

**DIVERSITY AS STRENGTH**

Kudos to the Eugene City Council for maintaining the racial purity that simmers just below our comfort zone. Our liberal persona reeks with the disrespect that the council has shown a great American. At the same time, however, their decision speaks to the broader issue that to honor one you raise them all. Added to that, it seems pathetic that with all Dr. King's contributions to the quality he sought for all Americans, the council continues to cower to racist pressures.

Even the cost was addressed when the Lane County commissioners offered to cover the cost. As to the charge that this issue "just" became either/or, the renaming has on the table since June 2002. If renaming a street is no big deal, then why did six of the eight councilors continue the racist charade? Back in the day, "if you're white, you're right, if you're black, get back." In addition, other racial and cultural groups benefited from the actions Dr. King inspired all Americans to rise to.

Yolanda King reminded us that we are not a "melting pot," but rather a mosaic. She goes on to say that until the races respect each other, only then can we work together for the good of us all. With all the progress our society has made, the implied status and access to the real power remains with the traditional venues. Sadly, the outrage we should feel is momentary and will be put back on the shelf.

Liberals complain about being bashed, conservatives rant and threaten the loss of values, the extremists want to dismantle the whole system, yet coming together to honor a great American remains out of our own reach. More meetings and other options are a way to support and give nothing. Our diversity should be our strength, not our demise.

George G. Brooks  
Eugene

**COMPELLING COMPLIANCE**

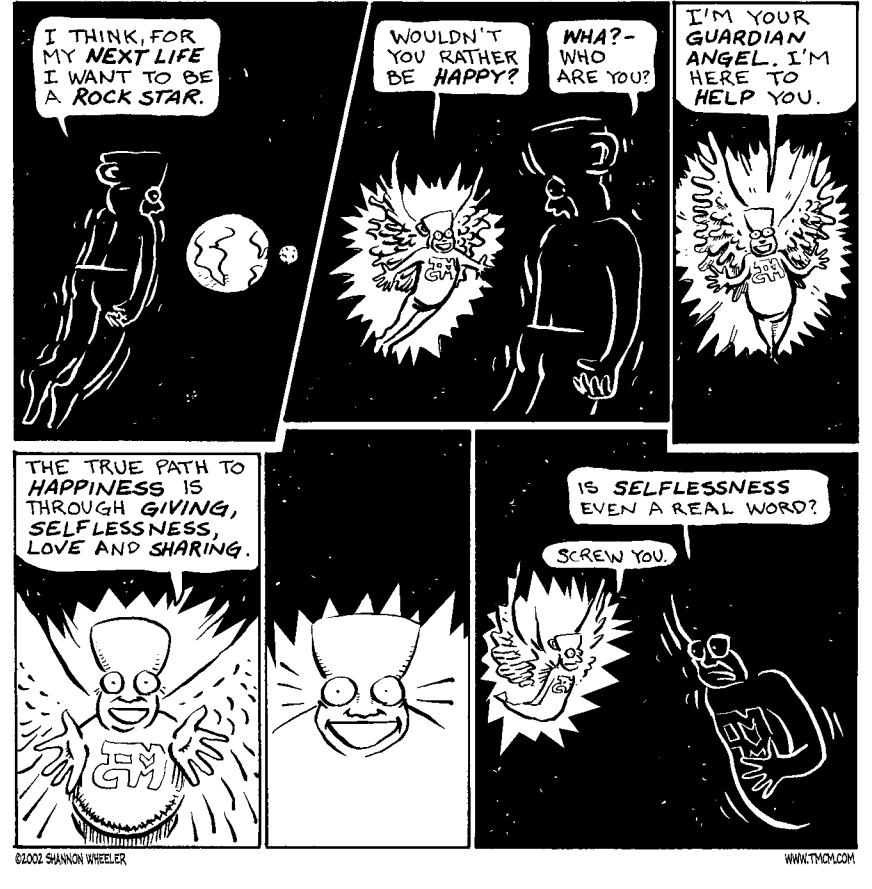
The Tenth Amendment reserves to the states, or to the people, the powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution. The government cannot force a state to raise its drinking age to 21, lower its speed limit to 55, its DUI limit to .08, require motorcycle helmets, seatbelts, car seats, etc. It compels compliance, then, by threatening to withhold badly needed (and usually already spent) highway funds from recalcitrant states who *always* buckle under the duress, giving a false impression of the authority of the federal government over such matters.

Now this same government is threatening to deny our police access to their bottomless pockets and unlimited resources in retaliation for our audacity in passing the medical marijuana initiative in blatant defiance of the Controlled Substances Act, whose sole legal standing is Congress' plenary, or absolute, authority over intrastate commerce and its alleged inability to distinguish intra-state commerce in controlled substances from not only inter-state traffic, but even drug use.

