

SMOG ALERT

After three days of waking up with headaches, burning eyes and lungs that hurt, I finally realized what was causing it as I was driving my kids to their schools open house today. As I gazed out over the thick brown layer of air that blanketed Eugene/Springfield I thought for a moment that I was in one of L.A.'s high smog alerts.

It sickens me to think that two or three dozen farmers and their field burning can so dramatically foul the air for hundreds of thousands of greater Eugene/Springfield residents and create such a public health hazard. I thank God I don't have asthmatic children — yet.

JA Claybaugh
Eugene

BURNING WRECKAGE

White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove has brought his slash-and-burn style of politics to Oregon — literally, if one were to believe the rumors in central Oregon that the B & B fire complex was intentionally set to provide a photo-op for George Jr. to pitch his scheme for lifting restrictions on logging federal timber.

Bush lost Oregon by less than 6,000 votes in 2000 and Rove, unrivaled master of political “dirty tricks” who’s also known as “Bush’s Brain,” plans to take our state in 2004.

Oil interests are well represented in Washington by Bush (Harken Oil), Cheney (Halliburton), Rice (Chevron) and Donald Rumsfeld, but Rove and Bush have given our children only dirtier air to breathe and the cruel irony of the underfunded No Child Left Behind act to comfort them.

Oregon’s schools and communities, children and elderly, ill people without insurance and ordinary working families face increasing hardship while W. cuts his own taxes by

\$100,000 and his administration spends \$4 billion a month on our current military adventures. From Congress come calls for more troops and the spending of hundreds of billions more to rebuild Iraq while the administration darkly warns of “disciplining” Iran. Does anyone see a pattern here?

Like the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, should we not be wondering who’s going to clean up all this wreckage?

Fergus McLean
Dexter

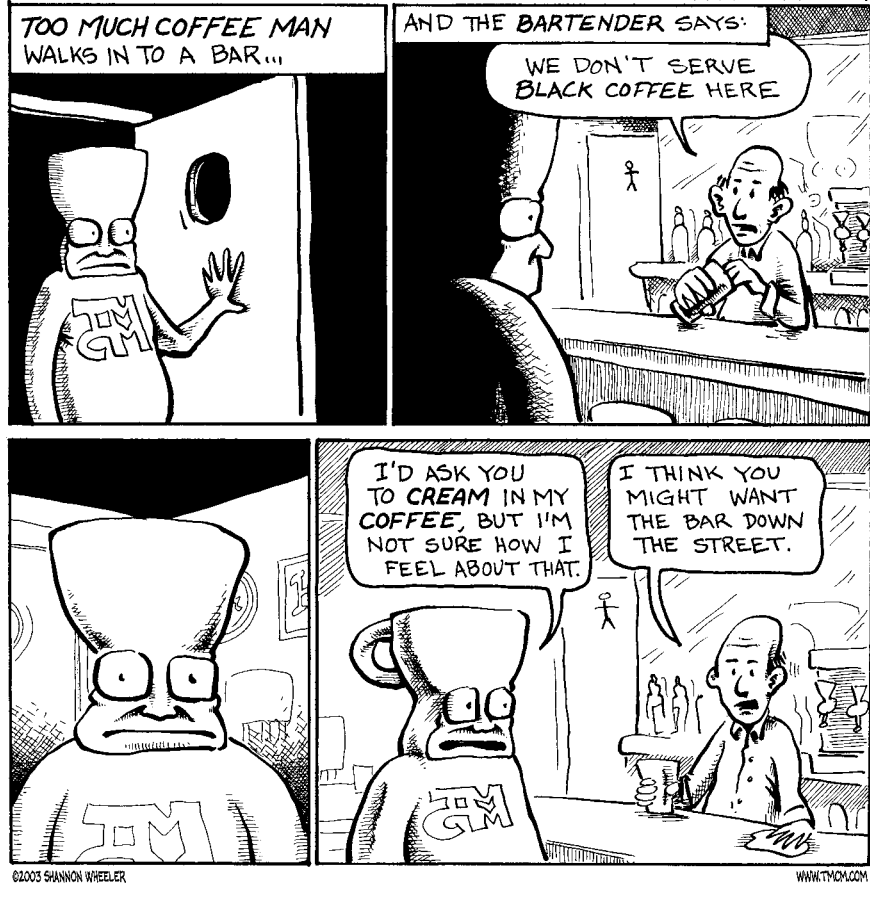
WAKE UP TO KUCINICH

President Bush spoke last week as though he will continue to pursue our present course of military action to save us from “terrorism,” regardless of world opinion. Sens. Biden and Hagel responded with their concerns that such a course will only increase the desperation and hopelessness which are the major roots of terrorism and waste precious resources needed elsewhere. Biden expressed the hope that our goal was not that of controlling oil fields and the politics of other nations, for that would surely fail.

