

Look OUTSIDE the bubble



A CAULDRON OF IDIOCY

AARON MCKENZIE

I started writing this column as a tirade against our "lord protector," George W. Bush, and the fact that no one really wants him in office. I quickly realized, though, that I was wrong and had again fallen into those dangerous waters wherein one confuses Eugene with Reality. We live in a bubble here, and while very few of us care to acknowledge that our world is run by a half-wit from Texas, I daresay a large portion of the country acknowledges him without compunction. The fearsome mindset of Bush and his followers is actually quite common in these United States. Bigotry and imbecility in our politicians seem as popular as ever.

Let's look at another example. Based on the abundance of "No on 9" stickers around Eugene last fall, you might have assumed that homophobic ignorance was a dying fashion. It was reassuring to know that Lon Mabon and his band of hateful troubadours would finally meet the resounding flames of total defeat they so deserve. But then the Oregon voters turned out at the polls and sent all our optimistic delusions hurtling back to earth. Yes, Measure 9 failed to pass, but the margin by which voters defeated it (only 52 percent of voters voted "no") was a sufficient reminder of the degenerate mindset that pervades this strange world in which we live.

The insular academic environment in which we daily find ourselves and the



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strange mix of progressive politics in Eugene further augment these rose-colored glasses. Ignorant idealism is a curious luxury afforded to those of us who effectively sit around and — I'd like to hope — think all day. It's a good life, to be sure, but our beliefs and opinions are rarely challenged and as a result, we soon begin to project our ideology on the world as a whole. As I said, I'm guilty of this, too, which makes this an exorcism of sorts. I have to keep reminding myself that our president is a vicious liar from one of the meanest, ugliest families in Christendom, a power freak running amok in the wake of Bill Clinton's hopeless libido. And moreover, a lot of people like him. It's hard to fathom, I know, but it's true.

Which is why I find it alarming when I come upon demonstrations here in Eugene for international issues or against, say, Mea-

sure 9. If ever there was a case of preaching to the choir, this is it. By and large, Eugene residents have a decent grasp of the issues facing the world and no protest — least of all here — is bound to effect much change. Along with Portland, our town is an anomaly in Oregon politics. Protests against issues such as homophobia ought to be held in the more rural parts of Oregon, not downtown Eugene or Pioneer Courthouse Square. Remember, 48 percent of Oregon voters voted "yes" on Measure 9 — and I feel safe in suggesting that most of them were not from Eugene.

Those of us who live in Eugene, however, have been lulled into the blissful notion that, based on what we see here, the whole of society is attempting to act responsibly toward the environment, is fighting hatred and bigotry, and is rightfully scorning George W. Bush.

We don't live in a bio-dome, though, and to lose sight of the world outside the city limits of Eugene is dangerous and wrong. Yes, there are pockets of rosy progressivism in various cities all across the country. But too many citizens still vote 'yes' on Measure 9 or put their faith in the foul promises of our commander in chief. We must not be lazy and imagine that the world is right and true.

If change is really your goal, put your opinions to the test: Try heading to Burns for that "No on 9" demonstration or protest the use of pesticides in Pendleton. If nothing else, the viewer response is sure to be far more interesting than anything in Eugene.

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Reinstate Gore by impeachment

GUEST COMMENTARY

Charles O. Porter

The only Supreme Court justice impeached to date was Associate Justice Samuel Chase, who was acquitted by the House of Representatives on March 1, 1805.

Andrew Johnson, the first of three presidents impeached, was acquitted in the Senate by one vote on May 26, 1862. President Clinton was impeached by the House but not convicted by the Senate.

Another president, Richard Nixon, was impeached but resigned August 9, 1974, to avoid probable conviction.

Our very democracy may depend on convincing the House of Representatives to follow the U.S. Constitution and impeach five justices — Rehnquist, O'Connor, Thomas, Scalia and Kennedy — to answer for their high crimes and misdemeanors in ruling that George W. Bush had won the election.

My research shows that nobody was impeached in the first 23 years after our Constitution was adopted. The charges for the first impeachment were dismissed by the Senate. Only

14 federal officers were impeached in the next 190 years. Add President Clinton and one U.S. District Judge since then for a grand total of 16.

Six of the impeached were found guilty. One resigned and the proceedings were dismissed.

Evidence shows that the five Supreme Court justices approved terminating the Florida vote count before all the legal votes had been counted. Their lame explanation is that it may be unfair, but the "law" required it and made it "necessary." That does not compute! People who buy that explanation are either profoundly corrupt, easily misled or both.

Leading newspapers are commendably sponsoring a further investigation of the many black voters in Florida who were intentionally blocked from voting at the polls.

Suppose a political party hired a private army to imprison 10,000 Gore voters, or 100,000 or 10 — whatever number would mean victory for Bush. Would a sufficient answer by Bush be: "You're just too late. You're past the legal deadline. The Supreme Court has the last word."?

No. Not to the United States I know. Not for long, anyway. Impeachment allows both sides to offer evidence and argue the law. If the House is convinced that impeachment is justified, then the senators in

attendance must vote that the charges are either dismissed or proved. This is the way the nation has its day in court to clear the air for justice and fight against tyranny.

The more I study the U.S. Constitution, the more I honor the intelligence and devotion of its authors and supporters over the many years. Sens. McCain and Feingold are rightly saluted for their battle to return policy-making to the Congress. Of course, as we all realize, such struggles are never finished.

Most of the men (no women so far) impeached have been U.S. District Court judges who, like the U.S. Circuit Court judges and Supreme Court justices, are appointed for life. Because there are so few impeachments, the ones filed get a lot of attention and keep the federal judges aware that they must continue their "good behavior" as specified in Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution if they want to continue in their justifiably honored positions.

Soon you may hear about a "Committee to Restore Gore." Tell your members of Congress.

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Letters to the editor

Focusing on beauty devalues women's achievements

This is in response to the Olsen twins column ("Skinny volves in trendy clothing," ODE, May 3). Much of the women's movement — dare I say the "F" word (feminism) — has degenerated into narcissism. Young women now equate "girl power" with the right to wear sequined culottes.

Can you really blame us? We are living in a culture where one of the richest, most powerful women of all time — a talk-show host and literary queen who single-handedly built a production empire — has said her biggest accomplishment was losing weight.

A prevailing message is that women can't be intelligent and desirable. The smart girls on television are short and fat with glasses and no dates. The cute girls are popular and about as deep as toilets.

Yes, our culture is increasingly visual, but women behind the camera and computer are best poised to reap its goodies. Glamorous fantasies touted in Vogue are, surprise, just that: fantasies. In reality, we'll more likely reach success as a webmaster, not a model.

Margaret Sanger pioneered birth control and liberated women sexually much more than Madonna has. Rosa Parks wasn't invited to all the pre-award parties, but her effect surpasses Gwyneth Paltrow's. As far as I know, Sojourner Truth never wore hot pants. In the long run, brains serve better than sex appeal. Beauty might excite men, but so does a case of beer.

Privileging physical appearance undermines our chances for serious historic achievement. Why focus on shaping our bodies when we can shape history?

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