

Give Us 'West Wing'

Watching the debates? Following local politics? Pulling out your hair? Suffering from uncontrolled fits of crying, laughing and nervous diarrhea? Then you are among the educated and enlightened who know how critical this election is – not only on the cosmic level (the sun might not come up Nov. 3), but also down here on the ground where we walk around and try to make sense of the human condition.



We're bleary-eyed and giddy from wrestling with the endorsements in this issue.

We don't claim great wisdom and insight, and we're biased as hell in favor of democracy, free speech, education, accountability and other radical concepts. So we urge you to also do your own research. Read the Voters' Pamphlet, study daily newspapers, check out the League of Women Voters election guide, attend City Club debates, listen to public radio, watch CTV, talk to friends and neighbors, get involved in campaigns, etc.

The biggest decisions in Eugene concern renewing the five-year local option levy to keep teachers on the job; and the \$7 million for a crime victims' facility to be added to a new \$29 million police station. We've twice voted down the fancy cop shop, but now it's back in a pretty package. A vote for needy crime victims will likely be used as a mandate for the police palace. Sneaky. Irritating.

At the county, the Don Hampton/Faye Stewart race is a big one. Will an environmental progressive or a pro-sprawl conservative carry the swing vote on the polarized Board of County Commissioners? The implications are huge for the future livability of Lane County.

The Oregon Senate is evenly divided going into this election. Republicans dominate the state House, but that could also change in November. Holvey, Barnhart, Ackerman and Ficek need our help. Some statewide measures on the ballot would have little impact on our daily lives, but Measure 37, if it passes (shudder), would in effect eliminate land use planning in Oregon. Picture Eugene sprawling away a la Las Vegas.

Nationally we expect DeFazio and Wyden to continue representing us in Congress. Wyden sometimes acts more like an R than a D, but he's better on the issues than Al King, so he gets our nod. The presidential race is anybody's guess. Pollsters are predicting another photo finish, but our country has changed over the past four years. We are more politically polarized, fewer of us are reading newspapers, more of us rely on talk shows and TV for our "news." Mainstream media conglomerations are flexing conservative political muscle. Grassroots organizations are breaking records registering new voters. All these things contribute to uncertainty in the presidential crap shoot. At this point, the outcome of the election will be determined not by undecided voters, but rather by which campaign inspires more people to get off their butts and vote.

We could grit our teeth and survive another four years of Bush's bumbling, embarrassing incompetence. The bigger problem is his administration. The White House thugs have to go. Fanatical hawks are driving our foreign policy in reckless directions and quashing our civil rights, polluters are in charge of dismantling our environmental protections as quickly as possible. All attempts to rein in greedy, corrupt corporations have been subverted. Thanks to Bush appointees and Congress, the drug companies, oil companies, insurance industry and government contractors are cashing in while the deficit soars and the poor get poorer. We are being driven to national bankruptcy in order to stuff corporate coffers.

We would support almost anyone running against Bush, but fortunately the Dems have come up with a candidate who has the ability to lead us in a whole new and more positive direction, both at home and abroad. John Kerry would put together an administration that makes sense. No more rats guarding the cheese. Kerry would give us a fresh start in world affairs. Kerry would give us a White House that looks more like "West Wing" and less like "Dynasty."

Half the people in our country who can vote don't vote, which means those of us who do vote are taking on even more responsibility and power. Our national election will be carefully watched in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, because what we do is felt around the world. Let's make some big ripples Tuesday, Nov. 2. Then we'll wash our faces, put on some fresh underwear and watch the sun come up Wednesday on a whole new world. – TJT

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HAMPTON'S BEST

I heard my very first Faye Stewart for east Lane County Commissioner radio plugs today. He has the support of his wife. That's nice. And the support of Lane County's sheriff. That's something.

But Don Hampton has actual experience on the job. He may not have family fortune or developer dollars backing him but he does have experience as mayor of Oakridge before being appointed as East Lane Commissioner.

West Lane Commissioner Anna Morrison even voted for Hampton's appointment after passing over Faye Stewart on the list of wannabees when Tom Lininger resigned the post to teach law at the UO. Now there's an endorsement!

The upcoming commissioner election is very important. The board is composed of five commissioners who vote to decide many issues. Don Hampton has shown himself willing to vote against highly questionable land use issues that would make a lot of money for a few.

What is Faye Stewart's position on McDougal and Musumeci style development? Know before you vote. The big boys make millions but there's nothing in it for little people except urban sprawl.

I was out at the Short Mountain land fill the other day and looked down to find dozens of Cedric Hayden for CC lawn signs. Hopefully Faye Stewart's will soon join them and Faye can continue his work on the school board.

Keep Hampton!

Norm Maxwell
Lorane

RESPECT FOR ACKERMAN

State Rep. Robert L. Ackerman is running for re-election in the North Eugene area and I would urge voters in that area to return him to office.

I first met Mr. Ackerman when I elected to represent Springfield on the Board of LCC. At that time Mr. Ackerman was chair of that

board. Mr. Ackerman not only earned my respect, but the respect of his other fellow board members and the members of the administration and union leaders with whom he interacted. He took his role as chair of the board very seriously and always had some thoughtful and insightful questions to ask regarding the items on which we were to make decisions. He was especially valuable to the board and to the college because of his legal background and his years of experience gained from his local practice in the legal field.

I think the citizens of Oregon, Lane County and Eugene have been well served by Mr. Ackerman and I, therefore, urge the voters of his district to retain him as their representative in Salem.

G. Dennis Shine
Springfield

A LITTLE RESTRAINT

Indeed, Waldo Lake and the surrounding landscape is a special place (Outdoors column, 9/30). So special, that, in the early 1980s, hundreds of Oregonians worked endless hours to make sure it was protected as an official Wilderness area in the 1984 Oregon Wilderness Act. And much of it was.

Ironically, Waldo Lake itself is not in the Waldo Lake Wilderness. In the political horse-trading that preceded passage of the act, Senator Hatfield decided that the trail around the west side of the lake should be the wilderness boundary, so that motorboats could use the lake and land on the western shoreline. That left us with two problems: two-stroke oil-spewing motors polluting one of the three purest large lakes in the world and mechanized use (bicycles) of land that qualifies as Wilderness.

It looks like the Forest Service, with our help, is about to solve the first problem. We can solve the second problem with a little self-restraint. Please honor the land for what it is, wild and untrammled.

Get to know Waldo on foot, and ride your