

service there so far has been outstanding. Your vote for him is a vote for the continuation of the experienced service Lane County residents deserve.

Michael Carrigan
Community Alliance of Lane County
Eugene

SEMPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

Emily Semple has faith in the people who live and run businesses in the established neighborhoods of Ward 1. Her core value is empowering residents to take the leading role in deciding how their neighborhood will evolve in the future. That is why she quickly stood with the residents of the South Willamette area in their opposition to the city's radical rezoning plan.

Emily believes the council should terminate MUPTE and explore "inclusionary zoning" as a more equitable and effective way to provide affordable housing. Emily will stand up for our most vulnerable citizens to provide decent and safe shelter.

With her business experience and strong scientific background, Emily is well prepared to cut through complex docu-

ments; she will follow the money trail to determine who will pay, who will benefit and who might lose out.

The council will make many important decisions in the next four years, and we must elect someone who will represent our interests. Our new councilor must insist on openness and transparency from City Hall and be our watchdog to ensure our tax dollars are used wisely.

That is why I voted for Emily.

George Brown
City Councilor Ward 1
Eugene

EFFECTIVE ALLY

In order to create positive change in our community and in our world we need good activists *and* good policy makers. Ideally we need them to work in consort to bring about change based on common values. In Ward 1 we have an important decision to make — choosing between two candidates who seemingly share many core principles and ideals.

But it takes more than strong values to be a successful elected official. These two

candidates clearly differ in their readiness to serve as a city councilor.

Josh Skov has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to preparing for the office. Over many years he's built collaborative relationships with community members, advocates, city staff and respected elected officials. He's dedicated countless volunteer hours participating in work groups and serving on committees, and continually works to understand and improve upon the structure of our local government, all in service to ensuring the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors are met, our environment is protected, and resources are allocated wisely.

I've been impressed with the respectful professionalism and discipline with which he's run his campaign. I trust Josh Skov will be an effective elected ally to activists and advocates of all kinds.

Laurie Trieger
Eugene

MENTAL HEALTH BILL

In *Eugene Weekly*, Rep. Pete DeFazio (D-OR) and I have been debating a bill he

is co-sponsoring, H.R. 2646. This complex proposal, more than 100 pages, is misnamed "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2016." It should be called "The Mental Health Consumer Disempowerment Act."

The worst part: It gives federal money to support Involuntary Outpatient Commitment (IOC). The euphemism for IOC is Assisted Outpatient Commitment (AOC). The heart of IOC, which I've fought in many states for decades, is mainly to require Americans living at home in the community to take powerful psychiatric drugs against their will.

Incredibly, Rep. DeFazio falsely reassures us that his bill would not emphasize forced drugs. He points out that state IOC law does not "include forced medication." Of course not. Judges pride themselves in saying, "I'm not a doctor; I don't prescribe." Judges provide the coercion. Doctors prescribe.

The drug-based approach has undue influence in mental health. We don't have space here to explore the pros and cons of psychiatric drugs. It can be common sense

VIEWPOINT BY SAMUEL PORTER

Breaking the American Taboo (on Socialism)

THE ELECTION AND REASON-BASED COMMUNICATION

What's your "social imaginary"? In other words, as the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor defines it in his 2007 work *Modern Social Imaginaries*, how do you imagine your social existence, how do you fit together with others — including the natural environment, I would add — and how do you imagine things going on between you and others, the expectations normally met and the deeper ethical ideas and images that underpin those expectations?

What holds society together — or any social relationship? And what is your role in it? Friendship, intimate relationship, marriage, family, classroom, the Whitaker neighborhood, workplace, community, town, the city of Eugene, Oregon, the Pacific Northwest as an eco-region, a nation or a society of more than 320 million people marked by increasing diversity such as the United States?

There are no simple answers — and some societies are integrated in authoritarian, not democratic and egalitarian ways. But in this extraordinarily divisive election year, such questions seem strikingly salient.

In 2015, the U.S. Library of Congress awarded Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor the Kluge Prize, a \$1.5 million equivalent to the Nobel Prize for people working across the humanities and social sciences.

After decades of thinking about such questions, Habermas, a leading German social theorist, says what holds democratic societies together is reason-based communication. For without the constant practice of open, public discussion and the readiness of citizens to submit their arguments to the gauntlet of rational criticism — where what counts is not your personal opinion but the ability to marshal the relevant evidence and argument — democracy is dead.

Taylor — who is not only a leading Canadian political theorist but also has been long engaged in Canadian politics — says what holds us together is active participation. This appears close to the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh's emphasis on the importance of "presence" in intimate as well as social relationships.

So what holds society together — what kind of society do you imagine is

worth living in — and what is your role in it?

With increasing disparities of wealth domestically and internationally, the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, more than seven billion people on a finite earth degraded by a fossil fuel-based industrial economy, global warming and increasingly scarce fresh water and arable land, along with intensifying refugee and immigration issues and so on, such questions seem to demand a response.

Trump in the United States and Le Pen in France offer one kind of response. But is their social imaginary the kind of society worth living in and working for? No, I would argue.

Rather, I'd point to a dark green, decentralized and egalitarian Democratic Socialism in the American tradition of Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington. Vermont's U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders was able only to begin to articulate this social imaginary in practical terms during his presidential primary campaign. Part of the task now is working out the details — where both God and the devil always are.

It's a humbling task, no doubt. But that kind of social imaginary does have roots in American political history — for example, in the Social Gospel of the late 19th and early 20th centuries — and, not least, the mid-Western progressive tradition Oregon's late U.S. Senator Wayne Morse exemplifies.

So wouldn't it be nice — since she is famously pragmatic — if Secretary Hillary Clinton drew on her progressive United Methodist and civic humanist roots, cut her neoliberal ideological ties to Wall Street and built a presidency on Sen. Sanders' breaking the American taboo on socialism in a way that fleshes out — through the American pragmatic tradition — that social vision?

Not likely, you might say. Maybe not. But shouldn't we, as members of American society, at least try to push her in that direction? Or, if you have a viable alternative, I'm sure "we'd all love to see the plan," as The Beatles sing in "Revolution."

Sam Porter, a native of Eugene, earned a Ph.D. in Ethics and Society from Emory University in Atlanta.