

**MARCUS VS. DEMOCRACY**

I was interested to read last week's cover story (4/1) in which Gary Marcus explained his distrust of county government. State law gives him two choices for obtaining the land use approvals he needs to build his massive power plant near Coburg. The first option is to present the land use questions to the elected government of Lane County, as most developers must do when they seek zoning changes in rural Lane County. The second option is to sidestep our local officials and present the proposal to the unelected Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) in Salem.

Mr. Marcus chose the second course. You can't blame him. If you were building a plant that would emit 50 to 100 million tons of carbon dioxide over its lifespan, as well as lesser amounts of other pollutants such as nitrogen oxide, arsenic, formaldehyde and mercury, and if you were planning to sell the plant's power to far-flung communities, then you would naturally want to seek approval from unelected officials living in a different airshed.

According to last week's article in *EW*, Marcus believes that EFSC has greater expertise on the questions he otherwise would have presented to the county commissioners. But let's look closely at what these questions really are. The issue that Marcus wrested away from the commissioners is the application of Lane County's *land use law* to the conversion of farmland to an industrial use. When EFSC officials consider this question, they will need to call up Lane County officials to find out what our land use regulations are. There's no way that EFSC has greater expertise on this issue.

Marcus insists that the commissioners don't understand the power industry well enough. But the local power experts are also raising questions about his proposal. EWEB Commissioner Sandra Bishop, a democratically elected official, mentioned in the *EW* article that "it is a bad idea to build this kind of plant in this location." EWEB Commissioner Dorothy Anderson said at a meeting of the Southeast Neighbors Association that Lane County doesn't need the Coburg power plant, and that EWEB has not made an offer to buy any of its output. I guess Bishop and Anderson can't be trusted either. That's the problem with democratically elected officials.

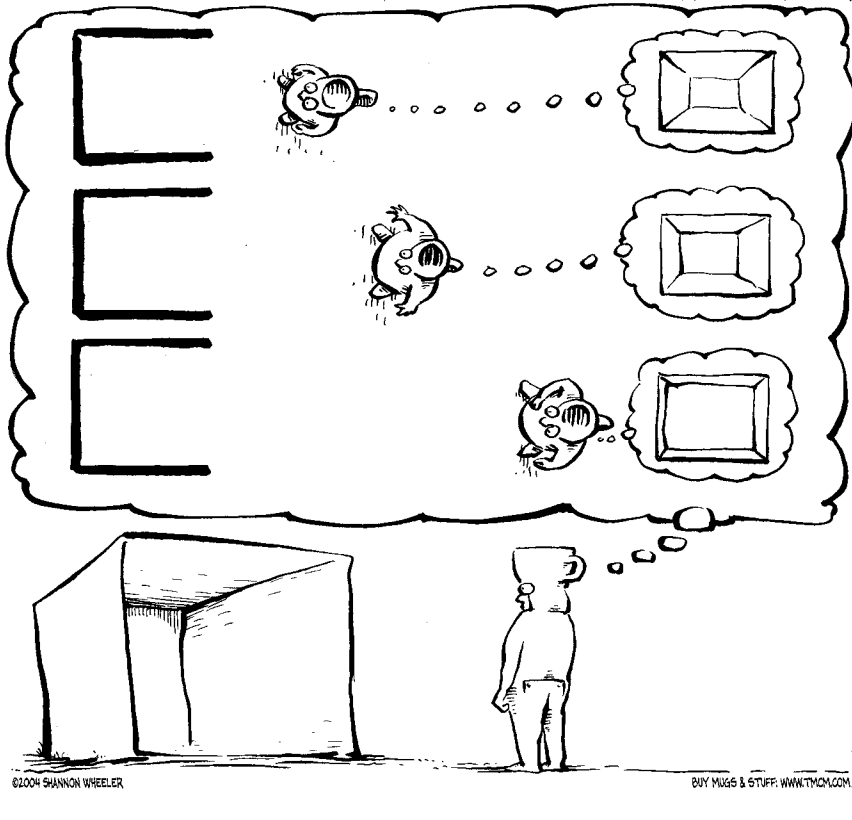
Former Congressman Jim Weaver put it best in a letter he wrote last February. "Marcus [should] take his project before the Lane County Commission. What is he afraid of? If it is not a swindle, then he should not fear the elected representatives of the people."

There are places on this earth where you don't have to worry about the nuisance of democracy. The U.S. isn't one of them. The Soviet Union used to build power plants with little popular resistance. Then again, the Soviet Union built Chernobyl.

The phrase "power to the people" doesn't refer to selling electricity. It's about democratic control.

*Tom Lininger  
Eugene*

**TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN** BY SHANNON WHEELER



**TOP-HEAVY OREGON**

After a long absence I recently returned to Oregon to help expand an old family business. When I first started reading *EW* I found it entertaining. However, after discovering the dismal state of affairs in Oregon, I began to realize that *EW* is more than just laughable, it's also a window into some of the minds responsible for Oregon's mess.

