

PRACTICALLY GREEN

Environmentalism is a predictable and justifiable reaction to unrestrained imprudent human expansion, destructive pointless materialism, and as George F. Will, conservative political commentator, writes: "our national knack for wretched excesses." However, once this is acknowledged, the certainty remains that humans, in order to exist, must either mine or grow wealth.

African conservationist David Western contends in *The Dust of Kilimanjaro* that "pragmatism seems to be a better approach to saving diversity and integrity of life than does a pursuit of a single universal ethic based on a sense of moral superiority or virtue." He further suggests that "protected areas" alone will never be large enough to insure the survival of biological diversity. His elemental idea is that "transition zones," areas simultaneously managed for ecological and economic health, are essential.

In the lower 48 states, wilderness areas and national parks are not large enough to be ecologically functioning tracts. Transition zones are required. The federal Northwest Forest Plan — not without faults — offers an opportunity to explore and develop methods for managing transition zones. This plan deserves support and criticism so that it may continue to evolve.

The net annual forest growth on the Willamette N.F. is estimated to be about one billion board feet — forgive me for the moment for being so commercially crass. Is it unreasonable to harvest about 5 to 10 percent of the net annual growth from one of the most productive resilient forests in the world?

P.S. Folks as I write, owl habitat is improving and accruing.

Monty Wilson
Blue River

THE MISSING LINK

As a New York native who stood, awestruck, at the base of the newly constructed Twin Towers, one might think that I

would be gung ho about the war in Iraq. The opposite is true.

Speaking for myself and every current and former New Yorker I know, the war in Iraq has made us less safe, squandered billions of dollars, cost hundreds of lives and I don't think it's hyperbole to say it's cost us the sympathy of most of the world.

My jaw dropped about two weeks ago as I watched one of our generals say that we are now seeing cooperation between Saddam loyalists and al-Qaeda. He also said that has never happened before because they are historically mortal enemies. I thought the media would pounce and ask, "But I thought Saddam and al-Qaeda were working together before the war? Wasn't that, along with weapons of mass destruction, the major pretext for invading Iraq?" I couldn't find a word in any local or national media.

Polls say 70 percent of the American public believes Saddam and al-Qaeda were partners in exporting terrorism. That belief is the result of a long-discredited story repeated by the media. No connection has been found although the Bush administration still speaks as if there were one.

The Bush administration and the media owe it to all Americans, including those who watched the Towers rise and fall, to tell the truth and set the record straight.

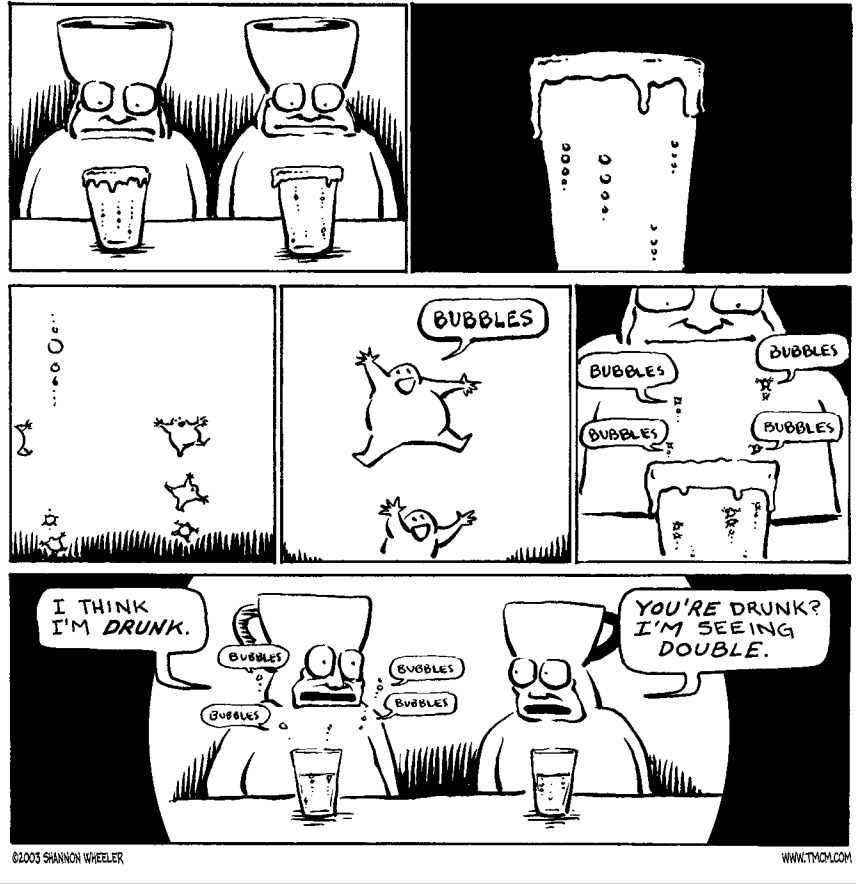
Leslie Weinstein
Eugene

CONSIDER THEORIES

All in the peace and global justice movement envision a peaceful and just world regardless of who believes that those in power allowed 9/11 or made it happen. There is room for all in the movement whether you believe conspiracy theories or not. I disagree that researching these theories is a distraction to the movement; in fact it is a necessary part.

