

was listed among the worst snacks found in school vending machines.

With Bush working vigorously to slash education funds, while handing out huge tax breaks to the rich, it would seem school districts like Fern Ridge have no other choice but to pursue alternative sources of money. But could companies such as Coca-Cola be the very reason for the paucity of school funding in the first place? The election of Bush was helped along with gifts of \$610,748 from Coke, which represented 88 percent of their campaign contributions. Are these really the civics lessons we want to teach our kids?

Bob Berman
Elmira

SUPPORTING SECRECY

The "independent" 9/11 Commission continues to battle a defiant White House determined to deny American taxpayers their right to know how *their* security failed *them*. Massive citizen support is crucial, but Norman Solomon and David Corn prefer to divide people by attacking the: "Unanswered Questions" movement providing this support (EW, 9/11).

Corn's attacks have been vicious. Even though government lies and evasion created

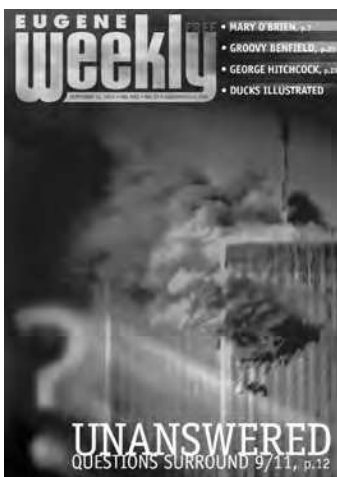
the movement, Corn became "irritated" by the "crap" of his readers' 9/11-related e-mails. A self-serving tantrum ensued. Like Solomon, he himself *has no answers*, and nothing they write justifies dismissing the questions. By indulging in the neocon tactics of nitpicking and ridicule, they strengthen secret government.

This encourages the segregation of 9/11 from linked issues like peace and justice: The attacks served as *pretext* for the injustice of the PATRIOT Act and a war on a country unconnected to 9/11. Available information implicates not America's freedoms, but bureaucrats' stunning failures to enforce the laws and procedures already in existence pre-9/11. Yet these transgressors were promoted, not disciplined.

What are the implications for a nation where those facilitating a crime are rewarded? Where a police state rendering us even less safe is preferred over a real investigation to identify the actual causes of a security breakdown? Where the U.S. president assumes the work of destroying America (its Constitution) started by the enemy, and the double-dealing of two families (Bush and bin Laden) is the norm?

And that's not even a conspiracy theory. That's the reality check.

Bevin Gilmore
Eugene





Hmm... how can I top last Halloween's costume?

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THON BUSTER (thon' bust er) noun

1. one who contributes to KLCC in order to preemptively truncate an upcoming pledge drive ("Radiothon").
2. any pledge to KLCC which occurs before the onset of a 'thon.
3. *figuratively*: anyone who sleeps comfortably, knowing they have taken action, rather than having put off or shirked some ethical obligation.
4. *slang*: a hipster, especially one with highly developed musical tastes and/or extensive knowledge of current affairs.
5. *rare*: a single, supermassive cash donation, usually dropped from an aircraft at high altitude, which on impact completely eliminates the need for one or more Radiothons [see MOAB "Mother of All Busters"].

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usage: "Having already contributed to KLCC, the happy Thon Buster could hardly wait for Radiothon not to begin."

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HARD WORK AND COMPASSION

Typically I don't attempt to rebut criticism in print media, especially letters. As an elected official I am reconciled to the fact that in making political points, detractors often resort to personal attacks. I believe in their right to speak freely.

This situation is not typical because in her letter to the editor (9/4), Gina Garner smears others with her broad brush. In her attempts to discredit me she maligns a coalition that, I believe, deserves thanks and recognition for the good work they've done. The Peacekeepers Advisory Group (or after renaming; Peaceful Assemblies Group) was formed in response to escalating tension leading up to the war in Iraq.

The group included members of the Human Rights Commission and the Police Commission, who wanted to help ensure a safe environment for demonstrators, police officers, and the general public, regardless of their stance on war.

No one knew how big the protests were likely to get, but the potential existed for them to generate massive crowds, and therefore, safety concerns. An additional exacerbating factor was that these demonstrations attracted people from all walks of life, including seniors and children (three generations of my own family attended).

PAG's intent was to facilitate discussions between rally and march organizers and EPD, in order to answer questions and convey logistical and policy information.

Issues addressed included things like jurisdictional boundaries, marching routes, permits, bike regulations, EPD protocol and policies, and emergency access. It was an unprecedented attempt to pro-actively problem solve, and initiate conversations among typically divergent groups. In other words, "dialogue."

PAG made concerted efforts to include all organizations that might be involved in marching or demonstrating. Everyone was invited, and participation was voluntary. Some chose to get involved, others did not. Two principles guided us: first, that no one get hurt; second, that people are able to exercise their right to free speech and assembly.

Rally and march organizers, peace activists, Human Rights and Police Commission members, and city staff volunteered significant time and effort to the dialogue. I admire the organizers who participated for their foresight, hard work and compassion. I appreciate the command staff for their willingness to discuss difficult topics face to face with activists. I believe everyone involved deserves to be commended for the effort, as well as for their commitment to preserving peace in our community.

The efforts of Ms. Garner and the grassroots organization Friendly Neighbors for Peace are also appreciated. Participation in our democratic society takes both individual and collective action to create change. That is what will make our world and our city a better, safer place: everyone doing what they can to help.

Bonny Bettman
Eugene City Councilor, Ward 1

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