

BEATING WALDEN

Because of the “genetic Republicans who could not conceive of not voting for a Republican” in Greg Walden’s congressional district (“The Far Side,” May 25), any Democrat who runs against him will be at a disadvantage.

For this reason, it might be time for Bernie Sanders supporters who are disaffected with the Democratic Party to show their displeasure by registering as Republicans and mounting a primary election challenge to Walden. If they would do this, they could form a substantial voting bloc that could, at least, force Walden to use some of his million-dollar campaign chest for the primary election.

Also, a progressive populist such as Sanders might be able to win the support of working-class Republicans who are angry with the party for policies that are hurtful to them.

One of the reasons that the Republican Party has turned so far to the right lately is the fear moderate Republicans have of losing to Tea Party Republicans in the pri-

mary elections. This might change if there were substantial numbers of progressive Republican voters.

If someone does mount a campaign to attack Walden from the left, I can think of a good campaign slogan: “Make America America again.” This means putting the good of the American people above the good of any political party and going back to a time when the government was of, by and for all the people, not just the privileged few.

Steve Hiatt
Eugene

NATIONAL BREAKDOWN

I’m also disabled. Hockenberry (“I Am An Enemy of the People? Okay, Prove It,” June 1) states that “the president has called the press an enemy of the American people.” I would add to his list of U.S. breakdowns in “the deteriorating U.S. economy”: unemployment, outdated and inadequate housing, unequal rights for many, high rate of homeless people and unemployed veterans.

Hockenberry has had an interesting

journalistic background. My question is, will the U.S. leaders address these breakdowns, the educational system and inequalities of income?

Stace Webb
Eugene

WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS

The landscaping for the new EmX 11th Street route looks great. However, it does not appear that enough of a sidewalk has been installed behind the new trees to accommodate a wheelchair. This is a concern.

Beverley Mowery
Eugene

CONSIDER THE HARM

Shock gave way to disgust the further I read the salacious news story “Lane County DA Offers Plea Deal in Rape Case” (May 25). *EW*’s decision to publish certain revolting peripheral details plucked from police records in a story that is ostensibly a legal update shows a grave lapse in judgment on the part of its editorial staff.

There are stories in which readers must

be expected to look unflinchingly at the horrible truth of sexual assault, but this isn’t one of them and here’s why: The author explains that *EW* was unable to reach the woman who was raped that night. Disgust turned to horror as it occurred to me this individual would be as surprised as I was to find published in her hometown newspaper such lurid, humiliating and pointless details of the night she was raped.

The author bio indicates she’s an intern, which suggests she writes for *EW* in order to gain professional newsroom experience. *EW* failed its readers, its community and the writer herself when it printed this story without first considering the harm it could cause the woman who was assaulted last year.

Ben Ricker
Eugene

Editor’s note: EW tried but was unable to reach the victim, who did not have an attorney who could speak on her behalf. Information and details used in the story were obtained by a public records request. EW did not use the victim’s name to protect her privacy. The reporting intern worked closely with the editorial team. We stand by our decision to publish this story.

VIEWPOINT BY BOB WARREN

Bottom Feeders

TWO KINDS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Here’s the deal: If you care about your community, you cannot afford to ignore economic development.

Economic development is not a benign program implemented by well meaning people to create jobs. It is one of the prime game changers that determine the future of a community. We ignore it at our peril.

The kind of businesses that we recruit, and how we recruit them, will play a role in determining who we are and what we become.

A recent issue of “Blue Chip,” the Register-Guard’s business supplement, highlighted the growth of local manufacturing and food processing companies that have grown and created jobs here since the great recession. These are companies that either started right here, in our community, or moved here, and have grown significantly, creating jobs and making positive contributions to our community.

There are really two kinds of economic development. One is exemplified by the firms in “Blue Chip.” Local companies like Bulk Handling Systems, Sport Hill, Bike Friday, Glory Bee and others that have started and grown in our community — companies that are here because this is their home. These are firms that make positive contributions to our community as they grow here and create jobs. Take a drive out West 11th and you will notice the huge industrial building near the now-defunct Hynix plant. A business recruitment from Business Oregon or Greater Eugene? No, it is Yogi Tea, a local company started and grown right here.

The other kind of economic development caters to what I call the “bottom feeders.” Bottom feeders are what economic development agencies like Greater Eugene cater to, and would like to recruit — companies that would only locate here for cheap land, low cost housing and labor and big tax breaks. Firms that want to take what they can get in exchange for moving here.

Greater Eugene, the alleged replacement for the Lane Metro Partnership, would like us to believe it is in the business of recruiting companies to move, expand or locate in our community. Of course that is nonsense, Greater Eugene has no real ability or capacity to do that.

But how they do that is to market us as a cheap place to do business, offering massive property tax giveaways to locate here. There is little or no talk about quality of life or community commitments, just cheap land, and low-cost housing and labor. To Greater Eugene, our community is just a low cost anywhere USA.

There is a better way to do business recruitment, and it is successfully happening right now.

A recent opinion piece in the *RG* by Andy Vobora of Travel Lane County highlighted the positive and significant economic impacts by the travel industry on our community. He made good points about the jobs created, as well as other direct economic impacts from our travel industry. While he was correct, Vobora left out another important economic development role played by that industry: business recruitment.

I believe the travel industry, combined with local business associations like The Silicon Shire, and business incubators like RAIN and NEDCO, are our best business recruitment tools that attract and grow the kinds of businesses we actually want. They recruit and assist businesses that contribute to our community rather than just benefit from it. Businesses that want to be here because of who and what we are. Businesses that do not ask for or require expanding urban growth boundaries. Businesses that respect and support our community values.

When Tracktown USA puts on the Olympic Trials, or the NCAA championships, our community is put on the national and international stage in the best way possible. The media attention is focused on our quality of life around a significant and important community-driven event in beautiful facilities in a lovely setting and with massive community support. When people come to Hayward field, or attend an Oregon Bach Festival concert or participate in the Eugene Marathon, they see our community at its best.

Some of them will want to locate their businesses here.

This is not just “Anytown, USA.” This is a unique community in a gorgeous natural setting. Some of those visitors will make the decision, based on what they see and what they experience, to move or expand their firms here. Others will come here with their ideas and start and grow new businesses, creating jobs. Local industry groups like The Silicon Shire are working diligently to improve the business and entrepreneurial environment and support to help innovative new businesses start and grow right here. RAIN, the innovative University of Oregon high tech incubator, and others, like NEDCO’s Sprout, help people with ideas create jobs.

This is business recruitment at its best, and it is ongoing and successful. This is how we should be doing business recruitment, not by bragging about cheap land and low-cost labor while offering up huge tax breaks to out of state corporations that can, and would, locate in Anytown USA.

Bob Warren retired in 2012 as the regional business development officer for Business Oregon for Lane, Lincoln, Linn and Benton Counties. Prior to that he was a political advisor to state and federal offices.