Personally, I would love to see the bogus War on Drugs collapse under its own weight and the legions of spies in our midst driven to produce something besides information on my personal life, should the Feds make good their bluff, but I don't see it happening. It's too good to be true. They need this diversion to identify, isolate and disenfranchise those of us who insist on applying the test of our own conscience to the laws we obey. Nothing short of blind obedience is acceptable. Besides, you don't have to pay cops to look in everybody's pockets — they would do it for free.

Pete Raiteri  
Eugene

**TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN** BY SHANNON WHEELER



**WHY GAMBLE?**

I was listening to the radio the other day about a possible casino coming to Florence, and I heard the reporter say that the casino developers were "encouraging their detractors to look inside the state at other towns with tribal gaming." I thought that was very reasonable advice, so I looked.

I looked at U.S. Census data for 1990 and 2000 on three casino towns — Lincoln City (Chinook Winds), Coos Bay (The Mill) and Canyonville (Seven Feathers). Lincoln City's population is about the same as Florence;

Coos Bay's population is about twice the size of Florence; Canyonville has about one-fifth the population of Florence. Casinos were built in all three towns at about the same time, around 1995. Here's what I found:

- Population growth from 1990 to 2000: Florence 42.2 percent; Lincoln City 25.9 percent; Coos Bay 2.1 percent; Canyonville 6.1 percent.
- Unemployed (percent of working population): Florence 3.3 percent; Lincoln City 5.6 percent; Coos Bay 4.3 percent; Canyonville 5.5 percent.

**INSIDER BASEBALL** BY TONY CORCORAN

**The Stinge Factor**

R's have gone about as far as they can go.

Many committees closed Friday the 13th; it's that time of year. Most of the substantive bills have gotten through, but a lot of bills died in committees this year. The Senate D's and R's shared-who's-in-charge-today-co-leadership group exacerbated that phenomenon even further last Wednesday when they had a little dustup over which bills would go to Rules. Bills that don't move to Rules die as committees close. The House and Senate Rules Committees traditionally stay open until the end, meaning I get front row seats, and a vote, when things go sideways at the end. The speaker has now moved her projection of the "end" of session, by the way, from June 6 to July 6 and now to late July. Too bad there's not a kicker on that bad forecast, eh? Speaking of the kicker, don't look for the Senate referral we passed to get out of the House without an unacceptable spending cap.

The House and Senate Revenue Committees will either stay open or re-open when there's some sign of budget movement. For this late in the session little common ground has been reached on the education budgets or human services budgets or a transportation package; the public safety budget is close. But the bigger problem is the style of bargaining in which the leaders are engaged. The Republican leader says to the Democrats: In addition to the woefully inadequate co-chairs budget we presented in May, here's an additional \$113 million for education, \$175 million for human services, and \$70 million for public safety. That, coupled with the \$650 million shortfall in the May forecast, will require about \$1.1 billion in new revenue, which we'll help identify/steal. The Democrats respond: Excuse me, about that \$113 million for education — is that for everything? Headstart, K-12, community colleges, universities? If so, how do you propose we divvy up that money? Because our caucus members need another \$600 million for K-12 alone, not to mention enough to stop tuition increases at LCC and the UO, and bring back 875 Headstart slots that were cut. And about



that human services figure — \$175 million — that's already eaten up in proposals that you Republicans just endorsed to save the Oregon Health Plan! It wouldn't cover mental health cuts, A&D treatment, senior and disabled cuts, and on and on. The Republican response: We're telling you — this is as far as our caucuses are willing to go with a search for new revenue or taxes. Does that sound like the end is near?

Why? Here are the results of a recent national poll of legislators that I participated in for the Pew Center of the States (pun unintended I'm sure). The big shocker: Democrats were much more willing to consider tax hikes to fix budget shortfalls than Republicans. OK, no big surprise there. But the size of the margins explains why we'll be fubarred in Salem for a while: 63 percent of the Democrats polled said they were considering tax increases, while only 17 percent of Republicans were. There are 35 Republicans and 25 Democrats in Oregon's House, and a three-fifths majority of them are needed to raise revenue. You do the math. Note to self: Speaker in for long summer.

Play ball! Meanwhile, Major League Baseball showed up in our Senate Revenue Committee. Interesting group — the Oregon Stadium Campaign — their literature promised "not a penny from our pockets ... new jobs for Oregonians ... Affordable fun." Their spokesmen were articulate: Steve Kanter, highly respected professor and former dean at Lewis and Clark Law School; Harvey Platt, highly respected Oregon business owner and citizen; and some slick guy from the Indianapolis Pacers who claimed he didn't know squat about baseball but swore up and down that the city of Portland and the state could never be left holding the bag. Hmmm...

Here's how it works: MLB sends the Montreal Expos-factos to Portland. The city requests a grant, approved by the Legislature, but safeguards are included so the state has no liability. Then, once the players are here playing baseball, their state income tax is used to pay for the stadium bonds. Hummm? Who's the final guarantor, like, if there was a strike? "Well there isn't one right now, you see, it's all part of the grant application." My biggest concern is still not answered: the final guarantor. If it's Portland or the state, fuggedaboutit!

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