



"Two million prisoners rot in U.S. jails, most of them guilty only of nonviolent crimes with exorbitant and unjust sentencing. Thousands of these prisoners are innocent of the crimes for which they were sentenced."

IMPEACH THE BIGOTS

This is a letter of progressive perspective on the current justice system of the U.S. Jeff Luers burned three anti-environmental vehicles resulting in no injury, no death and some opened eyes and received 22-1/2 years in prison. Ken Lay defrauded thousands of people of billions of dollars and got zero jail time. His buddy, George W. Bush, committed war crimes resulting in thousands of deaths and thousands of injuries and received no punishment whatsoever.

Federal "justice" is an Ashcroftian nightmare of anti-constitutional bigotry and state justice is only slightly better. Two million prisoners rot in U.S. jails, most of them guilty only of nonviolent crimes with exorbitant and unjust sentencing. Thousands of these prisoners are innocent of the crimes for which they were sentenced.

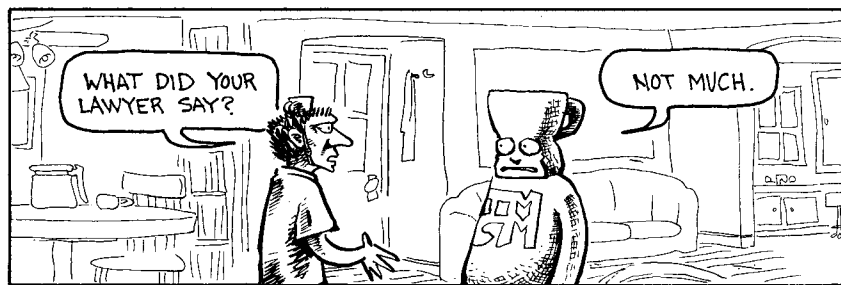
Police routinely beat and otherwise harass nonviolent political demonstrators and minorities on the street and get promoted instead of fired. The rich are pampered, the poor are oppressed and the environment is trashed. There may be justice somewhere in the world but certainly not in the U.S. We need to dump Bush, Ashcroft and all the other Crazy Killers of Kindness. Impeach Bush, not Martha.

*Bob Saxton
Eugene*

COST OF PUBLICITY

It's Friday, June 27, about 7:50 pm. I just got home from Eugene after a long day

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



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at work and some necessary shopping, and a 40-minute wait on the asphalt of Highway 99 near Junction City, on a day when temperatures passed the 90 degree mark by a good margin.

Why, do you ask, was I stuck on the blacktop with at least hundreds, if not thousands, of my fellow Oregonians? Because of a publicity stunt for Guaranty Chevrolet

in Junction City, wherein an airplane landed and later took off from Highway 99, blocking traffic, increasing congestion, increasing the irritability and "road rage" factor of the drivers, and tying up nearly every police officer in the area for traffic control. Did Herb Nil and company pay for all this? It seems highly unlikely, if not laughable, since the unofficial reason was to "kick off

INSIDER BASEBALL BY TONY CORCORAN

No More Cuts

Time to quit dancing 'round the budget.



I went to Salem this year with one goal: Do no further harm.

"The fewer people that you have to talk to, the fewer people there are who can say 'No'."

- Tim Knopp, House Republican Majority Leader - last Wednesday

"We can't fund the moon this session. It's not just about money and services. It's votes, it's compromise."

- Karen Minnis, Republican House Speaker - last Wednesday

Telling comments from the leadership of the House. Seems the Speaker can't get past \$5 billion for education, even though the Democrats in the House and Senate are saying that amount should be \$5.5 billion to get us back to where we had intended to be in the last biennium. And she has very little for human services. She's negotiating with her own caucus, not with everyone else in the Capitol, that's the problem. I went to Salem this year with one goal: Do no further harm. To schools, community colleges, universities, public safety, programs for the working poor, the disabled, seniors; I've had it, we did enough damage in the six special sessions. No more cuts to programs.

The session is winding down. A group of 20 has devolved to a group of three - Senate President Peter Courtney, Speaker of the House Karen Minnis, and Teddy the Guv. But they ain't makin' headway, they're stalled at the corral; they don't know whether to suck elm or drool, as Rayna would say. My goodness, it can't get more simple, Karen. You're the Republican leader, you're the one who can show us what you're willing to fund. You're in charge; revenue bills have to emanate from the House. Tell us what you're willing to pay for, and how you want to pay for it; we Democrats will either be there or we won't. Pretty simple: we can't keep dancin' forever.

We're running close to Larry Campbell's longest disastrous session in history - when he kept everyone there until the air-conditioning went out on August 7th and everyone left unhappy on August 8th. Please Karen, don't do this to us.

Has anyone noticed: The Governor's only had to issue two or three vetoes so far. Remember Kitzhaber's record? Why so few, now? In part because of the balance in the Senate: Bad bills haven't moved forward. Most controversial bills are locked up - cougar,

bear, wolf, timber, land use, abortion, water rights, medical malpractice - fading away in committees that are either closed or closing. The budget is the only fair game.

The last PERS piece, the successor retirement plan for future public employees, will be on the floor on Monday. As I write this column I don't know what the outcome of the vote will be. I hope it will pass out of the Senate and over to the House. Majority Leader Knopp says he won't concur with the plan we send over; he'll force it into a conference committee. The House will send three conferees, two Republicans and one Democrat. The Senate will send two conferees - one Republican and one Democrat. Guess who that will be? My General Government vice-chair, Senator John Minnis, and moi.

A bill can't get out of conference committee unless a majority of both chambers vote affirmatively. Hmmm? John and I both know the hit that public workers' pensions have taken from HB2003 and HB2004. We're trying to get both chambers to "yes" on this plan.

The successor plan, as it exists in the Senate version, is a hybrid system - part defined contribution, part defined benefit - a compromise that was hammered out among the public employer/business coalition, the governor, and the public sector union coalition. Splinters from all sides - from the Special Districts to the Oregon School Employees Association to the Association of Oregon Industries - will not support any compromise. Rayna deTortuga and her sidekick, Wrigley - representing the employers and business interests - are now being called "sellouts." The same is true for Margaret Hallock, the Guv, and I: We're "sellouts," too. I think that means the plan is a fair compromise. As Mike Salsgiver, representing the Portland Business Alliance, said, "We will not sacrifice the achievable on the altar of the perfect."

Salsgiver is a class act; after his testimony he told me he was getting a button made: DCBA. I thought it was a new-age masters degree program. Apparently Rayna had let Mike listen to a voice mail I left her expressing my frustration at certain business interests in the building who kept insisting that we stick public employees with a pathetic 401K plan. I mentioned something about those "defined contribution business a-----s". A DCBA is born. Stay tuned, the end is near, really!

Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove represents portions of Lane and Douglas counties in Senate District 4, which includes the UO area. He can be reached at sen.tonycorcoran@state.or.us