

with people who had AIDS. The first anti-gay rights amendment passed in Colorado that year: Amendment 2. Years later, it was declared unconstitutional. When Amendment 2 passed, many of the people who had AIDS at the clinic in Denver where I volunteered got sicker and died sooner than expected. That was when I first clearly saw the mind/body connection and the effect on one's health.

Now, Amendment 36 in Oregon threatens to harm a lot of people in the same way. When a group of people are discriminated against in a large public way, I believe it can adversely affect their immune system. For all those people who have supported gay rights in the past but are unsure on the marriage issue, please think about the damage that will be done to many gay men and lesbians and the friends and family that love them. Boost your fellow man and woman's immune system. Vote no on 36.

*Diane Clancy  
Eugene*

**CULTURAL INBREEDING**

With regard to the cartoon "No Exit" by Andy Singer in the 9/30 issue: The cartoon portrays a tree showing roots, trunk, limbs, and branches. The branches are all connected to each other and are encircled by a continuous branch connecting them all. It is entitled "Redneck Family Tree," obviously dredging up from the slime, the trite, derogatory stereotype that "rednecks" (that is, white, working class people) bear children by their

closer relatives and are therefore genetically inferior.

As a self-proclaimed "progressive" paper, I would think that you'd know better, although I know that you don't. As near as I can tell, the term progressive (what people call themselves to disassociate themselves from the left) means social liberal with a little dependence on government and victim mentality thrown in. Progressives talk about the "polarization" that goes on in this country, and at the same time are just as bigoted and prejudiced as the people they oppose. Only from the other side.

Eugene itself contains a thick, ugly strain of what I would call cultural inbreeding.

I don't see a great deal of difference between "fundamentalist Christians" and "fundamentalist progressives." Look within yourselves.

*Steve Pardo  
Springfield*

**ALL THINGS PINK**

I can understand why — in this dreary season of elongated electioneering, with one's TV leaking campaign lies and outrageous claims — any citizen might be tempted to drink too much wine and think of nothing but. But since voting is a slowly approaching duty, I say, "Do your duty, citizen!"

We all must think of things political and then enjoy our wine. As we daydream about "Iraqi democracy" and wish to have a little more democracy here as well, I cannot think

of a more fun way to learn politics than from that Sleuth of Wine, the learned Doctor Sparks, our very own Lance. I must thank him for bringing to my attention the vast pink conspiracy: pink wine, pink slips, pink underwear, pink racists, pink roses, Chaney's pink cheeks, and all things pink.

Fortunately, the florid season of pink wines has ended. The rains have arrived. There are some few shopping days left before the election, and there are so many blood red wines to buy for fall. So, Citizen X, stop whining and start dining!

I intend to relish my vote for anti-Bush. It was stolen four years ago by two bad, hurricane swamp boys named Jeb and W. I intend to set up my ballot, sip a little Lance-recommended joy juice, and soberly make my mark to end the dynasty. I encourage all of you to join me. Voting is a celebration, and if you cannot do it with good humor and style, bring your ballot over to my house. I'd be glad to vote for you and your family and friends.

Really Lance, all felonious thoughts aside, wine and humor are for pleasure. Your style, advice, and words are delicious. Now, as the season of pinkness fades, tell me: why are there no truly blue wines?

*Peter Jensen  
Eugene*

**SUPURB ARTWORK**

Kudos to Sylvie Pederson for her brief, poetic description of Stephen White's light sculpture called "Drifting III" at the Mayor's

Art Show (9/30). It is a superb work of art. I see it as vines growing out of waters, reaching upward with natural grace toward the roots of the Tree of Life, creating beautiful forms of enlightenment along the way. I wish the whole world could see it as a beacon for these troubled times.

*Jake Felsenstein  
Eugene*

**HOW WE GOT HERE**

As far as I know, the authority on legitimization theory is Jurgen Habermas, and legitimization of course concerns, given a nation's basic organization, whether or not the government in power is a legitimate one. Voters, and especially American voters, have incredibly short attention spans and faulty memories, and the tendency is to respond to the most recent issues or events. 9/11 deflected general American attention colossally. These factors, among others, have caused American voters to come to accept a U.S. administration which is not legitimate at all.

