

SLANT

• Look for our **election issue and endorsements next week**. Ballots will arrive in mailboxes soon for the May 20 Primary Election. You might not find a lot of sexy stuff on the ballot until the November General Election, but the primary has potentially a big impact. For those new to voting in Oregon, nonpartisan races, such as Lane County Commission positions, can be decided in the May Primary if one candidate gets at least 50 percent plus one vote. The commission races, of course, are anything but nonpartisan. They have been politically polarized for as long as we can remember.

• Commission races gone wild! There have been several debates between current **candidates for Lane County Commission** in the primary election and there are more upcoming (see Activist Alert). Some have been more fun (unintentionally we assume) than an episode of *Parks and Recreation*. West Lane Commissioner Jay Bozievich perplexed us by repeating both at the debate hosted by the UO College Republicans and at City Club of Eugene that he is "not a mother." We have heard he does have a couple of large poodles, but that indeed does not make him a mother, unlike his opponent Dawn Lesley, who is a mother as well as an engineer and a much less divisive candidate. Also unlike Boz, Lesley has not dressed up as a colonial soldier à la the Tea Party, she told City Club. Boz was probably his most ridiculous when in response to a question about climate change, he announced "I think we all agree that climates always change."

• How great it would be if the UO Foundation would immediately respond to the overwhelming vote of UO students and **divest of its fossil fuel stocks**, less than 1 percent of the portfolio. So far, the foundation has done the opposite. The symbolism of divestment would be huge, echoing a movement across the country. The fossil-fuel industry is fiercely fighting public transportation, even helping elect low-level officials opposed to mass transit. The industry is also funding an ongoing climate change disinformation campaign. Makes us wonder why the investment arm of our public university has a penny there.

• The Eugene **city budget process** is wrapping up and the Budget Committee meets again at 5:30 pm Thursday, May 1, at the Eugene Public Library. The panel will take public testimony on the FY 2015 proposed budget, but many questions remain unanswered. We've never seen an independent audit of our huge police and fire departments to know if they are overstaffed, understaffed or just right. We do know that Eugene spends \$10 million more a year on police than Salem, a city of identical size. The city manager keeps claiming 100 positions have been eliminated, but when we asked how many warm bodies are no longer on the staff we finally got an answer: four. Has the city hired any new analysts or lawyers? We asked and got no response. We're still puzzled by why Eugene has 305 more full-time equivalent employees than Salem. In the new budget it appears parks maintenance is being paid for in part by raising stormwater fees, which frees up money for the General Fund. And money from the General Fund is being siphoned off for a new City Hall instead of asking voters for a bond measure. We hear some city staffers have gone begging for funds from other departments. Meanwhile we lose millions in revenue each year to urban renewal districts and tax breaks and subsidies for private developers. Do all cities operate this way? We appreciate the hard work of the Budget Committee, but we wonder if its members are given all the information they really need.

• **The Eugene Occupier** is a smart little free newspaper on the streets of Eugene for spring. The new issue of Occupy Eugene's newsletter is once again telling Occupy's important story. We remember that the national Occupy movement before the 2012 election imprinted "the 1 percent and the 99 percent" on American voters, certainly helping to defeat Mitt Romney who epitomized the 1 percent.

• Last week's **Viewpoint by Bob Warren** on the uncompromising debate on forest bills got a web response from Andy Stahl who has been heavily involved in timber policy over the decades. Stahl takes issue with Warren's claim that "all timber harvests on federal forests were halted by a federal court injunction," Stahl says. "The courts enjoined only future sales of spotted owl habitat, not on-going old-growth logging of already sold timber. Timber harvesting on the approximately three years worth of sales continued unabated during the court injunctions." Stahl goes on to say logging in Oregon is "two-thirds of what it was before the spotted owl era," but employment is even lower because of mechanization. Stahl did not mention other factors at play: the crash in home construction during the Great Recession, competing wood products from Canada and the American South and the continued export of logs from private timberlands. The political battle rages over clear-cutting vs. habitat and if Warren's fears come true, conservatives will take both houses of Congress and habitat will lose. More comments can be found on our website. See wkly.ws/1qm.

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