There's increasing evidence that the people in power have a specific agenda for global

TWO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



fascism. All theories help to shed necessary public light on critical matters. I'm sad that the conference organizers oppose Mark Robinowitz's panel about 9/11 theories. It disturbs me that proponents of this movement lack an open mind on this. This is the same impediment of free speech many of us decry. This hurts and limits the movement.

We can think and decide for ourselves whether we agree with part, all or none of any theory. Who am I to judge as absurd what I have not experienced? Rather than discredit these theories, we need to overcome our narrow views. A lot of things were revealed historically that were met initially with ridicule and contempt. These theories need consideration.

Cecelia (Starshine) Levine
Eugene

INADEQUATE COVERAGE

Thanks for mentioning the "unanswered questions of 9/11" (cover story, 9/11) but your reporting was grossly inadequate. You reported the controversy over the events of that day, but not the factual issues themselves, and there are plenty.

You even omitted the most important element of the only one you mentioned, the failure to scramble the interceptors in response to the hijackings. The omission: That is standard procedure, much repeated. For it not to happen, someone very high up had to countermand standing orders.

Of the evidence I've seen, that is far and away the most damning. The rest is a long list of fishy events that could be explained by gross incompetence. I have seen no

REASONABLE DOUBT BY TOM LININGER

Chiding Chads

Don't be misled by the vilification of punch-card ballots.



According to the website of the Social Security Administration, the name "Chad" plummeted from the 107th most popular name for newborns in the 1990s to the 312th most popular name a decade later. These days, you're more likely to tickle the toes of Adolph, Milhaus, or Orenthal than to meet an infant named Chad.

Why were so few Chads born in 2001 and 2002? Because too many chads were pregnant in 2000. That is, the difficulty of pushing "pregnant chads" all the way out of punch-card ballots became infamous during the November 2000 presidential election, and played a role in swinging Florida's crucial electoral votes to George W. Bush. With all the bumper stickers and jokes on Leno ("Abort the pregnant chad," "Hang the hanging chad," etc.), few parents want to make the job of the playground bully any easier.

No doubt about it, punch-card ballots need to be replaced. Researchers at MIT have confirmed that punch-card balloting is more prone to errors than other methods of voting. I once marked a punch-card so sloppily that I needed to get a new one from the Lane County Elections Office (and no, I wasn't following Richard Daley's advice to "vote early and often"). I'm glad that Congress — due in part to the leadership of America's best congressman, Peter DeFazio — has appropriated money for counties to replace punch-card ballots with modern technology.

But as we criticize punch-cards, let's be careful that we don't become punch drunk. I was surprised when a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit held that punch-card balloting forecloses any possibility of fair elections — a holding that the Ninth Circuit reversed *en banc* last week. The original ruling by the three-judge panel won praise from some

conservative revisionists who blame punch-card ballots for the entire debacle in Florida. According to this view, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris was just an innocent victim of the evil punch-card ballot.

C'mon. Poor Chad shouldn't be the only fall guy for the disaster in Florida. The elections officials deserve most of the blame. Any inherent flaws in punch-card balloting were greatly exacerbated when the Florida officials opted for a two-page "butterfly ballot" that did not match candidates' names to punch holes very clearly. In fact, the "butterfly ballot" was so confusing that even Pat Buchanan admitted some of the votes he received were probably intended for Al Gore. Other problems in Florida had nothing to do with punch-card balloting. Elections officials sent absentee ballots gratuitously to voters in heavily Republican counties, but not to voters in heavily Democratic counties. Also, the officials simply "lost" boxes of completed ballots. These problems were aptly summarized in my favorite bumper sticker from 2001: "One person, one vote (offer not valid in Florida)."

Should we question the validity of past elections in Lane County because our county has used punch-card ballots? Of course not. Our elections officials are a lot more scrupulous than their counterparts in Florida. For the surest proof that the Lane County Elections Office is above board, just check out the win-loss record for the county's money measures last year: 0 for 6! In 1998, Lane County lost a revenue measure by 13 votes out of 52,000 cast. That would have been a win in the Sunshine State.

Let's not forget that election fraud predates the punch-card ballot. When Chicago residents voted with pencils fastened to the walls of voting booths, some voters complained that the strings were only long enough for the pencils to reach the Democratic boxes.

I'll conclude by paraphrasing the NRA: Ballots don't steal elections, people do.

Tom Lininger is a law professor and former county commissioner.