

FEDERAL FAILURE

I am a third generation native-born resident of Lane County. I have attended its public schools, community college, and prestigious university. As a resident, I've had the opportunity to contribute to my community in many ways: as an elementary school volunteer, long-term-care ombudsman, and volunteer human rights advocate, most recently on county advisory committee. I recently completed training to become a paralegal, and intend to use these skills in furthering my human rights work. The impending construction of Lane County's new federal courthouse leaves me very leery of my newly chosen profession, and questioning of the intelligence and common sense utilized by those scholars who chose to specifically exclude a protected class of citizens from full access to a federal building.

As a person who uses a wheelchair, I use elevators and ramps every day. I will be unable to conduct my business in a building that does not provide full access to me, and although elevator access *may* meet the absolute minimum standards of access according to the law, in reality, it is a joke. Ramps are respected and recognized as a disabled access, especially here in Eugene. People tend to only use them when they need to. Elevators, on the other hand, are notoriously full of people in a hurry, and in our county courthouse alone, I am often left waiting while the elevator both arrives and leaves full of people who are standing – waiting once for over 20 minutes (I timed it). Most people do not recognize that they may be the only access a person in a wheelchair has to a certain location.

Elevators are given to breaking down, as evidenced by the three hours I once spent on the second floor of a building at UO while waiting for an elevator maintenance man. Is this adequate access? I think not. In both situations, the person with the disability is left behind, singled out, and *excluded* from normal activities of daily life – not due to the disability, but due to human behavior and the limitations of man-made mechanisms.

Eugene has developed a reputation as a national symbol of inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. I, for one, will not sit by and allow such a tragic step backward in our advance toward full and equal access for all citizens. It is simply not acceptable.

I served on a planning committee for UO when they were designing and building the Knight Law School, and would be more than pleased to offer my assistance to any effort to change this oversight that could soon become a travesty of justice.

*Heather R. Cranor
Eugene*

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



RECLAIM GOVERNMENT

Carol Horne made several excellent points in her Viewpoint (Aug. 7, "Reclaim the Dream") regarding the nature of government today and the seeming loss of 1960s and '70s idealism. Unfortunately, her suggestion that something positive will be accomplished by not paying taxes or by engaging in civil disobedience explains why things are the way they are.

Experience has taught me that, eventually, the IRS will come after you for the withheld taxes and that civil disobedience does not stop wars. Unless everyone stops paying taxes and takes to the streets, these actions are largely ignored by government policy makers.

The only place change will take place is within the halls of government. If anyone is dissatisfied with the way things are, run for

public office or support the candidacy of anyone who champions the causes you believe in. Not all politicians are on the take, so support those who stand up for what they believe is right, like U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, and work to defeat those who mainly serve their financial masters.

Whining doesn't change anything.
*Michael Sullivan
Philomath*

RISKY OCCUPATION

I wonder if it's dawned on America's Orwellian public that many of the world's top microbiologists — 20 in the past two years — have died under mysterious circumstances. explanations from our "propaganda ministry" range from suicide to being blow off a bridge by an 18-wheeler.

Here's a hypothetical scenario for your consideration: There's a cabal on the planet

insider Baseball BY TONY CORCORAN

Life's a Pissoir ...
Cautious cactus caucus causes consternation.

Things are pretty quiet on the Senate and House floors. It was so slow last Tuesday that I spent half the day chasing a bug around the urinal. (Gosh, I hope this doesn't get me in trouble with PETA!) Next Monday, I'm carrying the only bill in the Senate; our official work of the day will probably take less time than the opening prayer.

The House isn't doing much better. On Friday, their Rules Committee had only one issue: House Memorial 11 - urging Oregon's U.S. senators to allow a vote of the U.S. Senate on the nomination of Miguel Estrada to the U.S. Court of Appeals for D.C. Circuit Court. I can just see it now, Ron Wyden opens his mail from Oregon: "Oh, goody goody, I've finally received word from home: The Oregon Legislature wants me to move the nomination of Estrada. I've been struggling with this for a year. Now I can nominate this right-wing wacko with the full support of Republican legislative sponsors – Farr, Kropf, Kruze, Close, Nelson and Zauner. Good enough for me! I'll get right on it."

Speaking of Rep. Jeff Kropf, I am happy to report that the House Republican caucus loves his diplomatic skills. Apparently Kropf appeared on Lars Larson last week. Sars was on a tirade about RINOs (Republicans in Name Only) who supported any new tax proposals and he goaded Jeff into identifying the comrades of RINO ringleader "Fat Max" Williams. Now Jeff's not the brightest bulb in the chandelier – his nickname "Spanky" comes from his rabid pursuit of a bill to require corporal punishment of schoolkids – and he proceeds to name off Rob Patridge, Lane Shetterly, Pat Farr, Billy Dalto and a few others. Patridge hears about this, orders a tape of the show, and was playing it for his next caucus when Kropf walked in a few minutes late. It was not a pretty scene.

Meanwhile, Senate Republicans also blew up in caucus last week when three of their archconservative leaders – Roger Beyer, Steve Harper, Jason Atkinson – announced in a press conference that they had sealed a deal with Senate Democratic negotiators. Unfortunately they held the press conference before telling



their caucus, and when they did tell their caucus, they said: "And, oh, by the way, we've made this deal but we're not gonna vote for it because it involves increased taxes, so we need three of you other guys to provide the votes." Apparently Ken Messerle, usually so calm he's a posterchild for Quaalude, erupted, and the "deal" was quickly deep-sixed. Meanwhile, our Senate Democratic caucus has been dissolved

by our leader, Kate Brown. Kate can't operate in the light of day, knowing that she and our other elitist brainiacs – Peter Courtney and Ryan Deckert – must find a way to privately capitulate to the Republicans. Kate is the twisted modern Democratic inversion of Chief Joseph – she will fight no more, forever. Friday, Kate talked to each of our members separately, without showing us her latest proposed plan in writing. She then refused to have a noon caucus to allow folks to talk about her proposal. We joked that she has taken the argument one step too far regarding whether caucuses should be open or closed to the media. She now has closed caucuses so completely that even the members can't attend. All this reminds me of the old joke: What's the difference between a caucus and a cactus? With a cactus, the prick's on the outside.

With the exception of the Republican caucuses, all the action is in one room: As I write this on Sunday morning, Aug. 17, a group is hunkered down in Salem creating the final "matrix" for a settlement. At least now the R's negotiating in the room are conservatives, not Baathist Party members; while we're represented by our neo-liberals. Forget \$5.3 billion for schools, forget the UO budget, forget LCC. Thursday, with the help of six Democrats – none from Lane County, thank goodness – Senate Republicans voted out a Department of Education budget cutting Headstart by \$1 million. This isn't about good budgets anymore, it's about the deal to go home.

So we're each on our own now. Deals are being cut left and right. I won't support the inadequate budgets or the irresponsible one-time revenue proposals; so I've only got three issues left on my plate to fight for: small high school funding, small school mergers, and Headstart funding.

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