

Getting PERSONAL

Corcoran's not making much of a 'sacrifice.'

When Tony "Soon-to-be-ex-Senator" Corcoran, in his final "Insider Baseball" column (10/23; perhaps not coincidentally, the issue with the turkeys on the cover), referred to me and others as "meatheads," I'll have to admit, I was pretty pissed at first. But when I'd calmed down enough to think about it, three things occurred to me: name-calling is the last resort of those with a weak argument; "Meathead," a fairly old term in itself, gained new notoriety back in the early '70s as an epithet frequently hurled at his progressive son-in-law by none other than the penultimate reactionary, Archie Bunker; and since one is known not just by their friends but their enemies as well, rather than sue for libel, I should be beholden to Tony for elevating my standing amongst my peers.



So I had a good laugh with my friends, and have even gone so far as to take up "Meathead" as my *nom du guerre*.

But the Noble Martyr didn't stop at schoolyard insults. He also suggested that I couldn't be "bothered with the facts" when in my last letter to *EW* (10/6) I claimed that he'd be much better off financially in the new position his buddy Gov. Kulongoski had rewarded him with after the hit he did on PERS, than as a union staff member and a legislator combined.

I had based my premise on guesses – educated, maybe, but still guesses. So I did some research. And here's what I found out.

As a senior organizer with SEIU, Tony was making \$56,724 a year (source: SEIU). Add to that the \$15,396 he was pulling down as a state senator, and one ends up with a total of \$72,120 per annum. But we see that in his new position with the Appeals Board he'll be making \$72,576. The rest is easy math: Tony comes out nearly half a grand to the good. And that's just to start; if the Great Warrior manages to cling to his new job long enough, his salary will go up to \$84,000.

As for the benefits he claimed he's also being "forced" to sacrifice – can medical, dental, etc., for the staff of a service employee labor union really be better than what an upper-level Salem bureaucrat receives?

Oh, there's more, by the way – the "kicker," as it were. And I'll have to admit (again), I didn't see this coming. Wiser heads than mine did, however, and if the readers been following the news on this subject, he or she is aware of it now, too.

Lets talk retirement.

Now I won't go into a long explanation of how PERS works, but the system has/had two methods of calculating benefits that are/were most commonly used. The first, the so-called "money match" method, which Corcoranism essentially tore all to hell, was based generally on how much one had built up in one's account over the years. "Full formula," however, has two main key elements upon which one's monthly check is figured: how long the member was in a PERS-covered position(s); and the average salary of the member's *three highest paid years*. So, if Tony stays with his new job in Employee Appeals for just three years, his final retirement income will be several hundred percent more than what it would have been had he stayed a senator, just because his new wages are so much higher (about five-fold, as a matter of fact). Add to that his SEIU 401k account, and whatever else he's managed to sock away over the years, and one becomes hard pressed to see what he really lost when he left the union, particularly when one compares what the career cook, clerk or custodian will be making when they ever retire – or *if*, thanks in large part to this tireless advocate for workers. Dang; facts are funny things, ain't they? Even when viewed from the top of that ol' turnip truck.

So, this is likely all I'll have to say about the Irish Bowling Ball (his words, not mine), as he fades into a much-deserved political obscurity. OK, except for this, which I just can't resist: in the end, it seems that "Insider Baseball" has been very, very good to him.

Bill Smees of Eugene is a 25 year veteran of the UO, unpaid union activist and "proud meathead."

similar nude males, then maybe we can talk about "the beauty of the human body" smokescreen.

*Charlotte Behm
Springfield*

BUDGET DECISIONS

I want to thank writer Bobbie Willis for her personal interest and intelligent questions in preparing her article "Farmed Forces" (10/23) about our farm and ideas of a local economy. I am particularly pleased she was willing to write about my personal spiritual/moral impetus for the work I do.

I would like to add emphasis to a portion of the discussion we had on a local economy. Small local processing plants for food products are critical to a local food system, yet very expensive and time consuming to build and manage. If Greener Pastures Poultry did not exist, I would have no legal way to market the turkeys grown on my farm! So readers, please make a commitment; dedicate a portion of your food budget to locally grown, locally processed, locally available foods. Start with, say, 10 percent of what you spend. Your home will be better off for it.

*Paul Atkinson
Laughing Stock Farm*

PROUD MOM

When Barbara Bush called Democratic presidential hopefuls a "sorry lot," I wonder if she realized the irony in what she said.

Let's compare George W. Bush to, for example, presidential hopeful Gen. Wesley

Clark. Clark, a self-made man, graduated number one in his West Point class. He holds masters degrees in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford and was a Rhodes scholar. In his 34 years of military service, Clark was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He was shot four times in one Vietnam battle. Clark's many staff and command positions included directing strategy for the Joint Chiefs. As a four-star general he commanded NATO forces where he helped save the lives of 1.5 million Albanians. He also kept Saddam Hussein in check after the first Gulf War.

Clark is held in high regard by other nations. He was knighted by the British and Dutch. Even the French gave him the "Legion of Honor" medal. In 2000, Clark was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, this nation's highest honor.

George W. Bush attended Yale and Harvard where he held a "C" average. Bush's military service, during the height of the Vietnam war, was with the Texas Air National Guard. He was suspended from flying and was AWOL in his last year. Bush's oil business ventures were failures.

Barbara Bush is entitled to her opinion. She is a proud mother. But by calling the presidential hopefuls a "sorry lot," she invites a comparison that only highlights why her son should be replaced.

*Leslie Weinstein
Eugene*

RACIST GOVERNMENT

In regard to *EW's* article (10/16)



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