dollars ever." I couldn't agree more. Let's put aside politics and simplistic slogans and do all we can to improve — not eliminate — AmeriCorps.

Eugene M. Lang is the founder and chairman of the "I Have a Dream" Foundation, an educational support and intervention program for disadvantaged children.

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