

ESCAPING RELIGION

I'm not a bit surprised to hear the right-wing religious fanatics threaten to hold a recall election to remove Kitty Piercy as mayor. The disagree-with-us-and-you're-out-of-here fanatics. How dare she decline a mayors' "prayer" breakfast because she happens to believe in that disappearing constitutional idea regarding separation of church and state? These people will stop at nothing to advance their desire to dismantle our Constitution and impose their religious beliefs on us all, including our mayor. Isn't that what we were escaping when we fled Europe in the 1700s?

I am a practicing Christian. What I hear in scripture is Jesus telling us to love one another, tolerate our differences, help the poor, be honest and forthcoming and hold with great care and respect this beautiful creation called planet earth.

The Bush born-again, the God squad of government, are nothing but a pack of reverse Robin Hoods. They take from the poor to give to the rich, they plunder and pollute our beautiful planet, bomb countries full of poor people, kill hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians and tell their twisted and perverse lies — all while wearing that "Christian" smile! Kitty Piercy had the courage to stand up for her belief in our beloved Constitution. These "Christians" have just shown themselves to be the thugs that they truly are.

*Julie Claybaugh
Eugene*

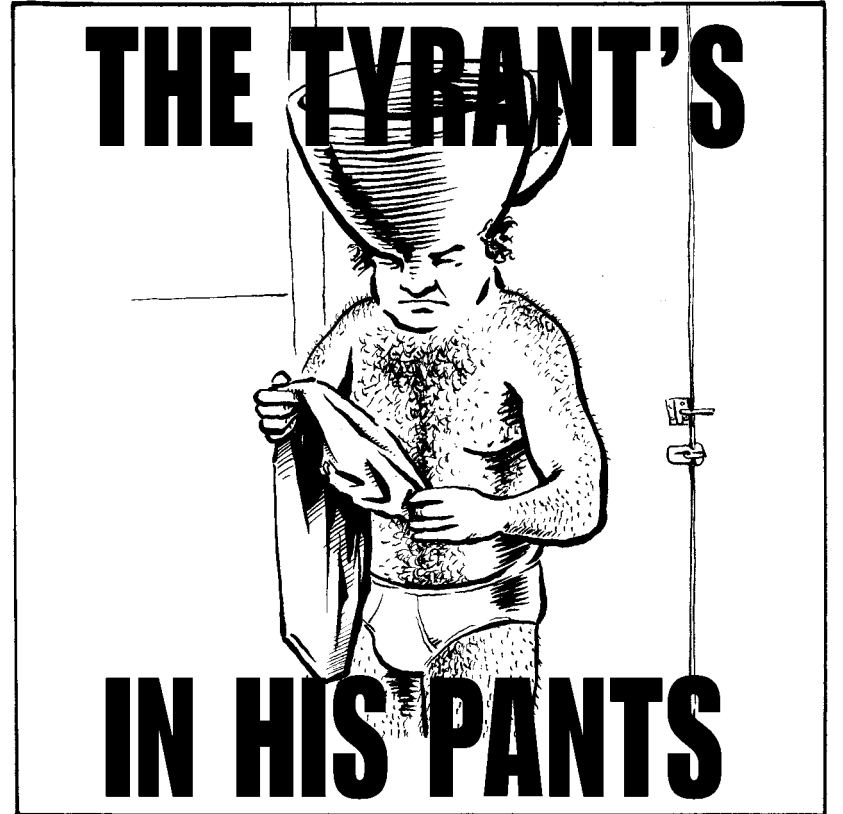
NOT ENOUGH

The UO and the College of Education (COE) need to put more effort and will into addressing the ongoing discrimination at the COE. President Frohnmayer has passed responsibility for dealing with this on to Greg Vincent and the external reviewer. Dean Kaufman after ignoring the situation, has now passed responsibility on to the Diversity Steering Committee. While some things are being done, the UO is not fully committed to making lasting change.

The coalition of students, teachers, staff, and community members working hard on this issue has put forth eight demands, and so far only one has been met: the request for an external review. Some of the demands that remain are: creating a program of recognition for faculty and staff who active advocates for people who have been discriminated against, requiring all faculty and staff to attend trainings about affirmative action policies regarding prohibited discrimination and retaliation, creating an advocacy and grievance center that has the authority to hold faculty and staff accountable, and operationalizing the COE's Infusion of Diversity policy. These are very achievable and reasonable demands.

Real and lasting change is needed. Diversity is not just a fringe issue that we bring in a specialist for. Diversity is something that everyone, from the president and the dean on down, is responsible for working on. Frohnmayer and Kaufman need to take

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



personal responsibility. They have to do more than just say they are committed to change; they have to make change happen.