Congress is considering a bill to develop more nuclear weapons and revive nuclear power. If we truly fear weapons of destruction in others, why are we continuing on this dangerous path? The nuclear genie threatens us all. We need to let Sens. Smith and Wyden know that we oppose any further development of nuclear weapons.

Instead, we need to turn around present priorities with a comprehensive program, such as that proposed by presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich. He says, “It is the U.S. which can lead the way toward a global community which is inclusive and sustainable, which promotes democratic values and which enables the growth of the potential and the health of each person by putting human rights, workers’ rights and environ-

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



mental quality principles into each and every trade agreement.”

And he proposes concrete steps he would take to achieve these goals, including jobs with living wages, single-payer universal health care, corporate responsibility, education for all, care of the environment, campaign finance reform, and cooperation with other nations in building a peaceful and sustainable world with justice for all.

Rude Awakening, the apocalyptic comedy that played last week in Eugene, brought out

the possible end of the world that nuclear power poses. Do we not see the dangers we are creating? We need a new vision of our place in the world. We can have a different world. But there is a lot of work we need to do together to bring it about.

Portia Foster
Eugene

LOST HER BEARINGS

It's been some time since City Councilor Nancy Nathanson displayed the courage of

INSIDER BASEBALL BY TONY CORCORAN

Short-Sheeted

A view from nowhere.

The session is finally over in Salem — 227 days, 3,000 bills introduced, 875 bills passed, six vetoes. I've been telling folks for months that we wouldn't get out unless some moderate Republicans joined the Democrats and provided votes for a revenue package. Since I criticize them mercilessly when they've disappeared in the past — it's only right for me to acknowledge that moderate Republicans, including Pat Farr, showed up with courageous votes at the end. Along with 11 other moderates, Pat helped close the session. The same thing happened in the Senate, where four moderate Republicans joined 14 of the 15 Dems in moving the revenue package and getting us out of Dodge.

I have to admit, though, there were times toward the end when I longed for a visit to our sister state to the south. However, after viewing the events in California — as sensitive as I am to vertically challenged people — I've begun to feel resentment at being shorted. We're getting the short end of the stick in Oregon; we've been short-sheeted! In California, life imitates art; in Oregon, where we can't afford art, we imitate California.

It's like Hollywood morphed two movies — *Twins* and *Terminator* — to create the Governor. California gets Arnold, the Taxinator: “We will fix the schools and the police with no new taxes, just like my father taught me in the Hitler Youth Brigade.” Meanwhile Oregon gets Danny DeVito with an attitude — Kevin Mannix. Danny stars as Kevin in *Secret Plan: The Sequel*. Christopher Walken co-stars in a challenging double role as Dan Doyle and Betsy Close. And, well, we couldn't find anyone to play Jeff Kruse ... something about negative typecasting.

Seriously, consider Mannix's behavior. When the session ended, Kevin rabidly jumped on a newsroom microphone and promptly announced that the Oregon Republican Party, the Constitutional Party, and Citizens for a Sound Economy will gather signatures to defeat the revenue proposal “for the people who will be footing the bill for this massive income tax increase.” What a lie! In fact, no Oregonians will pay



any more in taxes. They'll simply get three-fourths of the Bush tax break instead of all of it. Come on, Kevin, you shameless whore, you yourself were espousing an income tax surcharge a few months ago in front of the governor and party leaders from both sides! You have no clue how to achieve \$700 million in cuts.

But we do know, if you did cut proportionately, that schools would lose over \$300 million. If you haven't heard of the Citizens for a Sound Economy, they're one of the largest national right-wing organizations, funded by Big Tobacco, big drug companies, and, surprisingly, Bill Gates. They fight against public education, public services, and for the privatization of Social Security — not our friends. Even Hasso Hering, conservative editor of the *Albany Democrat-Herald*, attacked Kevin: “If he is going to throw bricks ... Mannix has an obligation to show how he would balance the budget without this modest surcharge on the income tax.”

On the home front, it's good to be back — sorta. My union has decided to treat me like the crazy uncle in the attic, burying me in an assignment far from Salem and my own district. This happened to me once before. In the early '70s in Vermont, I helped organize an AFSCME effort to represent workers at the state hospital. We lost the election by a few votes. Management at the state hospital assigned me to the graveyard shift on a back ward for six months to show their displeasure. This time, unfortunately, it's the union shoving me onto the back ward. This should warm the cockles of those who considered me a sellout for my work on PERS. They accused me of having a sweetheart deal with the governor; not so, *mon ami*. My union consultant job was unilaterally canceled and I was placed under a supervisor who once wanted me fired. Oh well, too bad there's only one Labor Day each year.

Thank you, Ted Taylor and *EW*, for allowing me to vent. I will continue to offer my observations on state politics as the situation arises. And I'll be back to talk to you when we're in session again, which might be sooner than you think. Thought for the day: Stop Mannix!

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