

**NEW POLICE STATION GETS ZERO SUPPORT**

Nobody voted for a new police station in an unscientific ballot by *Eugene Weekly* over the past two weeks asking what the city should do with \$29 million in internal money it has squirreled away.

The City Council voted last month to use the \$29 million in internal money plus a \$7 million property tax bond measure to build a new police station (see story, 7/29).

Forty percent of ballots mailed or e-mailed to *EW* favored using the money to support local schools instead. Buying parkland came in second at 31 percent, fixing potholes third at 26 percent followed by paying off police lawsuits (19 percent), running the library (19 percent), community policing (17 percent) and re-funding taxpayers (12 percent). A total of 46 people sent in ballots as of press time, and many people voted for more than one thing to spend the money on.

Many voters also suggested other uses for the money including: rapid transit, a city auditor, catching thieves and vandals, cleaning up the Willamette River, extending bike paths to Mount Pisgah, health and human services, sheltering the homeless, youth and disabled recreation programs, nodal development, free parking and buying bikes for everyone in town.

Many voters also used the ballot to express their displeasure with the city and police department.

Instead of using taxpayer money to pay off lawsuits resulting from sexual coercion by two EPD officers against more than a dozen women over the last decade, one citizen wrote that the police should cut officer salaries to pay off the claims. Another wrote, officer Roger "Magaña got away with sexually molest-

ing women while on duty for 10 years! It's plain that police policy is at fault, and we shouldn't have to foot the bill for that."

Another citizen wrote, "Let them [police] sacrifice something, like their new cop shop. There are plenty of properties in the downtown area that would suffice with some fixing up. It would do EPD good to be a bit humble right now."

"If the cops want a new station, let them ask us again," wrote another voter. "Maybe they will get the message that this community wants oversight, independent auditing, maybe even accountability. Is that too much to ask of our public servants?"

"Anything is more practical than an unnecessary and voted-against police station," a voter wrote.

"I cannot believe that they squirreled away that much money, is that actually legal!" another voter wrote, referring to the \$29 million the city cut from city services and squirreled away to fund the police building.

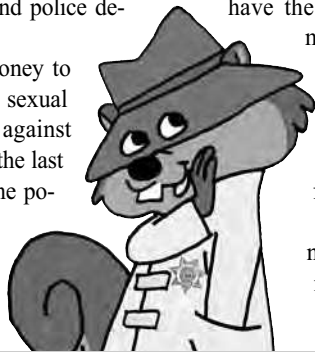
"Considering the poor performance of the police in the last decade, how much loss would it be to have their building collapse? Move the secretaries out though," a person wrote.

"What part of 'NO' and 'NO' didn't the city council understand?" a citizen wrote referring to the two past failed efforts to pass a tax for the police station.

A voter marveled that the city would have the "audacity" to ask again for money after two failed votes.

"Clearly, they take us for fools! Which is why their new measure will fail too .... Money to schools, and not to fools!"

The bond measure component of the police station funding will be on the real ballot in November. — Alan Pittman



**THIS MODERN WORLD**

by TOM TOMORROW



**BARNHART, SPASARO CONTINUE SQUABBLE**

The skirmish of words and accusations continues this week between Democrat Rep. Phil Barnhart and his Republican challenger Michael Spasaro in one of the few contested local races in November. Barnhart represents Central Lane and Linn counties in House District 11.

Last week (see News Briefs 8/5) Barnhart voiced concerns about Spasaro's statements on his website saying Barnhart has voted for "extreme, partisan policies," and is "out



Michael Spasaro

of touch with the people who live in this district." Barnhart responded that he won 62 percent of the vote in the 2002 election.

After *EW* went to press last week, Spasaro defended his statements, saying, "There is no doubt in my mind that they (voters) have lost faith in their elected officials and in state government. They are specifically frustrated with Rep. Barnhart and his votes on taxes, the lack of leadership he was able to provide on important issues like education, and the fact that they have not even seen him at their door."

He goes on to say that "Barnhart was redis-

**SLANT**

• As we go to press this week we hear that Rodney Johnson, one of Eugene's unique and well-loved individuals, has suffered a massive heart attack and is on life support at Sacred Heart. Friends and family are holding a vigil for Mr. Johnson. He is described as "a loving person who has touched many people" in Eugene's business community, music scene and at LCC.

• *Register-Guard* editorials are sometimes well-crafted and even make sense, but they must have forgotten to turn on their computer's logic checker for their column Aug. 5 disputing the need for an independent auditor. Their main argument appears to be that hiring an independent auditor would "damage the relationship" between the council and the city manager. Where's the evidence for that argument? Some cities have experienced just the opposite. A good auditor can point out problems that a city manager can deal with *before* they become big issues that involve the council. Let's look at what best serves the public interest. Creating a higher level of transparency and accountability far outweighs the chance of increased tension between the council and manager. Let's stop speculating about hurt feelings and look at the thorough work done by our Charter Review Committee that unanimously recommended the city refer to the voters a charter amendment that would permit the hiring of an independent auditor.

• We ran a short news item last week about the House District 11 race between Barnhart and Spasaro (see follow-up story this week). The Oregon Right to Life PAC is backing Spasaro and has accused Barnhart of being "pro-abortion." We see that accusation a lot, and such language really is inaccurate and unfair. Nobody we know favors abortion as a

solution to unwanted pregnancy, including Barnhart. "I certainly do not promote or encourage abortion," he tells us. "I cannot imagine being 'pro' abortion. I simply oppose the state prohibiting it or regulating it. I am pro-women's rights, not pro-abortion."

• It's worth picking up a copy of the September *Esquire* magazine to read a long piece by Ronald Reagan, one son of a president, about George W. Bush, another son of a president. This time his focus is not stem cell research. Instead, he writes mostly about the "L" word – not "liberal," but "liar" – as it applies to our president. Consider what a condemnation this is, especially when the Bush team tries so hard to tie Bush to President Reagan and his popularity. Clearly, young Ron Reagan does not want his father's legacy tainted by the lies of George W. Bush. It's an amazing article.

• Orange alert! Orange alert! As we shake in our Birkenstocks, we can't help but wonder why we haven't experienced a major coordinated terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. Did we kill all our enemies? Have we foiled all their sinister plots? Unlikely. Terrorism plotters are probably just kicking back watching us self-destruct with our monumental deficits, overextended military, religious fanaticism, crack-down on civil liberties and pariah status in world opinion. Have we allowed them to get the better of us?

• Will John Kerry and company stop in Eugene Thursday night on their way to Friday's Portland rally? We hear it might be just a little sleep-over at a private home (quick, change the sheets!) and some casual conversation over breakfast Friday. Boxers or briefs? Does he leave the lid up? We want to know.



**SOMETHING**

**Sierra Club Forum  
Aug. 17**

• Politics and beer, what a great combination. Join Sierra Clubbers at 6:30 pm Tuesday, Aug. 17 at Rennie's Landing, 1214 Kincaid, to grill candidates about politics and the environment. Special guests will include Shaum Preston of the local Kerry/Edwards campaign, along with Floyd Prozanski, Phil Barnhart, Don Hampton and Bev Ficek. For more info, e-mail Debra Higbee at [debrah@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:debrah@darkwing.uoregon.edu)

• Shaum Preston (see above) is the newly appointed contact person for the Kerry/Edwards campaign here in Eugene, and he's recruiting volunteers. Call him at 345-5981 or (415) 412-0825 (cell phone). Campaign HQ is at 114 E. 16th Ave.