

GIVE GOOD GUYS A CHANCE

The R-G editorial page crew, usually a progressive bunch in spite of what *EW* might think, lost their way in endorsing candidates in Eugene races. You guys got it right.

Voters interested in a change for the better will choose Kitty Piercy for mayor, and Bonny Bettman, Betty Taylor and Andrea Ortiz for City Council. Their backgrounds and words offer promise of city government more attuned to all citizens.

The R-G said good things about all four, yet endorsed only Bettman. Whoa!

Listen, Nancy Nathanson and Scott Meisner, who the R-G endorsed, are good people, deserving of thanks for years of service — and a fond farewell. They have abysmal voting records on issues important for working people, the less fortunate, the environment, sane growth and resistance to over-zealous developers. *EW*'s April 8 report of council votes is clear proof: Nathanson and Meisner had 17 and 26 percent progressive scores, respectively — flunking grades — while Bettman scored 98 percent and Taylor 96.

The R-G's other endorsee, Maurice Denner, may be a fine fellow, but like Nathanson and Meisner, he's being pushed by the Chamber of Commerce crowd, who think they should keep running the city as they have for 50+ years. Time to give a different crowd — more representative of the rest

of us — a chance.

The election of Piercy and Ortiz, and reelection of Bettman and Taylor, will give the good guys a working mayor/council majority.

Don Bishoff
Eugene

WHERE'S BETTY?

Big mistake! In your endorsement article last week (5/6) although you correctly endorsed Betty Taylor for all the right reasons, right there, smack dab in the middle of the article, was an advertisement for her opponent. Someone not reading the whole article would incorrectly assume you had endorsed Denner. Please put Betty's picture on the front page with a big banner saying "We endorse Betty!" Other than that you were right on. We (the Oregon Bus Project) endorsed all the same candidates, as well. Great minds think alike. Hopefully they can win elections, too.

James Mattiace
Co Chair Oregon Bus Project- Lane
Eugene

FEAR-BASED POLITICS

Little in the way of progressive logic is evidenced in *EW*'s endorsement of Kerry over Kucinich. The line of "reasoning" is to the effect that a vote for Kucinich is really a vote against Kerry, and therefore a vote for Bush.

Talk about jumping the gun; Kerry is certainly not yet the Democratic nominee. While he most probably will be, anything can happen. (*EW* seems to forget what happened to Democrat ticket front-runner Bobby



Kennedy in 1968, shortly after he departed a whistle-stop appearance in our town.)

Odds and dire scenarios aside, what about the idea of a voting democracy? Last I checked, that's what we supposedly have. A primary election is the main opportunity for the lowly voters to state their preferences! Long before the national convention, exactly why should we feel compelled to put all eggs into Kerry's basket? This is fear-based politics, exactly the modus operandi of the Bushies. It is disempowering to the people, because it says Democrats should fall into lockstep on a Kerry vote — to avoid sending a message of "weakness" to the Republican

camp. This type of thinking, effective perhaps for belligerent military posturing, turns democracy on its head.

Proffering the same line, the R-G says that Oregon's primary vote won't be noticed unless Kucinich rocks Kerry's boat. Exactly why we should vote for the media-marginalized candidate, the only one who's facing the real issues with real answers! Voters can send a message that will be heard, but only if they use their power at the polls instead of giving in to fears that may or may not turn out to be apropos come November.

Vip Short
Eugene

natural resistance BY MARY O'BRIEN

Snoozing with Nature

Walled bedrooms are overrated.

The idea came from backpacking and from our son Zeke, whose biological clock was permanently set for waking at 4:30 am. My husband, O'B, and I liked sleeping outdoors, and we didn't like waking before six. So, 20 years ago O'B took the wall off the north side of the garage and half of both ends. He built a wall down the length of the garage in the middle, screened the north half of the garage, and we've slept there ever since. I hope I sleep the rest of my life like this.

First of all, the 13 panels of the screen walls are a tapestry of the seasons. Dawn comes through the eastern two panels at varying times. Every spring morning, the Indian plum and bigleaf maple leaves have grown larger. In summer, a dark, heavy canopy rustles in the breeze. Eight screen panels turn maple red in autumn, and all are starkly etched by branches in winter.

Springtime frogs sing us to sleep, and different bird songs mark different mornings. One summer, bees settled into the bird house under the eaves, and would startle and buzz loudly when we passed by them on our way to bed. Occasionally some small being's last call pierces the night when a predator has found it.

When I'm lucky, I am wakened by the tentative beginnings of a rain. It's hard to tell when rain finishes, as it morphs into drippings off the leaves and branches. When the wind blows, the trees whirl wildly, but the screen sifts the wind into a light breeze across our faces. One winter night when I stepped outside, every icy blade of grass was reflecting a full moon.

No winter night has defeated the warmth of down. One time we found that fine snow had sifted onto the bed through the screen. We shook the cover quilt, the snow flew away, and we slept warm. Spider webs drape the garage roof beams, but I can't recall being bitten by a spider in the 20 years we've been sleeping there.

Now there was the Time of the Opossums. At first there was just one. She (he?) would come into the other side of the garage around 3 am, after a night of foraging. We would hear her shuffle around a bit, but she'd settle down when we



knocked on the dividing wall. One night when I was out of town, the opossum was keeping O'B awake, so he wanted her out. He walked over to the other side of the garage, lifted the garage door, hollered at the opossum, and smacked the metal garbage can with a stick. The opossum shot out, and O'B went back to sleep.

Twenty minutes later a police officer was shining a flashlight into his eyes from outside the screen.

"Mr. O'Brien?"

"Hmm?" O'B answered.

"A neighbor has reported an argument and a gun shot from over here."

"No," O'B answered tentatively. Then he remembered - sort of. "Oh, yes. There was a ... you know ... one of those animals that get run over by cars."

"You mean an opossum?" the officer offered.

"Yes!" O'B answered cheerfully, everything coming back.

"Well, have a good night, Mr. O'Brien."

"You, too."

Shortly after that, a baby opossum bit O'B's thumb draped over the edge of the bed. That was it for the opossums, who were now clearly plural. We borrowed a live trap, set it up on the other side of the garage, put an apple inside and went to bed. Ten minutes later, a clank and a bunch of scuffling. O'B put the trap in the car, turned music on, drove a calm opossum five minutes away near a bridge, and let it go. Another apple, a few minutes more, and it started all over again. Four opossums that night; three the next night; two the next; and the last night, O'B carried away a very large matriarch. Ten opossums had set up home across the wall. None have ever returned.

I suppose (especially after the opossum stories) I'll never convince many people to forsake their walled bedrooms. But the truth remains for me: Every time I walk into the night to go to bed, it feels like I'm coming home.

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