It appears that over many years, while seeking the perfect safety net, many Oregon I-5 corridor voters micro-managed everything from zoning laws to minimum wage and have created an unbalanced, over-regu-

lated, top-heavy, bureaucratic nanny state. Oregon has far too many public employees with functions that are redundant, intrusive, ineffective or insignificant.

Plus, these I-5 dreamers also distrust, or simply hate, the agriculture and timber industries and often times this sentiment includes other businesses. Oregon's failed land-use zoning "experiment" (maybe well-intended) is now illogical, draconian, confiscatory and suffocating. Plus, the current system allows special interest groups (apparently with no filters or repercussions) to impede or prevent almost anything. Overall, this system is an

**Kumbaya Dammit** BY DAN CAROL

**Mods and Rockers**

Holding your nose is an option.

So what if the future of a progressive policy agenda – things like tolerance of diversity, support for environmental protection, tax fairness and *actual* regulation of corporate activities – depended on the resurgence of so-called moderate Republicans? You know, Republicans in the tradition of Abraham Lincoln (remember him), trust-buster and national parks advocate Teddy Roosevelt, and Oregon's own Gov. Tom McCall – who among many accomplishments here at home was one of the first prominent Republicans to call for Richard Nixon's resignation.

Is the idea of growing and nurturing moderate Republicans in political "terrariums" around the country a crazy notion?

Not really. If you throw away the rose-colored glasses, and take a look at the long-term Congressional and political landscape, a progressive-leaning agenda is not going to pass in Washington, D.C., very soon – no matter how things turn out in the presidential election. We critically need to find ways to undercut the unbridled dominance of Tom Delay and the Republican extremists. What better way than to give the Christian Coalition crowd a little competition in their own party. Look at how Republicans successfully split our natural base through the use of so-called wedge issues – they've been doing that with impunity for 25 years. Now it's their turn.

So if you accept the strategic argument that having a Republican wedge is good for our agenda, what are you prepared to "stand for" (handy tip: holding your nose is an optional accessory)?

I am personally and strategically "comfortable" with the following:

- John Kerry picks Senators John McCain (R-AZ) or Chuck Hagel (R-NE) as his running mate. McCain and Hegel are both GOP mods and fellow Vietnam veterans. (I know you know McCain, but did you know he is also as good as it gets right now on the environment?) Kerry wins. We're happy on Nov. 2 and yet harbor no illusions – we keep rolling along with smart state organizing strategies to build progressive power that lasts.



This one is harder: Rooting for Republican Senator Arlen Specter to beat nut-wing Patrick J. Toomey in the April 27 Pennsylvania primary. (Keep in mind, I can't stand Specter for his treatment of Anita Hill and many more votes down the line over the years.) But Specter actually is a moderate blocking point for Bush's craziest judicial nominations in a likely still Republican-controlled Senate, so this is one *lesser of two evils* choice I'll take.

- Calling Arnold Schwarzenegger an environmentalist. Arnold is so far taking cues on the environment from his brother-in-law Robert Kennedy, Jr., an environmental advocate with Riverkeeper and the NRDC. The new head of Arnold's California EPA, Terry Tamminen, is advocating a Hydrogen Highways proposal and talking to some of the "big box" retailers about the possibility of putting large arrays of solar panels on their big, flat roofs, electrolyzing water and having stations in the parking lots. Is this a dirty hydrogen smokescreen or the real deal? We'll just have to see. But it's a pretty serious improvement over Arnold's predecessor Gray Davis – and soon perhaps a political problem for George Bush. Other Republican moderates to watch (and maybe root for) on this front are Govs. Mitt Romney (Mass.) and George Pataki (N.Y.).

- Bookmarking [www.logcabin.org](http://www.logcabin.org). This is a national group of Republicans (Log Cabin invokes GOP stalwart Abe Lincoln) opposed to radical right domination of the Republican Party that stands on the front lines of today's most important battleground for gay and lesbian civil rights. Is supporting this group with your political donations more important than other checks you might write this year? Maybe so. In their own words: "The GOP must choose between fairness and freedom or intolerance and exclusion. Log Cabin works tirelessly to make sure the Republican Party chooses the right path. Ending up on the wrong side of history will cost the GOP for decades to come. So we tirelessly strive to achieve liberty and equality for all Americans."

So that's a look at the Mods. Next time, we'll preview the Rockers. Groups like Music for America, Rock The Vote, The National Hip Summit and Convention and The Rolling Thunder Tour, who are, in the words of my pal Jessica Tully, mixing up a new brew of "hip hop, Birkenstock and alt rock" to promote new forms of community and civic participation.

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