

tween interested parties? What about community input or democratic debate on such subjects? Or is our democratic process being thwarted? Are "we the people" powerless to influence decisions that affect our community's quality of life? Not if we take a stand; not if we speak out; not if we vote with our voice and pocketbooks. Other communities have done it and we can do it, too. Communities *can* influence local political and economic quality of life decisions. Sometimes when you see how the "good old boy wheeler-dealers" make things happen, it just doesn't feel like it. Enough already.

*Debra McGee
Eugene*

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

A few days ago I found a button that my dad got when he was in college. Jumbled with promotional buttons from his old job, old Eugene Celebration buttons and a random mix of silly and strange buttons, this one caught my eye. It said, "If I were 21 I'd vote for Barry." I turned 21 this week and I've been voting for three years.

Unfortunately, I can't say the same for many of my peers. It shouldn't surprise us that tuition is going up and entry level jobs are going down when only 36 percent of the 18- to 25-year-old age group showed up to vote in the last presidential election. Issues that matter to us are ignored by politicians because we aren't the ones who elect them.

It's great to hear about groups like the Oregon Bus Project (cover story, 4/15). On the UO campus the New Voter Project is working to register as many people as possible and encourage them to use their votes. Your vote is your voice. Politicians make decisions that will affect your life. If that's not enough of a reason to vote think about how hard my dad and his generation worked to give us that voice. Now that we have it, use it!

*Keely Hartel
Eugene*

PROUD TO BE A DEMOCRAT

I have never been more proud to be a Democrat. Whether at the local, state, or federal level, the Democratic Party is offering candidates who are smart, experienced, and dedicated to helping those who have been intentionally left behind. Sure, there are differences within the party as to who should be the Democrat representing us as mayor or councilor, but can anyone say we have chosen bad candidates? I don't think so. Can anyone say we have chosen folks who are without immense talent or integrity? How would you like to be a lobbyist who had to go into Peter DeFazio's office and try to offer him campaign money as bait to switch his vote against something he felt important to Oregonians? That is integrity.

Or try to convince Kitty Piercy, Andrea Ortiz, Betty Taylor, David Kelly or Democratic Lane County commissioners like Peter Sorenson to go along with something that was against the interests of the poor and the powerless? That is compassion.

It takes guts to get out in front of the people and offer to be a leader, and whatever happens in May or November, we Democrats did well in choosing candidates with that courage. Sometimes it is difficult to see the difference between political parties, but not here, not now. I have lived in places where I felt no one represented me in local or federal office, and that is a lonely feeling. All I had

were Ralph Nader types, pretending to be for the people, but never having the guts to become Democrats and hold office.

*Hugh Massengill
Eugene*

ENDORSE BETTY TAYLOR

Once in a while a person with intelligence, integrity, experience and devotion to the people she or he serves will run for office. We now have such a person in Betty Taylor. She truly works for the long-term good of our community. Betty speaks out for the kind of progress that enhances the very quality of life that attracts people to live and work in Eugene. She supports helping our existing local businesses and promoting a healthy downtown, as well as protecting area waterways and trees.

Voters in Ward 2 who believe in open and accessible city government should join the many organizations and leaders who endorse Betty, and cast their votes for this wise and hard-working candidate.

*Marjorie Tracy
Eugene*

VOTING WITH ENVY

I'll mark my ballot with excitement and a little envy this spring. I'm excited to vote for Bonny Bettman and Kitty Piercy. Candidates so competent and committed to conservation and compassionate community values can always count on my vote.

Yet I'm envious of my former neighbors between 13th Avenue and the river because they get to vote for Andrea Ortiz, and I do not. When I was in Ward 7, I never got any good choices for City Council on the ballot. Instead, my only choice was Meisner.

Don't get me wrong. I think Meisner is a decent, intelligent guy. For instance, a while ago I tried to get the council to protect civil liberties by voting against a dangerous ordinance. The ordinance took powers of punishment, which any kid knows are supposed to be the purview only of judge and jury, and handed them to the police, by letting them decide who was allowed the freedom to frequent our downtown. When I cited the Bill of Rights' guarantee that liberties shall not be taken away with out due process, Meisner mumbled along earnestly, as if he sort-of, kind-of, almost knew the Fifth Amendment by heart. I was shocked, then when, instead of voting with Kelly and Taylor to protect civil liberties, he blithely black-eyed the Bill of Rights by voting with Nathanson and company to implement the ordinance.

Ward 7 could do worse than Meisner, I suppose, but finally it has a chance to do better. Elect Andrea Ortiz.

*Martin Champion
Eugene*

NEW LEADERSHIP NEEDED

This year (finally) our nation's environment will be a high priority among voters. The same will be true for Eugene residents when they cast their ballots for the May 18 primary. In that regard, the *R-G* editorial staff was off the mark when they chose to endorse the Ward 7 incumbent Eugene City Councilor Scott Meisner.

In choosing Meisner, the editorial staff mistakenly used the word "independent" to characterize him. The evidence, as judged by public interest groups, would indicate otherwise. This incumbent has primarily served private interests in his decision-making, to



OFAM at The Shedd

The Dave Liebman Group

Sunday May 9, 7:30 pm
at The Shedd
3-4:30 pm workshop

Dave Liebman plays Keilwerth saxophones exclusively. Thanks to The Music Group Inc. for their financial support.



OFAM NHT 2003-2004
www.ofam.org

Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas

Saturday May 15, 7:30 pm at The Shedd



OFAM'S Magical MOOMBAH!

A musical vaudeville for kids!!
recommended especially for children ages 3-8

Saturday - 10:30 & 12:30!
"Beatles Stories"
May 8 & 15
at The Shedd!

Kids Tickets: \$5.00
= \$1 off with this ad!
Adult Tickets: \$2.50
For info call OFAM at 687-6526
or visit www.moombah.org

1st Moombah: 10:30 am; Playshop: 11:30 am
2nd Moombah: 12:30 pm. With your Moombah ticket
get into the AMI Discovering Instruments playshop
between the shows!

Proudly brought to you by

Kettle Foods, The Eye Center, Mist

John H. Haines, MD
Kent A. Karren, MD
Robert H. Davis, MD
The Eye Center

Hawaiian Next

Music's Generation

May 20th
at The Shedd



Cyndi Lauper

July 16th
The Hult
682-5000

OFAM at The Shedd

868 High Street (at Broadway)
541-687-6526 - www.ofam.org

The Eye Center
John H. Haines, MD
Kent A. Karren, MD
Robert H. Davis, MD
Presenting Festival Sponsor