

DARING TO ATTACK

"Bring 'em on," says our commander in chief. The man who evaded his own military service during the Vietnam War dares Iraqi dissidents to attack our soldiers. In the days that followed "Bring 'em on," the number of attacks grew. How callous, how irresponsible! When I heard him say it, I screamed, "Then you go and fight!" "Bring 'em on?" You got it, prez. Let's bring on the call for impeachment before he kills more American soldiers.

The real American heroes, now, will be the brave Republican congresspeople who put their country before their personal gain and stand up for the Constitution. If either the Senate or the House of Representatives were in the hands of the Democrats, investigations and impeachment proceedings would already be under way. It is up to our Republican congresspeople to represent all of us.

I didn't vote for Gordon Smith, but he is still my representative. If you want Sen. Smith to actively question what the Bush administration is doing, then let him hear from you. Send letters or e-mails, make phone calls until his staff is buried in our demands. There are patriotic Republicans in Washington. Encourage them to do their jobs.

*Carol Horne
Eugene*

BONNY'S SENSE

There is something that deserves to be added to the discussion about the renaming of Centennial Boulevard after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. City Councilor Bonny Bettman was a constant source of common sense and support for the NAACP's efforts

to have Dr. King's contribution to all Americans publicly recognized by our community.

Because of her active involvement with the issue from the beginning, she understood that the NAACP leaders had done everything that was required of them in the public process. She knew they had done everything they were asked to do.

She understood the anger felt by NAACP leaders and community supporters when they experienced what so often happens to people of color, women, working people, and others who are not part of the power structure: Play successfully by the rules and those in power will turn around and change them. Councilor Bettman, the Eugene-Springfield NAACP and the MLK Boulevard-naming community supporters deserve our thanks.

*Roscoe Caron
Eugene*

SLIPPERY DICKERY

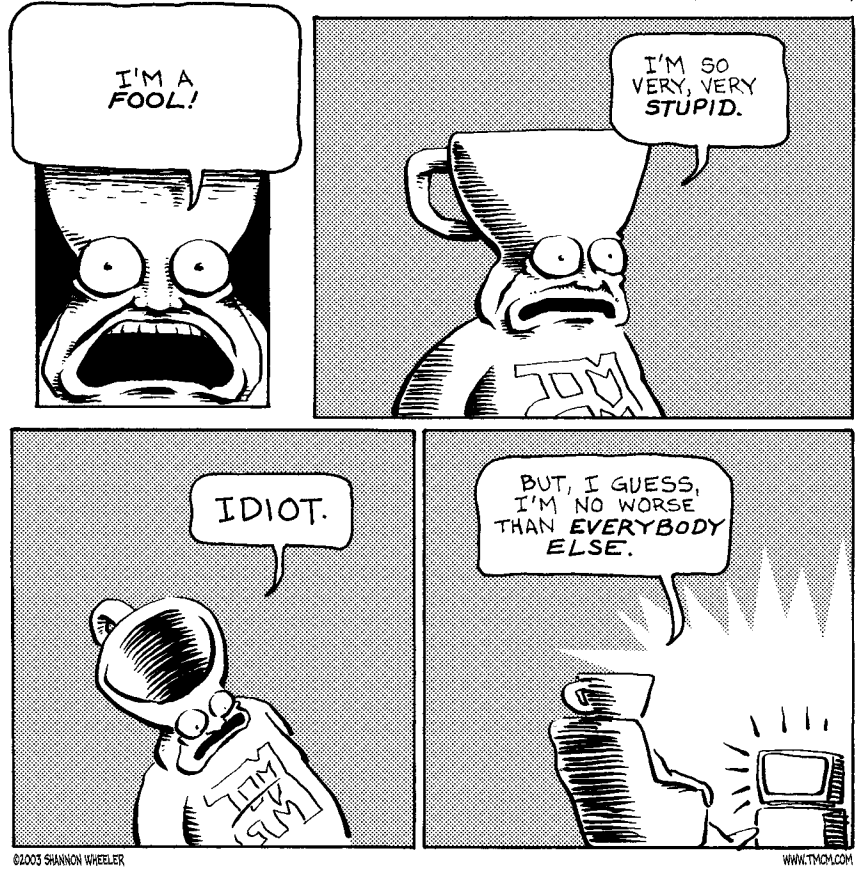
Dick "The Hand" Cheney must have slipped out when "Dubya" the sock puppet accidentally spoke the truth and said, "I stand behind the speeches I have been given," instead of "the speeches I have given."

*Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain*

MISPLACED BLAME

Once again we have one of your readers slamming industry for messing up the Willamette River (Chris Gaylord, 7/3). Once again I feel compelled to point out that around 80 percent of the pollution in the Willamette comes from unregulated non-

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



point sources such as agricultural runoff and storm water. Gaylord can confirm this by calling the friendly local DEQ office.

Industry is already heavily regulated in this state with some of the most stringent discharge limits in the nation. Gaylord also fails to mention the impact of municipal effluent treatment discharges. If Gaylord thinks it's bad now, what do you suppose is going to happen when the valley grows by its projected one million more people in the

next 20 years?

We as a species refuse to control our numbers. Government policies such as child tax credits and wide-open borders encourage the population explosion. This is the root cause of the dirty water. Trying to fix things by heaping even more regulation on industry would be akin to fighting a forest fire with a garden hose.

*Jerry J. Ritter
Springfield*

INSIDER BASEBALL BY TONY CORCORAN

Sausage vs. Baloney

Unholy counsel, hostage swaps and other legislative quirks.



The speaker has a little problem: Even though there are 35 House Republicans, she doesn't have 31 votes to pass her insufficient budgets.

She has offered \$5.05 billion for schools; but almost everyone else in the building is looking for a minimum of \$5.3 billion. But don't get me wrong; the speaker is a good, caring person. It's the people advising her, the four Horsepersons of the Apocalypse – no, that isn't the name of a New-Age country-western band. Larry Campbell, Gary Wilhelms (both former legislative leaders), Chuck Adams, and Oregon's own Cruella de Vil, Paulette Pyle. Paulette represents a group with a nice name – Oregonians for Food and Shelter (better known as Agribusiness for Pesticides and Herbicides). These unholy advisors have placed the speaker in harm's way. She is unable to get us out of the building and we've been held hostage almost 200 days. One senator was so bored he left Friday for a National Baloney Festival. I don't make this stuff up.

Sausage-Making 101: OK class, here's a pop quiz on the ethics of voter hostage exchange. House Bill 3631 allows a 90-year-old lady, Dorothy English, to override Multnomah County and subdivide her 25 acres – purchased in 1953, almost 20 years before land use laws – into six parcels. House Bill 2379 allows a tax credit for low-income family housing, sponsored by Sen. Margaret Carter, long-time champion of the working poor and minorities. Senate Republicans, under the influence of anti-land use extremists, Oregonians in Action, refused to pass Margaret's bill unless we gave them the votes for the Dorothy English bill. Is this illegal? No. Is it bribery? Technically, I'm not sure. Does it stink? Yes. What would you do? Based on my risk/benefit analysis, I voted for the English bill to get Carter's bill passed.

Dilemma #2: Yesterday in Senate Rules we heard testimony on HB2537, sponsored by two thoughtful ladies, Reps. Joanne Verger and Laurie Monnes-Anderson. The bill provides low-cost health insurance for employers who don't currently provide coverage for some of Oregon's 400,000 working poor. A noble idea, but it's meeting tough resistance from seniors, women and mental health advocates. The dilemma is that in order to make premiums cheap enough for small employers to buy into the plan, the bill removes mandates and critical services. So prenatal care and delivery, chemical dependency, dentistry, HIV treatment, mammograms, emergency eye care and mental health are not covered. And physician assistants, nurse practitioners and optometrists are, illogically, not included – even though they would certainly save money for any plan!

What would you do? The AFL-CIO's health policy advisor, Lynn Marie Crider, made a good point. It's bad public policy to just pick and choose services, disconnecting from the services provided, for example, by the Oregon Health Plan. Instead we should be looking at the cost-drivers that cause health insurance premium inflation. I think we need the missing ingredient from Dr. John Kitzhaber's original health plan – an employer mandate – with a tax credit. And we should all thank Verger and Monnes-Anderson for putting our public health insurance crisis on the table.

The lack of a mental health component brought out some of the strongest testimony I've witnessed all session. A man explained how his schizophrenic son, who was taking \$600 of medication a month, kept losing his health care coverage as his income increased, only to lose his job when he was off his meds. Another witness described being so suicidal and depressed that at one point she dug her own grave in her backyard. She calmly and objectively described the treatment she received at OHSU – years of therapy including electro-shock – and the forced separation from a young daughter. Then she described her current state of wellness. She's just about to get her master's degree and there was no sign of the crippling depression that had almost ruined her life.

Her point was to let us know that mental illness, or "biochemical imbalance" as she preferred we call it, was curable if people just had access to treatment. She left us with a quote from J. Krishnamurti, the Indian theosophist: "It is not a sign of good health to be well-adjusted in a sick society." Seems like a perfect metaphor for Oregon's 72nd Legislative Session.

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