

Hope Amidst Chaos

Many eyes and hearts have opened.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Below is the text of Dan Goldrich's presentation to the peace rally held Sept. 24 at the Federal Building in Eugene. Goldrich was one of numerous speakers before the crowd that filled the plaza and spilled over across the streets.

I speak for Progressive Responses today, somberly and with renewed hope. Somber, for obvious reasons: the U.S. dead and the thousands of Iraqi dead, the deepening cruel insurgency, the continuing ideologically driven intransigence of the administration in refusing to renounce permanent bases or control of Iraqi oil, the faces of those abandoned in New Orleans, the aged and infirm left to die because the week before Katrina, the U.S. government was busy trying to delete from the general principles of the U.N. the phrase, "Respect for nature."



What do we owe these dead, these victims? I refuse to think we owe them more dead and more victims in the service of lies, illusory imperial ambition, ignorance of history, and denial that nature is our home. I choose to think that we owe the victims taking their loss so extremely seriously that we dedicate ourselves to do better in the face of daunting challenges.

What are those challenges? Global climate change is upon us, it's present, and requires courage merely to contemplate. Have you read Elizabeth Kolbert's three-part articles in *The New Yorker*, April and May, on this? Growing social polarization, locally through globally, opulence and impoverishment. Growing extremist, often fundamentalist violent movements in many places. See Mark Danner in the *New York Times Magazine*, (Sept. 11) on how U.S. policy has made this worse, particularly by making war on Iraq, and continuing cases of states using terror against their people.

Above all is the challenge: How do we want to live as we confront these aforementioned tremendous challenges? What have we been learning about meeting these challenges?

- That broad, global cooperation is required to confront global warming: to restructure our economic base for sustainability, and to meet the needs of the environmentally displaced, the environmentally vulnerable.
- That the challenge of violent movements and states using terrorism requires new international law and new international police institutions. U.S. security requires global security. No response will work to elicit the needed broad cooperation of governments and peoples unless it is based on fairness, on equal justice.
- That either we will succumb to police states and the fearful war of each against all others, or we will make community globally and locally, taking care of one another and of our home, the Earth, in a way that down through time has provided a fundamental sense of connection, of transcendent meaning.

Obviously, the Bush administration sees the world differently on all those scores. Most influential Democrats have opted for silence or carping around the edges.

So how can you or I feel hope and rising energy at this moment? Because at great cost, in Iraqis and U.S. soldiers dead and maimed, and in Gulf Coast devastation, many eyes and hearts have opened. Many are seeing the need for a new national and global effort to sustain life, and to do so decently.

The debate is finally on – how and when will the U.S. withdraw from Iraq? (See CommonDreams.org and truthout.org for powerful analyses countering the claim that we can't leave Iraq to chaos.)

The call by such organizations as the Apollo Alliance for a new, appropriate development strategy based on energy conservation, efficiency and sustainability is gaining implementation in city after city and state after state, including Oregon and Portland.

Despite the neo-conservative imperialism and ceaseless spin of the Bush administration, U.S. public opinion tends strongly to support a more globally cooperative foreign policy, the International Criminal Court action on Darfur, and greater U.S. effort to limit greenhouse gases. There's growing and now majority public awareness of the scientific consensus on global warming.

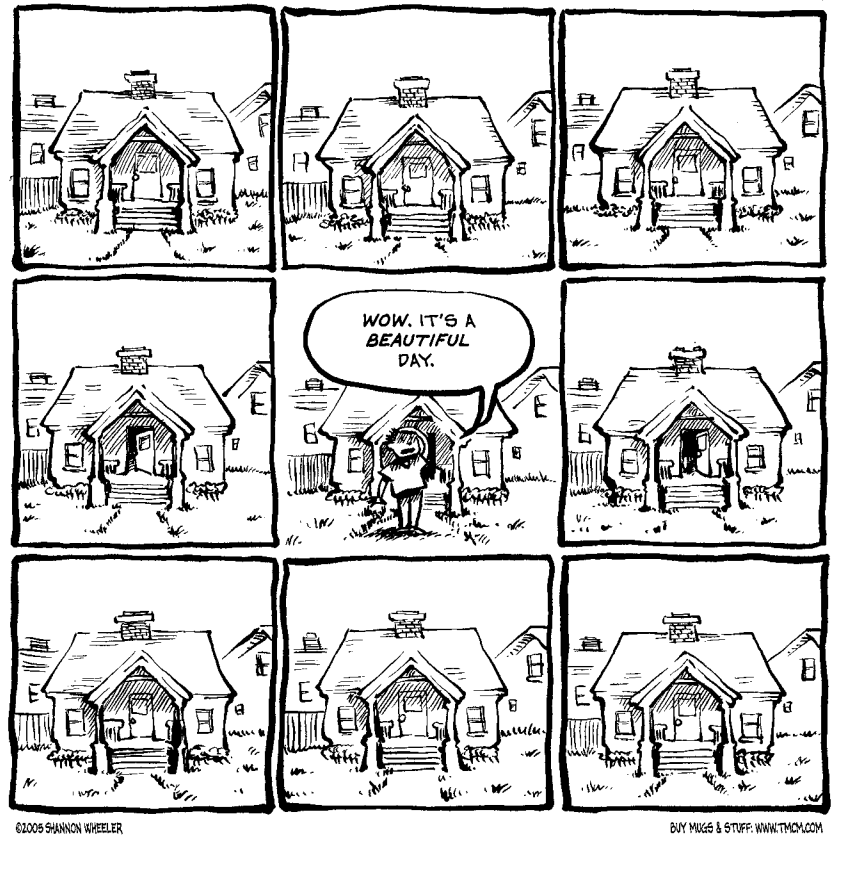
So I am imagining the political possibilities as more leadership arises on these critical matters, in response to demands from the base, all over the country.