*Pira Kelly
Eugene*

THE UPSHOT OF WAR

I'm trying to find the positive aspects of the second Gulf War. These are the things I've come up with. Tell me what you think. Families of the dead soldiers get a brand-

KUMBAYA DAMMIT BY DAN CAROL

High Road Cookbook

A primer on building a 'moral economy'

They say that too many cooks spoil the broth, but when it comes to baking up strong local economies, I am here to say the maxim is wrong. There's an effective new cookbook for political and economic progress emerging across the country, and it's time to widely share the best recipes.

Paving the high road is especially important given new interest in the progressive community around finding smart strategies to "fight Wal-Mart," grow new local leaders like the right wing did, and have a stronger "progressive narrative." The high road recipe set — which includes living wage campaigns, Apollo clean energy strategies, community health, high-speed Internet access and much, much more — helps fill in many of these gaps.

So what's the "high road" exactly? Well, in contrast to the low-road of low wages, lousy benefits and high pollution, high road economics puts more green in worker's pockets and is greener to the environment. Premier chefs of high road thinking include Los Angeles' Anthony Thigpenn, former UAW economist Dan Luria, Working Partnerships USA founder Amy Dean and the University of Wisconsin's Joel Rogers, who directs HighRoadNow.org, linking a multi-state coalition of think and do tanks. Dr. Rogers puts it this way: "High road economic development strategies promote high-quality jobs under competitive conditions, environmental sustainability, corporate accountability, and community revitalization. Our approach runs counter to the conventional model of economic growth, which typically ignores job quality, erodes the tax base, harms the environment, lacks accountability to broader community interests and is unfriendly to labor."

Now that we know what it is, how exactly do we start down the high road — toward what Berkeley's George Lakoff and others call the "moral economy"? Actually the steps are pretty straightforward.

Run a living wage campaign, dammit. If you haven't run a living wage campaign in your community in the last six years, start there before trying any other recipe from the list below. Minimum wage and living wage campaigns are the initial staple for high road cooking. If we can pass a minimum wage increase in Florida in 2004 with 72 percent support, then believe me, you can pass it anywhere (and we have in over 120 communities). More importantly, the cross-cutting alliances we see develop in these campaigns — between labor, faith, urban and other constituencies — create serious political yeast for the next round of cooking. (See www.livingwagecampaign.org)

Choose a tasty recipe for your community. Once you've run and won a living wage



effort, we're ready to crack open the next chapter of the high road cookbook. It is important to recognize that there is no single recipe for getting there. Like cooking at altitude, you'll need to change the recipe mix depending on local conditions and unique opportunities (for example, when a fired-up mayor or county commissioner wants to carry the ball).

• Apollo/clean energy: I am a co-founder of The Apollo

Alliance and I am clearly biased, but certainly new partnerships between labor-business, rural-urban and environmental communities are sprouting up all over America on the potential for wind energy investments, biofuels, end user efficiency jobs and more. Check out Apollo's regional policy center (www.apolloalliance.org/regional_projects/) for ideas.

• Smart growth: Until recently, state economic development has often boiled down to insane corporate subsidies as states compete for new plants to re-locate or stay (see www.cfed.org).

• Big cable or community Internet? Comcast and Verizon can charge exorbitant rates for high speed Internet access and decide who gets to be on their network or we can provide it at lower rates by having cities install whatever new technology comes along (see www.freepress.net and www.ctcnet.org).

• Community health clinics: I find the work of Ellen Friedman and her colleagues at the Community Clinics Initiative (www.communityclinics.org) to be amazing. While helping to address health care access for low-income populations, these clinics also are becoming community centers for addressing a whole host of economic and social challenges, and a place to pilot test new models for community organizing.

Franchising the cookbook. We've been talking about arming progressive state legislators with model laws for years. Now it's time to do that and more — to support state treasurers, mayors and all levels of political leadership who want to travel the high road and find meaningful alternatives to a Wal-Mart economy. The bottom line: No one proposal, place or person is gonna be able to do it all. No way. The key will be recipe sharing and networking — and intelligently spreading around resources to support the smart folks out there who already pioneering in the space. Then back it all up with a smart network of regional nerve centers, national two-way communications and tool sheds to service it all at scale.

We especially need to be careful not to over-invest in Wal-Mart fights and under-invest in efforts to offer success stories that show how we can do better than big box stores in farm fields. To do all that, an outside network analyst like Green Media Toolshed's Marty Kearns might be good to bring to the table — someone who understands network construction and isn't invested in any of the old politics.

Dan Carol of Eugene is a political consultant. You can read Carol's full Kumbaya Dammit rap for progressive reform at www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20030331&s=carol