

SO LONG, TONY

I was disappointed to see that Tony Corcoran is resigning his state Senate seat, although I am pleased with his appointment to the Employment Appeals Board. His confirmation by the Senate should be a no-brainer (which, in today's political climate, may mean a one or two vote margin).

As a Republican, I certainly haven't always agreed with Tony, but I've always respected his candor, his commitment and his integrity. No matter how wrong-headed I sometimes thought he was, I always knew he was doing what he thought was right and not just what was politically expedient. And no one ever had to wonder where he stood on an issue after talking to him.

When he was selected to head the PERS reform committee in the Senate, my Republican friends in Salem were saying that this was either the best possible selection or the worst. While many of them feared the latter, I predicted it would be the former. I was right. Thanks to Tony, the impetus for legitimate PERS reform did not degenerate into public employee-bashing. Nor did he allow the full cost of bringing the system in compliance with fiscal realities fall entirely on new hires and future public employees.

I was reluctant to write this letter because I'm sure Tony is tired of having Republicans congratulate him on the courageous and principled stand he took on this issue. But what I would like to point out is that this was not an anomaly for Tony. Throughout his years of public service — which are by no means over — he has never been afraid to stand up for what he thinks is right.

Unfortunately, too many of us are willing to acknowledge this only when we agree with what someone is doing. I figure this is a good time to belatedly confess that I have admired this quality in Tony even when we disagreed. And, I'm pleased to say, I don't expect him to change.

*Jack Roberts
Exec. Director, Lane Metro Partnership*

GUTTING PERS

Most mainstream media are businesses — big businesses, even — and as such are generally opposed to organized labor and all it stands for. The thoughtful observer should keep this in mind when a prominent labor "leader" such as Tony Corcoran begins to be lionized in the press as one whom, despite a strong union background, "nobly sacrificed everything for what he believed in."

One should also remember that, even though there is a hiring freeze in state government right now, Corcoran nevertheless managed to get "appointed" to a cushy state job by his PERS-gutting cohort, Ted Kulongoski, one wherein he will eventually be making more than he ever did with SEIU.

*Bill Smee
Eugene*

READ THE DIRECTIONS

In response to yet another complaint about punch cards and hanging chads in your lovely Best of Eugene issue, I'd like to say that only a careless fool would have trouble with them. Anyone who bothers to take the time to read the directions, punch out the correct chad, and check for any hanging chads, deserves to have their vote counted. Darwinism clearly weeds out the rest. Unfortunately, in this day and age, the directions could be in flashing neon lights, and most people would ignore them.

People who blame a piece of stiff paper for their problems have more important issues.

*Dayna Terry
Eugene*

CRAP SHOOT

This is for the scurvy sauce who ripped off my diabetic medications from my car parked at Willamette Plaza where I work. This happened at about 6.30 am on Sept. 17. Can you believe it?

Look, if I had opiates or synthetic opiates, I wouldn't leave them on the passenger seat.

TWO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



All those medicines will do is lower your blood sugar until you go into a diabetic coma. See ya.

You are no doubt a junkie sifting through crap to be happy. Ironically, I'm for Rx for addicts and 24 hour liquor stores — all legal.

Hey, idiot, you missed the Rolex and the '59 Fender Stratocaster. You can't do anything right.

*Greg Hume
Creswell (I hate Eugene)*

ONLY KUCINICH LEFT

In response to Jim Johnson's letter (9/25) criticizing Kucinich backers, I suggest that those who insist that Dean is the only candidate with a chance of beating Bush are wearing blinders. Unfortunately, since Americans

love generals and he is backed by the Clintons, Clark may have a better chance. Shouldn't we instead vote for him?

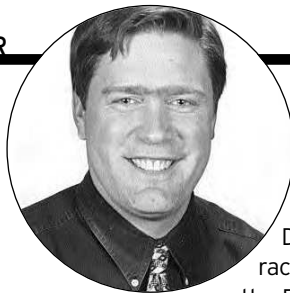
If Kucinich has no chance, that is because most Americans know little about him. The mass media choose to tell us about a few candidates and to ignore the others. In doing so, they think to control access to the Democratic nomination and make sure that no one who threatens their interests will be elected. Americans without cable television have been able to watch only the first of the ongoing series of debates. And it's no accident that the California gubernatorial debate received more news coverage, though most of us cannot vote in California.

The missing information can be found on the Internet, where I have learned that

REASONABLE DOUBT BY TOM LININGER

Tony the Tiger

Corcoran has been a tough, honest legislator; he'll be missed.



Tuesday, October 7: Arnold Swarzenegger wins his first elective office, and Tony Corcoran resigns from the Oregon Senate. On balance, there is a net decrease in the toughness of America's politicians.

Arnold may be "the Terminator," but Tony is "the Terminator Stout." (I stole this nickname from a beer at McMenamins, where Tony and I used to compare notes on our political campaigns in 2002).

Whether it's challenging conservatives or standing up for underprivileged kids, Tony has never backed down from a fight. In 1999, when I was president of the South Lane Family Relief Nursery, our program faced a significant loss of public funding. We knew that bad ideas were floating around the Legislature, including a proposal to make drastic cuts in programs that help low-income children. The Relief Nursery was on the verge of closing its doors when we called Tony. With his own background as an orphan in Ireland, Tony understood better than any other legislator that all children need a fair chance. Tony agreed to help us make our case to the Legislature, and the next thing we knew, our funding was secure for the following two years.

A lot of people in Lane County have similar stories to tell about Tony Corcoran. He has been a steadfast advocate for schoolchildren, veterans, seniors, and poor families without health insurance. In 2003, Tony was the only Senate Democrat who voted against the budget package, insisting that the state was neglecting its obligations to the neediest Oregonians.

One of Tony's greatest accomplishments was beating Cedric Hayden in a close

Senate race that no other Democrat could have won. Vying to represent rural Lane and Douglas counties, Tony had the hardest race of any Democratic Senate candidate in 1998. At the time, Tony was serving in the Oregon House. He could have easily retained his House seat that year, but the state Democratic Party convinced Tony that he should take a chance on the Senate race. Tony's victory gave the Democrats the momentum that we needed to end the Republican dominance in the Senate.

Long odds never discouraged Tony. When he first ran for the House in 1994, he squared off in the primary against the popular mayor of Cottage Grove. Because Cottage Grove was the biggest city in the district, most observers thought the mayor would win. But Tony was a tireless campaigner, and he knocked on all but a few hundred doors in Cottage Grove. He won the primary by a couple hundred votes. "Good thing I didn't visit those last 200 voters, or I probably would have lost," Tony would later joke.

Tony was a great mentor for young candidates like me. When I ran for county commissioner, Tony watched me debate my Republican adversary Ed Kemp. I argued strenuously with Ed, and then Tony pulled me aside to give me some advice. He said I was being a little too tough on my opponent. (Too tough for Tony Corcoran? That's like Rasheed Wallace chiding a teammate for being too hard on the referee!) Even though I snickered, I heeded Tony's advice. This guy wrote the book on effective campaigning.

Tony is one of a kind. He'll be a tremendous asset to the Employment Appeals Board, but you can't blame the Lane County Democrats for wishing that Tony will return to politics one day. Let's hope that the Terminator Stout echoes the Terminator's most famous phrase: "I'll be back."

Tom Lininger is a law professor and former county commissioner.