

PIERCY INSISTED THAT WE HAD TO GET BENEATH THE GLOSSY VENEER OF PROGRESSIVE POLITICS AND MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.

and a "I remember back when she was a teacher. I like her a lot."

I stationed myself at corners or next to a tree or bush, at a discreet distance from the canvassers. At times, I felt as if I were one of those chaperones who sit quietly in the sedan while budding evangelicals in prim dresses and natty suits passed out fliers and pamphlets.

I sensed that the students were initially discouraged by the chilly reactions to their cold calls, remembering my failure to sell encyclopedias during a two-week stint in my college days when I was more desperate for a living wage than I am now.

Valiantly, with grit and goodwill, the troika toiled up the street while dogs howled, poodles yapped, lawn-mowers growled, and garage and yard sale entrepreneurs dismissed

them as potential customers.

Tia was the keeper of the map and announced the next address, Erin was the spokesperson who had the moxie and charm to talk to anybody, and Matt lightened our mood with droll commentaries on scruffy landscaping, "sketchy" households and citizens he considered seriously asleep at the switch.

After climbing up into the west hills, we made a U-turn at 23rd and headed back toward 18th. Along the way, the crew encountered an officially registered voter with a cell-phone glued to her left ear, who truculently informed them she had quit voting for good so leave me alone. A burly fellow, strapping an off-road four-wheeler in a pickup bed, announced that no way was he going to vote for Piercy. What was their first clue?

Next, to prove the Taoist maxim of natural balance, Erin knocked on Charles Wright's door and we got a live one. Resplendent in a purple tie-dyed T-shirt, he listened politely, said he was probably going to vote for Piercy and treated the Springfield High Schoolers as coequals. It was a lovely reminder that communal consciousness still has a pulse in this grim, contentious world.

A block later, we reached our bus stop on 18th, alerted the driver via the phone waves, sprawled on some grass and nibbled sub sandwiches until the bus arrived. **EW**

Dave Johnson, a native Eugenean, is a former staff writer for Eugene Weekly. He has traveled extensively and works now as a freelance writer out of Portland.

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