In 2000, ballots in the deciding state of Florida were in many cases defective, circa 19,000 ballots were just tossed out in heavily Democratic South Palm Beach County. Knowing this full well, a majority of Supreme Court justices voted to end the recount in Florida and so, without having the authority, appointed sorry Little Elmo president. Then after 9/11, many voters once furious about the 2000 election mess caved in

**viewpoint** BY SONNY TAILOR

**Raising the Bar**

Who will benefit from Eugene's proposed rental code?

"Renters' rights" is the catchphrase associated with the city of Eugene's resolution to draft a rental code, but renters' rights are not even considered by the proposed code. On Aug 11, the City Council unanimously agreed to create a rental code intended to provide enforcement of the minimum standard conditions of habitability. The planned code, that City Councilor George Poling stated, "targets the few landlords who are problems," will spell trouble for those property owners who don't comply with the community development director's (CDD) decisions. The planned code gives the director power to arbitrarily impose a fine of up to \$250 per day upon property owners who fail to comply with orders, and to place liens for unpaid fines against properties deemed to be in violation. This could result in the forced auction of property to satisfy liens attached for unpaid fines that were ordered by the CDD under provisions of this code.

This decision is viewed as a victory by some special interest groups; however the effect of the proposed code may not be as positive as anticipated. Championed by the ASUO, Eugene Citizens for Housing Standards, Associated Students of LCC, and OSPIRG, this proposed code is said to provide renters with fast access to assistance in resolving habitability issues with rental units. The model for this proposed rental code is Corvallis's Rental Housing Code, that proposes to, "provide minimum habitability criteria to safeguard health, property and public welfare of the owners, occupants and users of residential rental buildings." This code claims to be, "intended to supplement rather than conflict with the habitability standards of the State of Oregon Residential Landlord and Tenant Act," yet fails in its stated purpose by being far narrower in scope than state law. As a result, the proposed code will limit rather than expand the remedies available to tenants who seek help from the commission versus pursuing a claim under ORS 90.

Under Eugene's proposed code the property owner is required to; maintain the building structure so that it is able to resist collapsing under a reasonable load, maintain minimal weatherproofing standards to protect occupants and their



property from running water, maintain plumbing to be free of leaks, and provide a working fixed heat source capable of maintaining a temperature of 68 degrees F. Habitability issues such as: electrical problems, cooking appliance failures, vermin infestations, holes in interior walls, debris-filled gutters, invasive trees or shrubs, water damage, and general unsanitary conditions are but some of the issues that are not considered by this proposed code.

Filing a complaint under this code follows similar guidelines to filing a 10-day notice of complaint under ORS 90, except that once you have complained to the city, the city then complains to the property owner and gives him or her an additional 10-day notice to comply with the demand. Consequently, instead of being an agent to obtain speedy resolution, the proposed code actually serves as an additional step to obtaining injunctive action against the property owner. Because of these shortcomings, the proposed code can actually become an obstacle to obtaining justice.

If vigorously used, the proposed rental code would be a powerful tool for city planners that could be used to eliminate the rental properties that are the most dangerous habitations, and thereby raise the "overall" standard of housing for the city. A side benefit for the city would be economic stimulation by requiring essential repairs on substandard housing and the possible stimulation of the rental real estate market.

From the tenants' perspective, shortcomings of the proposed code include the lack of provisions for: providing alternate housing, reduction in rent, or the return of deposits. And the proposed code provides for no consideration to the victim for property damage or medical expenses incurred as a result of being forced to live in derelict housing. Under ORS 90, the tenant may be entitled to a reduction in rent, return of all deposits, alternative housing, and monetary awards for property and medical expenses as well as compensation for harassment and property owners who act in a malicious manner.

One does not have to read too deeply into the code to determine that the city will profit greatly and enjoy expanded arbitrary power. This proposed code is sold under false advertisement by its supporters who have endorsed the proposal as a form of assistance to renters. In fact, the code that Eugene will base its own code on had initially exempted low-income housing from being held to the regulations. So much for the code protecting the poor.

The code goes before a hearing by the City Council Nov 8.

*The Corvallis code can be found at <http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/downloads/cd/rentalhousingcode.pdf> and the proposed Eugene code is at <http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/Council/Agenda/S040524B.pdf>.*