As you and I look around at those assembled today, we see so many young people demanding something better. Inspiring. Life goes on. Political life goes on.

You young ones need to know that there are many elders with you in spirit and action, elders who see life itself under grave threat and who will not yield to that threat. So we can find the energy and inspiration to go on, and organize a community-based movement strong enough to hold leaders to account regarding life's agenda.

Dan Goldrich of Eugene is a retired UO political science professor and a member of Progressive Responses, a group of academic leaders who came together in response to 9/11.

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MASQUERADING?

I read with interest the recent letter to the editor (10/6) from Bill Smee accusing me of masquerading as a moderate after years of being an "extreme right-wing, anti-labor activist." I admit to getting on in years, but I'm honestly having trouble remembering exactly when I was an extreme right-wing, anti-labor activist.

Was it in 1990 when, as a Lane County commissioner, I opposed Ballot Measure 5? Was it in 1992, when I opposed and actively campaigned against Ballot Measure 9, the OCA's anti-gay statewide ballot measure? Was it in 1994, when I publicly opposed the measure that would have repealed Oregon's prevailing wage law?

Was it in 1995, when as Oregon labor commissioner I joined Gov. John Kitzhaber and Attorney General Ted Kulongoski in signing an amicus brief with the U. S Supreme Court successfully supporting efforts to overturn Colorado's anti-gay initiative?

Was it in 1996, when I debated Bill Sizemore more times than any other elected official of either party in opposition to Measure 47, further limiting property taxes for schools and local governments?

Was it in 1997, when I was the only statewide elected official to publicly testify in favor of the Oregon Employment Nondiscrimination Act outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation?

Was it in 1998, when I was running for reelection as labor commissioner and Bob Shiprack, executive secretary of the Building and Construction Trades Council was co-chairman of my campaign and I received endorsements from labor unions representing electricians, plumbers, steamfitters, cement masons, ironworkers, operating engineers, bricklayers and others?

Was it in 1999, when I reversed the ruling of my predecessor and held that transgender and transsexuals are protected from discrimination under Oregon's disability law?

Was it in 2000, when I made television commercials (along with Kitzhaber) oppos-

ing Sizemore's ballot measure effectively prohibiting public employee unions from engaging in political activities? Was it in 2002 when I was the only Republican gubernatorial candidate to support collective bargaining rights for farm workers?

Admittedly, I don't expect to find a lot of philosophical soul-mates among readers of a publication that is already questioning whether Mayor Kitty Piercy is a "real" progressive. I do, however, think it is not too much to expect a modicum of respect for the historical record even when attempting to smear someone whose politics you dislike.

*Jack Roberts, executive director
Lane Metro Partnership*

POLICE EXCESSES

Why did six Eugene police officers respond when my daughter's friend did her a favor by jumping a fence to retrieve the bike lock that she had dropped? Why was it necessary for the police to use a pain compliance hold on this young man? Why did they handcuff him and frighten him before ticketing him?

After years and years and years of complaints against the Eugene Police Department, why do they continue to overreact, particularly when responding to situations involving crowds, young people, or people of color? When will the EPD learn to stop abusing the people for whom they work? The next time the Eugene Police Department asks the voters for money, I will vote "NO!"

*David P. Johnson, PhD
Eugene*

CHRONIC WHINING

Regarding the letter "This Paper Sucks" (9/29). I am so sorry that when the writer moved here there wasn't a newspaper waiting just for him. I read your paper every week. I don't agree with some of your articles, explorations of musicians and artists I've never heard or heard of.

I also disagree with his use of "hip" in reference to a city where I was born and raised. I