

EXPLOSIVE EVIDENCE

Did anyone notice this week that Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey completed his visit to all the communities in Oregon? He finally arrived back in Eugene and submitted a report to our governor and legislators containing explosive evidence of what everyone in the state already knew except for Mayor Torrey and his cohorts in the Republican party: Our public schools are underfunded!

It took Torrey almost four months and thousands of miles of driving to come to this conclusion, and all he really needed to do was drive to Salem once and look at how poorly his party's leaders in the Legislature had funded education over the last several years.

Since taking over as the party in power in the House, it has been Torrey's own party that has systematically gone about the process of placing our children's education on the back burner while giving away tax incentives and tax cuts to the rich and powerful in Oregon.

The mayor's highly publicized trip across the state was nothing more than a political ploy to promote the mayor's star in the Republican party. This is the mayor who presided over Sacred Heart's exit from Eugene, multi-tax breaks for big companies who are now or have already laid off thousands of Eugene residents, and then his administration's failure to attract "living wage" jobs to the city.

Isn't it time that we as citizens hold Torrey accountable for his actions? The city is far worse off than it was when Torrey took office. The Democrats in the Legislature have been crying out for the Republicans to do something about education funding only to be silenced by the speaker's gavel. In comes Torrey on his white horse and all of a sudden the Republicans are going to talk about education? Sounds like a set up to me. Let's get

real education reform in Oregon this year and adopt the right plan, which is the Democrat's plan.

*Rich Cunningham
Eugene*

PRESIDENTIAL STAINS

President Bill Clinton had sex with an intern, lied about it and was impeached. President George W. Bush willfully lied to the American people and took us into a war that cost the lives of over 170 American soldiers and thousands of Iraqis. Where is the outrage? Where is the screaming? Where are the investigative reporters who have the moral responsibility to protect our freedoms?

The Bush White House has admitted that it exaggerated and even fabricated some of the evidence presented to the American people and the United Nations. What more evidence do we need? Where are our congressional representatives? Where is their commitment to the Constitution they vowed to uphold?

I don't get it. Is the death of 170 American soldiers less important than a stained blue dress?

*Carol Horne
Eugene*

WORKS: COMPLETE

A friend of mine heartily recommended Willamette Rep's production of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)*, saying it was laugh-out-loud fun. Fortunately, I bought my tickets before I read Brian Boone's review. After seeing the show myself on Saturday night, I wondered what show Boone had seen.

The one I saw was hilarious, brilliant, well-acted and captured the essence of Shakespeare's works. Boone saw the audi-



ence participation bit in *Hamlet* as tiresome. For me, it was a graphic experience of Ophelia's madness. As for the present-day references, perhaps the reviewer doesn't realize that what makes a work classic is its continued relevance through time. Rather than an "aching desire to please," as Boone says, the modern references in the production I saw were not only appropriate, but right on. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

*MaryJo Comins
Eugene*

NEW MEDIA APPROACH

The only people more uneducated than our schoolchildren lately seem to be our lawmakers and our media. As Eugene continues to be a national leader in research into educational and social welfare issues, the findings are being ignored. We have growing evidence that raising class sizes, closing schools and eliminating social service needs are costly and damaging to a society. Where are these studies in our media and policymaking?

As our institutions instead focus on un-

INSIDER BASEBALL BY TONY CORCORAN

Honey, I Shrunk the Students!



Now you know why it's important not to teach civics or history to the next generation of Oregonians.

When you think of intellectuals influencing the course of human affairs, you think of physics or economics or baseball. You don't think of political theory, because you don't think of political theory as having an intellectual underpinning. For example, most Oregonians think the Legislature stinks: putrescent partisan pinheads flailing incompetently while Salem sinks. Hah! We outsmarted ya'll this week. While all the adults out there are worried about school budgets and social services, we've decided on a unique strategy. First, we passed a House bill that restricts Certificate of Initial Mastery subjects to math, English and science. We eliminated art, and more importantly, social studies, as core courses for a CIM. Students won't have to study government or civics anymore! Great.

Next, we passed another brilliant brainfart - HB 2894, the Legislature's answer to the school funding crisis. Talk about bringing the mountain to Mohammed! Under current law, if a district operates for less than 175 days - 34 had to this year - those schools fall out of compliance with state standards and risk losing money. This bill simply allows Oregon schools and school districts to operate with shortened school years without penalty in perpetuity. Golly, why didn't we try this earlier?

Finally, to save money on the Oregon Health Plan, a work group suggested that we could resume coverage for the 100,000 Oregonians we threw out of the plan by just eliminating hospitalization coverage. Brilliant! That way the cost for the most severely ill can be shifted to everyone else who has health insurance. Tell me we're not doing our job. The next thing you know, our leaders will tell us all to go home while they figure out the budget. What? Randy Miller and Kate Brown already suggested that? They said they can think better with everyone gone; and besides, the devil's hands make idle workstations - or something like that. What will we think of next? I know: Let's pass a law requiring that any cattle sold at an auction have to be actually ambulatory. Oops, sorry, we actually did that last week.

Separation of Powers

We have few opportunities in the Legislature to visit with our Oregon Supreme Court justices - sightings are rare. We had an interesting hearing in Senate Rules Committee a while back - SJR29 - a referral to amend the Oregon Constitution to elect Supreme Court judges from seven geographic districts instead of statewide. Judges are a favorite target of conservatives. The sponsor, Sen. Ted Ferrioli, was raised and educated in Portland and Eugene, moved to Creswell, and then to John Day in 1994.

Ferrioli has become, for better or worse, the poster child for Oregon's east/west debate: namely, that valley folks ignore the rest of the state, or try to impose their political will on easterners and southerners through land use laws and environmental regulation. One grumpy supreme, the Hon. Mick Gillette, shows up for the hearing. He doesn't like the resolution, having been raised in Milton-Freewater and educated in the Willamette Valley. A consummate wordsmith with a steel-trap mind, Mick gives a scathing analysis of the flaws in the resolution. He exposes the first two sentences as non-sequiturs, and says a third sentence misrepresents the history of Supreme Court districts in our 1857 Constitution. Mick explains how the original judges were circuit riders on horseback, and when they met together in Salem, they were the Supreme Court; times changed.

Most of us on the committee knew that Ferrioli and Gillette had both crossed the Cascades during their lives, going in opposite directions. Gillette argues that while the Legislature is regionally diverse, the language they come up with is a compromise. The supremes then simply read the language and interpret the intent; nothing more, nothing less. Ferrioli argues that we need the change because of a Willamette Valley political bias and "judicial activism." When asked for an example of such "judicial activism" on the part of the Supreme Court, Teddy was at a loss; but the Crime Victims United lobbyist insists that the Armada decision was a clear illustration. I ask Hizzoner if he can defend himself against that allegation. Mick replies: "Mr. Doell has a right to his opinion, no matter how wrong it is." Court adjourned.

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