

Editorial Now & Then



Rev.
Hults

Well, now it looks like the Grand Old Party holds a majority in the hallowed halls, for the first time in forty years. And being in charge, they will be expected to pull some solutions out of the hats they have tossed in the ring. We believe it will take some kind of magic. And "Mouth of Newt" or "hair of the dog" isn't going to do it. The old policy of "Just Say No!" will no longer cut it. This election period, we were treated to a full page ad for the Republican ticket with the image of Lincoln, and a reminder that the philosophy of Republicans was fiscally conservative, supportive of civil rights, and for reducing government interference in the lives of the average citizen.

Well, since you brought it up, the last few Republican Presidents have lead us down the road of debt, drugs, and discrimination. To be precise, the S&L fiasco, the horribly expensive and totally failed "war on drugs", the support of the Christian right, and its war on gays and women's rights.

We have seen in the past that the Republicans can often suggest solutions that would be laughed at if proposed by liberals, and actually bring them off. (Nixon's China policy comes to mind.) So, could we humbly suggest a few possibilities: Balanced budget, yes; line item veto, yes; Welfare Reform, absolutely; but let's take it just a little beyond the Welfare Cadillacs, and get into the Corporate Welfare Limos. The reason the Tax and Spend Liberals couldn't get things paid for is tax codes favor the large corporations and rich individuals, leaving the poor and middle class to shoulder the burden. We tax the unemployed, and give exemptions to "Non-Profit" corporations and the "Church". So the poor and middle class must make up for the lack of revenue that would be generated by property taxes on land used for "religious purposes". Hell, here in Oregon we can give money to a PAC and take it off our taxes, so instead of the general fund getting \$50 the OCA or Sierra Club gets it, and the rest of us have to make up for that loss. Now don't get us wrong. We do encourage support for whatever cause you freely choose. It just doesn't seem fair that others must eventually pay the bills for an agenda that is not one they support. In the Mother Country (England) contributions to the Church are not tax deductible. The feeling is that giving is a private matter and the giver will be rewarded by some other means than a tax break. We could go on for days about the separations of Church and State and the philosophy of "render unto Caesar", but we must move on.

Drugs! We don't know how much this country has spent since the sixties to combat drugs; we imagine it is in the billions and billions of dollars. Surely, we have spent enough to give every junkie and crack head enough dope to kill himself or cure herself a hundred times over. We have built more jails and incarcerated more people than any country in the world. It has been said that 75% of all crime is drug related (and at least two thirds of that are the drug Alcohol). One very prominent conservative, William Buckley Jr., advocated the legalization of all drugs. He suggests we spend our money to help folks stop using drugs if they want help, and if they don't, let them do what

they will, as long as they break no other laws. Once you take away the profit motive, and with it the Beamers and the Uzis, a doper is just a guy who can't form a sentence and falls down a lot. We have made substantial progress with the drugs alcohol and tobacco, but by using social pressure, not legal sanctions. With one small change in the drunken driving laws we have greatly reduced the negative impact of our most dangerous drug, booze. If you don't think the drinking habits of Oregonians has changed in the last ten years, just ask a bartender. Strictly enforcing the laws we already have, and doing away with those which don't work is a much better solution than trying to keep up with the "drug of the month" folks. Besides, we must give some thought to why folks want to be stoned out of their minds. Most people (including junkies) only take drugs when they are in pain. (Granted, junkies' pain is brought on by the absence of the drug, but it is a very real pain nonetheless.) The after-work beer and the three day binge are attempts at self-medication for the relief of pain. We agree with Mr. Buckley that we would be better off if these folks could see real doctors to get safe doses, clean needles, and an opportunity to change, rather than Dr. Feelgood, who offers dangerous dosages, violence, and prices that might include your grandma's TV or your 15 year old daughters body. We are reminded of a recent article about the success of Portland's Outside/In Clinic's needle exchange program. They give clean needles to junkies, so they don't share, get AIDS and die. But, we also read about a new shipment of heroin that is more pure than the last batch, and it killed a half a dozen folks. If we can give them the tool to use the drug, in an effort to save their lives, why can't we just give them the drug in a safe, clean needle, and eliminate the whole damned sub-culture that is draining our fiscal and emotional reserves?

Onward; The Religious Right vs. The Constitution of The United States. It has been stated so many times that this is a nation of laws, not of men, that you would think we would remember. Whatever the Constitution does not forbid is left to the individual citizen to decide. No, we don't get to vote on what god we all have to worship, or if we sacrifice goats or virgins on Sunday or Easter. Our Constitution says that Congress shall make NO laws concerning religion. None. It is a private thing, and the state has no business in the religion business. We find it amusing that the same folks who say they want to get government out of our lives, also want the government to write prayers for our children to say in school. This is why your beloved editor is a Republican. It is a funny party. Self-righteous womanizers like Ole Bob Peckerwood, Bragart Bigots like Jesse Helms, Young Mouth of Newt the money machine, yes, it will be sweet to poke fun at obvious scoundrels, rather than a bunch of do-good liberals who just whine when you yell at them. Republicans these days (with a few exceptions) are like puffer fish, when you scare them they puff up big and tight. Then it just takes one small hole to explode the bags of air.

So, fear not, my underdog democratic friends, you will have more fun in the next two years than you imagined possible. The new dog and pony show in D.C. will be a barrel of laughs, and remember, now it is your turn to sit back and watch them shoot themselves in the foot that they have stuck in their collective mouths. Yes, Jesse, we mean you.



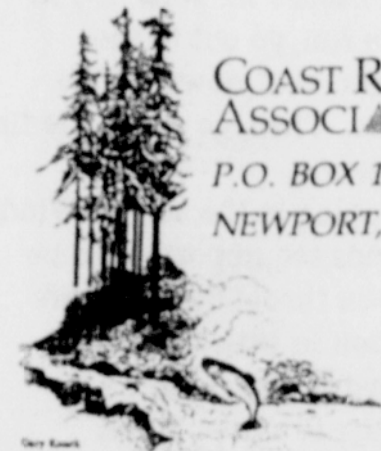
More Stuff

Well, it being winter and our vacation time, we find that due to circumstance beyond anyone's control, Alex and Mar & Rory failed to get in in time. But we expect to see them back soon. Dr. Karkeys has surrendered in the face of abuse and is back in these pages. Plus, our friend and former resident of C.B., Pattra, is back home and has a few Cowboy Haikus in this issue with more poetry to follow. And again in the Haiku form, by Satbodi, more Neahkahnne Haikus in an attempt to keep the road open. We would also like to welcome new advertisers; Geppetto's, Photographer Don Pier, and the Bayside Gardens, the nearest place to Cannon Beach to hear live music on a regular basis.



Coming Soon: The Fund for Wild Nature has, in its infinite wisdom, given a small but much appreciated grant to the Upper Left Edge, to help us tell you about some of the smaller groups and grassroots movements in the Greater Edge area. We will begin next month with the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium, out of Northern California. These folks get down to the pavement when it comes to real solutions. This means we will again be a twenty page rag. Whee!!

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X PAGE 5



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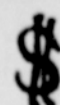
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