



PHOTO BY CAROLINA MANERO

PROGRESSIVE POSSIBILITIES

Robert Kuttner in on elections, the economy and Merkley

Robert Kuttner, economist and co-founder of *The American Prospect*, says the magazine was founded “deliberately to be a strong liberal voice,” and he adds, “I think the role of magazine like ours is to put forward ideas, to put forward a perspective on the election but to do so consistent with accuracy.” Kuttner, who is known for his political commentary — he’s the author of nine books and has published in everything from the alt-weekly *Village Voice* to the *Huffington Post* — continues, “I think the right lives in a fantasy world; it’s possible to have a viewpoint but also have some respect for evidence.”

Kuttner spoke at the UO on Oct. 2, and he will be giving two more campus talks as part of his “Untangling the Economy” series. He is the UO’s 2012 Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics.

Kuttner might be a liberal voice, but he critiques left- and right-wing politics alike. Among the politicians he does like is Oregon’s own Sen. Jeff Merkley, who will be speaking as part of the Morse Center series as well.

As the presidential election draws near, one question that arises is: If Obama wins, will progressives try to push him further to the left? Kuttner says he thinks they will. “Mitt Romney is God’s gift,” he says. “I mean to have this incompetent a candidate, who is also resented by the right-wing base of the Republican Party. This is better than Christmas.” He continues, “I’m afraid that the Republican base, which is increasingly captured by the far right, is going to conclude if Obama does win that the problem was they had a dreadful candidate, not that their ideas were out of sync with the rest of the country.”

Kuttner says it will take a couple more defeats before the Republicans conclude that they are too right-wing. But will Obama go left? Kuttner doubts it. He says the most likely scenario is Obama wins by a few points, Dems manage to hold the Senate, and almost-but-not-quite capture the House, leaving the Republicans still able to block most things. He says that in four years if the economy is still sluggish “even a far-right candidate could win because he’s not the incumbent.” So he doesn’t see the Republicans moving to the center or Obama, who he calls a centrist, not a progressive, moving much to the left. Though he does see Obama becoming tougher as a partisan, “That you could extend an olive branch at the Republicans and not have them throw it back in your face, I think even Obama has realized that’s an illusion.”

In a recent column, Kuttner writes that politically things “will change for the better only when Democrats manage to nominate a compelling progressive.”

He tells *EW* that he sees Merkley as one of the handful of compelling progressives, as well as Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Jack Reed of Rhode Island and Elizabeth Warren in Massachusetts, if she gets elected, which Kuttner thinks she will. As to whether Merkley or another true progressive could be elected president four years from now, Kuttner is more dubious. “Money is so powerful that compelling progressives get weeded out at earlier stages,” he says.

Looking at the possible field for 2016, he says Hillary Clinton has 50/50 chance of running, and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has momentum. But he says that would make the fourth center-right Democratic president: Carter, Clinton, Obama “and then, God help us, Andrew Cuomo.” That would not be good, Kuttner says. He sees Cuomo as “one of those Wall Street Democrats who is very centrist on budget issues and doesn’t do anything about unions.” He says Hillary Clinton is still centrist, but a little better “because she’s a stronger person.”

He says it would take an awful lot for a compelling progressive to get elected because without Wall Street support he would have trouble raising that kind of money. “So it would be a people’s campaign against a money campaign. And you don’t know which one of those might catch fire, so I’m not saying it’s out of the question, but it’s difficult.” ■

For more on Kuttner’s views, and other speakers as well, check out the Wayne Morse Center’s speaker series list at waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/ Kuttner will be talking about “Globalization and the Good Society” at 5:30 pm Oct. 17 and on “The Economy in the 2012 Elections” at 7 pm Oct. 23, in 175 Knight Law Center at the UO.



AMAZON PARK

animal clinic

Taking Care of Your Four-Legged Family for Over 30 Years



Full Service Clinic:

- Well Pet Care
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Cancer Management
- Behavior Consultations
- Dental Care

Cameron Jones, DVM

Barbara Maki, DVM

Cary Heyward, DVM

Appointments Available 8am-6pm Weekdays 9am-4pm Saturday
info@amazonparkvet.com • 541-485-0161 • 725 E. 25th Ave. Eugene

Homeowners, it's Showtime!

Lane County HOME Show[®]
 improvement

October 12-14, 2012

250 Home & Garden Exhibits & Hourly Seminars
 Remodel it Now Series! Extension Service! Experts!
 St. Vincent's Antique Shop ~ Great Entertainment Acts!

SPEAKING!
Deborah Pierce, AIA
Author: The Accessible Home
Award Winning Architect
 Saturday 12noon
New Life for Old Homes
Using Universal Design
 Saturday 3:00pm
Bathrooms for
All Ages & Abilities
 Sunday 12noon
Kitchens for
All Ages & Abilities

Saturday! Scott Cully
Master Pumpkin Carver
Carving Extravaganza

Win PRIZES!

Locally Crafted A-Frame Garden Shed
 Quality Woodcraft Sponsored by KEZI-9

BIG Green Egg BBQ Grill
 Premium Spa & Stoves Sponsored by KEZI-9

Country Stoves - Striker Wood Stove
 Emerald Hearth, Spa & Patio Sponsored by KVAL-TV

LED Kitchen Cabinet Lighting Package
 Brighter Homes Lighting Sponsored by KVAL-TV

Corsicana Classic Queen Mattress Set
 The Mattress Company Sponsored by KVAL-TV

FREE! ADMISSION
 Bring Canned Food Donations
 FOOD for Lane Co.

HOURS!
 Fri. 5pm-9pm
 Sat. 10am-9pm
 Sun. 10am-5pm

Fairgrounds Eugene

EugeneHomeShow.com