

YOUR ZEN MOMENT

A defining moment in the race between Democrat Vicki Walker and Republican Jim Torrey for Senate District 7 came during the City Club debate of Sept. 29, when both candidates were asked to describe how they differed from their respective political parties.

The Democrat answered that she believed she did not differ from the Democratic party — that she had been a proud Democrat since she reached voting age because she believed in what Democrats stand for — health care, education, and a fair shake for all citizens, not just the privileged few.

The Republican answered that he differed from the Republican party in that he intended to be independent and to use common sense to find solutions to our state's problems.

Kinda says it all, doesn't it?

Please join me in supporting Democrats like Walker in November. Common sense should not signify a break from your party leadership.

Andrew Ross
Eugene

DENNIS THE TOOL

EW (Slant, 9/28) says the city of Eugene is controlled by the assistant city manager and his department heads. That sounds about right. I figured Dennis from Montana is just their tool, suckered by his devotion to the strong city manager philosophy (the rules say I get to be king, so that's what I'm going to pretend to be, even though I know I'm a puppet of the Old City Hall Cabal). Such a nice man. Too bad.

Now my friend says the reason for the \$5 million-plus AstroTurf conspiracy has to be that someone in City Hall has an uncle who is the only dealer in Lane County. What about that? I thought it was power, not money. It's power like Jim Torrey is ex-master of Kidsports, and this was all mandated by Kidsports. Now, it looks to me (I just read the R-G between the lines) like maybe the city in fact is strong-arming the school district into these artificial turf fields so all these non-city amateur sports leagues can use the school fields. In other words, it's driven by the rich people who sponsor/support these private amateur leagues like Pop Warner Football, Kidsports, American Youth Soccer Organization and other groups.

We are being required to hand over another \$5-plus million dollars to private organizations. And if you read the article, the school district already spent about \$2 million on two fields at middle schools. To benefit private entities. This is the district that doesn't have enough money for art, music, foreign languages, councilors or librarians. Not enough money to pay tutors or substitute teachers a living wage. Stuffs 40 students into

a middle school classroom.

I'll vote no on all money measures, now and for the foreseeable future. I derive no benefit from any of this, and neither do most of my neighbors, and we are being sucked dry. Enough is enough.

Ann Tattersall
Eugene

JILLIONS & ZILLIONS

Thank you for printing the recent letters of Msrs. G. Dennis Shine, Robert McGlaufflin and Mark Robinowitz about the size of U.S. fiscal indebtedness. In fairness to all three gentlemen, I think their helpful comments address three discrete, albeit related, topics: U.S. federal budget deficits, U.S. federal debt and associated financial mismanagement/crimes.

The late Sen. Everett Dirksen (R-IL) once remarked, "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money." (He was referring to U.S. taxpayer dollars, of course.) For most of us, especially arithmetically challenged individuals such as myself, billions and trillions, not to mention millions, are really big numbers. So how big is BIG?

I pose a story problem for the aforementioned three gentlemen and your readers to illustrate this question of relative magnitude. Suppose the current President Bush were to limit himself to telling one lie per minute, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. How long would he take to tell a million lies? A billion lies? A trillion?

John Heintz
Eugene

PAYING THEIR FAIR SHARE?

Alan Pittman's article (9/14) raises some interesting questions about winners and losers under Lane County's income tax proposal.

Renters will clearly lose and pay the tax. Landlords will win and receive a reduction in property taxes, even if they pay no income tax.

Judging by their muted opposition, the business community expects to win. It's easy to understand how. Existing property taxes are hard to avoid because land can't be hidden or moved out of the county. Income, on the other hand, is easy to shift. All that is needed is an accountant and a business operation someplace with no income tax.

Tax avoidance schemes won't even need to be legitimate because Lane County has neither the resources nor the expertise to identify, audit and prosecute business cheaters, particularly the lucrative ones who could tie the county up in court for years.

However, Portland's experience suggests that cheaters needn't even bother with avoidance schemes. They can simply not pay. In a

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Dr. David Lippincott

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