

We Can't Afford to Lose Him

Pete Sorenson's re-election is a must

Deciding to endorse and strongly support Pete Sorenson (commissioner for South Eugene including Whiteaker and the Jefferson/Westside neighborhoods) is an easy task. He's the most qualified and most deserving candidate by far. Sorenson's deep public service resume, proven independence, progressive record and courage in the face of ugly bullying from special interests and Republican-owned media, make him unique in the commissioner race.

As a 17-year veteran of service on the Lane County Budget Committee (appointed by three different commissioners, two Democrats and one Republican) and as its immediate past chair, I know a thing or two about county government.

Sorenson is endorsed by virtually every conservation and labor organization, Democratic Party of Lane County, Independent Party of Oregon, Mayor Kitty Piercy, LCC Education Association's PAC, former crusading local congressman Jim Weaver, and former South Eugene commissioner Jerry Rust (1977-97); he has tremendous grassroots support and affection for his independence in standing up for South Eugene's priorities: education, conservation, human rights, sane land use policy, the UO, animal care and youth services.

Space doesn't allow for reciting the full gamut of his achievements – saving the Lane County Fairgrounds, defending thousands of local forest acres against attempted zoning changes to permit sprawl, saving the iconic Florence dunes, fighting for same-sex county worker health care protection and expanded county clinics for low-income citizens, fairness and dignity for county workers, etc. Sorenson has received awards for helping create the Veterans Service Center and for human rights ("Hometown Hero Civil Rights Award" by the Eugene Human Rights Commission). He's volunteered for Kidsports and YMCA coaching. His opponent has never once served on a county or city board or committee.

Pete has stood up for us. Now it's our turn to repudiate the politics of personal destruction.

He's stood up to the special-interest controlled right-leaning Republican board majority (Bozievich, Stewart and Leiken) and their seeming endorsement of a virtual giveaway of millions of gallons of precious McKenzie River water, as well as that same board majority's outrageous tolerance of the West Virginia style mountain-top removal of iconic Parvin Butte. Perhaps that's why a local deep-pocketed land speculator just pumped

in \$12,000 to the campaign of his libertarian-leaning opponent Andy Stahl. After all, Stahl is a close ally and donation recipient of Cato Institute employee and arch-conservative Randal O'Toole who advocates for privatizing federal forests and parks! Stahl proclaims himself the "architect" of an alarming trust scheme to semi-privatize and clear-cut some 1.5 million acres of federal forest, leaving an uncertain amount of protected old-growth. He proposes an elimination of locally accountable individual commissioner districts and ridicules the critics of the Republican board's recent shameless gerrymandering as "crybabies." Not very "progressive" sounding!

Sorenson's record of service is unmatched: chief legislative assistant to congressman Jim Weaver, pivotal player in adding French Pete to the Three Sisters Wilderness, special assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Oregon state senator and assistant Democratic leader, chair of the LCC Board, three times chair of the Lane Board of County Commissioners.

As a crusading pro-conservation lawyer, featured in a *New York Times* article, Sorenson won landmark federal litigation protecting drinking water against lead contamination. He won a major lawsuit protecting citizens and small business against industrial biocide poisoning near railroad tracks. He is a nationally recognized expert in the Clean Water, Clean Air and Endangered Species acts, and has lectured across America: Stanford, NYU, Columbia, UCLA, Tulane and dozens others. He was a delegate to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm and the only Lane County commissioner ever invited to a bill-signing in the Oval Office (for Clinton's signing the Sorenson-supported Secure Rural Schools funding act).

We can't afford to lose this proven champion for what makes Eugene and Lane County so special: our care for one another's dignity and security and for the God-given grandeur which surrounds us. Pete has stood up for us. Now it's our turn to repudiate the politics of personal destruction; It's time to re-elect this decent and compassionate neighbor and leader!

Scott Bartlett of Eugene is the immediate past chair of the Lane County Budget Committee and was twice elected as Oregon member of the Electoral College of the United States.



CONFIDENCE IN PETE

I met Pete Sorenson in the late 1980s. He was a practicing environmental attorney in a third-floor walk-up office bustling with law students. People were becoming disgusted with the grass seed agricultural practice of burning harvested fields. Pete wrote a "field-burning ban" ballot initiative for us which did not gather enough signatures, but the movement proceeded to get a phase-down bill passed in the Legislature. Pete then worked with me and another plaintiff to begin the process of suing the first Bush administration EPA for not promulgating the Clean Air Act regulation for particulate matter. The EPA wrote the regulation.

Then in the early 1990s Pete gave me emergency free legal advice over the phone. Seneca Timber company workers showed up with heavy equipment claiming they had access through our property to their recently purchased adjacent property. They threatened me with "idle equipment" and "labor time lost" costs, which could be thousands of dollars. Pete's excellent advice absolved me of liability from their threats.

I do not know Andy Stahl as well. I did vote for him when he ran for Crow/Applegate/Lorane school board. Since this is the only elective office he has held, and he lost his bid for re-election, one wonders if this is a rousing endorsement. My question for Andy: If you aspired to the commission as an environmentalist and progressive Democrat, why didn't you run against Faye Stewart when you lived in our district? Why run against a fellow progressive environmentalist who has a long and outstanding record?

*Jan Nelson
Crow*

FARR'S DUI MATTERS

Recently, the *R-G* [and *EW*] published reports of Pat Farr, candidate against Rob Handy for county commissioner, getting cited in 2006 for being four times over the legal limit to drive. It is legitimate to ask why this issue is important to the race, and not just an example of dirty politics by the Handy campaign. Though I don't speak for the campaign, I'd like to weigh in.

- Farr made this a public matter by endangering the lives of everyone on the public streets that night. DUIs are the public's business because of the nature of the crime.
- Farr has made honesty, transparency, and "bringing trust back to government" the foundation of his campaign. Yet he hasn't been honest about his own past. He opened the door to this.
- At the time of the crime, Farr was executive director of FOOD for Lane County. That nonprofit had just survived a huge controversy a few years before when the board fired their founding director. Another scandal at the top of FFLC could literally have brought that organization to its knees. Farr's crime put in jeopardy the tens of thousands of people FFLC serves every year.

Judge for yourself his fitness for office.

*Kevin O'Brien
Eugene*

PARVIN BUTTE BLOWUP

The *Weekly* has told us all along, and by now, the extreme, pro-resource extraction agenda of the Board of Commissioners majority is blatantly obvious, even in mainstream reporting. A front page *R-G* story (5/3) describes county commissioners' differences on whether the county should appeal a decision that leaves neighbors at the mercy of Greg Demers' mining operation on Parvin Butte in the community of Dexter.

I watched most of that public comment and discussion on Cable Channel 21. Property owners living near the butte provided heart-rending testimony on how the harsh noise and dust of mining negatively impacts their lives and community. With no county appeal, the mining will likely continue for at least several years, and historic Parvin Butte will be obliterated.

It's impossible to imagine how anyone can support those three majority commissioners after seeing their level of callousness. It doesn't move them — no matter how severely people are affected or how clearly the problems are presented — the vote still went wrong.

And then, Commissioners Stewart and Bozievich had the nerve to be offended when Dan Stotter, the attorney representing aggrieved Dexter and Lost Creek residents, pointed out that these county decision makers don't care.

Appropriately, on the same day, the *R-G* Life Section front-page story presents photographer John Bauguess of Dexter whose extraordinary photos of destruction in this area will be exhibited May 14-18 at Maude Kerns Art Center.

I wonder if the board majority will be there for the reception.

*Elaine B. Weiss
Eugene*

BAD PICK ON AG

Having read your almost infallible endorsements over the years, I was stunned at your pick (5/3) of Dwight Holton over Ellen Rosenblum for the crucial position of attorney general. Rosenblum is a progressive with years of experience in Oregon state courts whose top priorities include fighting white collar crime and sexual abuse; Holton, whose priorities include fighting Oregon's marijuana laws, has practiced only within the federal system.

Please check the actual records of both candidates, and don't let yourself be swayed by all those "law and order" TV ads paid for by Holton's Eastern financier friends.

*Douglas Card
Veneta*

NEW ZEALAND MODEL

The forest policies of New Zealand have much to teach us, but the assertion that the Andy Stahl influenced DeFazio-Walden-Shrader O&C logging Plan has as its prototype the "New Zealand Plan" is misleading.

The origin of the "New Zealand Plan" was the Maruia Declaration of 1977, a pre-computer petition with 341,159 signatures



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