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New!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WORDS FROM WEAVER

Pete Sorenson was my top aide when I was first elected to Congress and helped me put through the French Pete Wilderness Act over strong objection from the timber industry. I can say without qualification I know no more dedicated and honest a public servant.

He is needed as never before on the county commission to withstand the firestorm flaming on the right that will lead to the degradation of our land, water and air in Lane County. Together, with another strong voice on the commission, Rob Handy, they will hold firm against runaway power grabs like the ones blistering from the right that maligned them in recent months, hoping to drive them from office. I urge citizens in their districts to keep these two fine people on the commission as a bulwark against the interests that will undermine the quality of life in our county.

*Jim Weaver, former congressman
 Eugene*

REPRESENTING US

Whether or not you are new to town, you may be mystified about whom to vote for in the local election on May 15. Are there any candidates proven to represent us, the 99 percent, instead of well-funded special interest groups who often resort to smoke, mirrors, misinformation and personal attack in their campaigns? Fortunately yes, there are.

Many long-time Eugene residents and public interest advocates such as myself endorse the reelection of four candidates based on personal observation over the years. For example, since the 1980s, the campus and the community applauded Pete Sorenson as he consistently stood with us to oppose the UO administration's unfair and unwise decisions to eliminate its invaluable low cost student family housing at Amazon and Westmoreland. Those of us supporting peace and justice appreciated his leadership in getting 200 elected officials around the state to sign on to a petition to the Oregon congressional delegation to demand an end to our war in Iraq.

These kinds of actions and the voting records of Pete and three other elected officials demonstrate a solid commitment to peace, justice, environment, education, sustainable economy and the public interest. Like the League of Conservation Voters, we're endorsing Pete Sorenson and Rob Handy for the county commissioners' positions, Betty Taylor for City Council and Kitty Piercy for mayor.

*David Zupan, director
 Progressive Voices
 www.progressivevoices.org*

PETE TO THE RESCUE

Pete Sorenson and Rob Handy both should be re-elected! To refresh memories, former commissioners Anna Morrison and Ellie Dumdi seldom were of help to coastal residents. We greatly increased Sorenson's workload by asking his assistance on county matters.

It was Sorenson who saved our iconic Glenada dunes from development. The lands were in foreclosure, developers were poised and bulldozers were ready to go. Lane County was preparing to auction the irreplaceable dunes, pine forests and a Native American archaeological site. In 2005, thousands of

residents signed petitions demanding the dunes be saved. Lane County citizens owe a big debt of gratitude to Pete Sorenson for his outstanding leadership in saving the dunes.

Indeed, it was Sorenson who came up with an innovative solution to the problem. Due to his vast knowledge of state law, Sorenson asked his fellow commissioners to invoke an Oregon statute giving counties the power to place suitable foreclosed properties into their parks inventories. After a colleague verified that state parks officials would use some eligible lottery proceeds to compensate Lane County for the land, the commissioners voted to save the dunes. Without Sorenson's knowledge, and creating a bipartisan solution, this irreplaceable legacy would have been lost forever. Future generations may never know Sorenson's role in this, but on the coast we deeply appreciate his talents.

Rob Handy and Sorenson are a tremendous help to coastal residents.

*Lea Patten
 Florence*

STAHL'S LONG RECORD

In the race for Lane County Commissioner I am supporting Andy Stahl. Stahl has a long record of environmental advocacy and executive leadership running Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. He has worked tirelessly on behalf of education and the welfare of children as a foster parent and as a school board member. He supports open and ethical government, in sharp contrast to the incumbent, Peter Sorenson.

As a parent and grandparent I watched with dismay as Sorenson, his soulmate Rob Handy, and their "book club" circumvented Oregon's Public Meetings Law; worse yet, when found guilty, the pair continued to deny any wrongdoing and tried to spin the verdict as a green light to engage in more egregious behavior. What kind of example is this for the next generation?

I likewise puzzled over their decision three years ago to resist restoring county jail capacity from federal funds while prioritizing their acquisition of personal assistants at public expense. Would one of their would-be aides have rushed to the rescue if my kids or grandkids needed a cop?

Fifteen years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded legal costs later, Sorenson has had his chance. It's time for a change.

*Teresa Carp
 Eugene*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rob Handy says the money for part-time constituent service aides came from an unfilled administration position in the budget, and not from public safety.

THEY RARELY AGREE

Your April 5 Slant column really did a number on Andy Stahl, candidate for county commissioner. His longtime friend Randal O'Toole, a research employee of a libertarian think tank, donated \$500 of his personal funds to Andy's campaign. Although Andy and Randal are of different political persuasions, implications in the "Slant" item were that somehow the two think in tandem. In fact, although Andy and Randal have common ground as to some political problems, they hardly ever agree on solutions. Slant engaged in a dangerous ad hominem fallacy. Here's what I think: