

Unwanted Presidencies

A report from We Count 2006

A recent Zogby poll found that, excepting Fox News viewers, most Americans believe the 2004 election was stolen. We know this with 99.99 percent certainty because of exit polls; however it isn't provable because, unlike Florida in 2000, there aren't paper ballots to recount in most critical states.

If 2004 was rigged, then we no longer have a democracy. But, the question now is: How do we protect future elections? To find out, I attended the We Count 2006 conference (www.WeCount2006.org) recently held in Cleveland.

A Practical Election System with Integrity

I flew to Cleveland to present a new voting system designed to prevent nearly all known election-stealing tricks. "The Baber Plan" is like Oregon's Vote-By-Mail (VBM), only better. VBM's weaknesses are: 1) VBM makes exit polls impossible, so it's much harder to detect election manipulation. 2) There's no observed, unbroken chain of custody for ballots mailed through the postal system. Ballots could be "lost and found." 3) VBM uses electronic central vote tabulating systems that are vulnerable to programming exploits.

The plan modifies Oregon VBM in two ways: 1) Most voters would bring ballots into polling places on Election Day so ballot chain-of-custody is protected and exit polls are possible. 2) The optical scanners would be ordinary PC document scanners. Anyone with such a scanner would be allowed to scan all precinct ballots at county election facilities. Voters could confirm their recorded votes on websites. Any number of interested parties could access raw data files and compute election results themselves.

What Happens Next?

The consensus at We Count 2006 was that Republicans will probably retain majorities in both houses of Congress, either by stealing races outright or by litigating their way to "victory" (à la Bush 2000). We know what happened in 2002, 2004 and 2005. We've seen plenty of ominous foreshadowing in the 2006 primary elections.

Republicans have their motives for keeping control of Congress – to avoid impeachment, among others. Apparently, they also have the means to steal elections. There will be even more opportunities this year because more states use e-voting machines. So, given the motives, the means and the opportunity it looks likely democracy will get murdered in November. Again.

What to Do?

The way to handle serial murderers is to predict their next victims, send out guards to protect them, and bring the killers to justice.

Many progressives have become so disillusioned they wonder why they still bother to vote. There are four reasons:

- In Oregon there's practically no evidence of election manipulation, so our votes almost certainly count.
- If we don't vote, democracy killers don't have to bother to steal elections. They win by default. If the election riggers win without stealing elections, observers won't be able to catch them and put them in jail. Election observers with video cameras and witnesses are planning to watch this election closely.
- Gandhi said that, when practicing Satyagraha, it's essential to provoke a response from the powers that be in order to *make the injustice visible*. Simply exercising our right to vote may be the only provocation needed to trigger election theft and make it visible.
- Not voting is exactly what the bad guys want you to do. So vote, even if only to spite them! Encourage everyone to vote. Voting, even if some elections are rigged, is our way of continuing to assert our expectation of democracy. If we stop voting, it's like saying we don't care if we've lost it.

Get ready to take to the streets if it looks like the Republicans keep the House and Senate by election theft. You'll know because official results won't match recent polls. Massive public protest forced the Ukraine to have a run-off election in 2004. Mexico's recent demonstrations pressed their case further than would have been possible otherwise.

Dennis Kucinich said it sometimes takes a few years for the larger public to wake up to the truth. It's taken a few years for most Americans to reach a watershed moment in which they've realized, "Those people were right!" about the Iraq war. Another watershed is approaching for the issue of election fraud.

We must shine light in dark places and make the truth visible. If you'd like to help reform elections, especially if you can travel to other states, please contact TruthInVoting.org.

Thanks for everything you do to protect our democracy.

Marc Baber is active with Eugene's grass-roots election reform group www.TruthInVoting.org. The Baber Plan can be found at www.MarcBaber.com/ElectionReform.htm. A longer version of this commentary can be found on our website, www.eugeneweekly.com

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VOTE GREEN

A "yes" vote on Eugene's Parks and Open Space Ballot Measure 20-110 is a vote for a greener future for our city. Imagine the South Hills connected along the ridges from Hendricks Park around the Amazon Creek headwaters to the west Eugene wetlands. Imagine the greenway and paths along the Willamette River extending north to the McKenzie River. Imagine these green ribbons enhanced by new neighborhood parks and improved athletic fields sprinkled throughout the community. Ballot Measure 20-110 aims to turn these imaginings into reality.

Parks and open space are very versatile investments. They promote physical fitness, foster community harmony, improve quality of life, attract talented employees, expand local tourism, raise property values, filter air and water, reduce flooding and erosion, enable wildlife movement, spark our curiosity and slow the urban pace. Parks are places where we can be our best, whether it be teaching, learning, coaching, playing, observing, relaxing or volunteering. Oh, and did we say parks are just plain fun?

The successful 1998 parks bond measure allowed us to refurbish Amazon Pool and neighborhood parks, while acquiring several open space areas. Measure 20-110 will allow us to acquire key open space sites, enhancing our national reputation as an environment-friendly community, while developing needed athletic facilities for our youth.

The generosity of past generations of Eugeneans helped create the wonderful system of parks we enjoy today. Now it is our turn to add to this legacy for future generations. Vote yes on Measure 20-110.

Art Farley
Steve Gordon
Eugene

PHONY DIPLOMACY

When reading about local candidates in the voter's pamphlet, I noticed a very shady statement. Jim Feldkamp, Congressional Candidate for the 4th District, lists one of his occupations as "adjunct professor" at Umpqua and Lane Community Colleges, yet

under education he states that his highest education level is a master of arts. To be qualified for the title of professor, adjunct (part-time) or not, you need to have a Ph.D. If you only have a M.A., your title is instructor. Feldkamp's course for one term for each school on the cause and effect of terrorism in the Criminal Justice program doesn't seem to lend any credibility to his "I'm-a-professor" story. Instructing two non-credited classes does not a professor make.

Puffing up his résumé with lies trivializes the incredibly hard work and years of haggling over a thesis that all the actual professors here in the 4th District have done. These lies also discount the toiling by current graduate students and the individuals with master's degrees who truthfully call themselves instructor. If it is so easy to get away with fabrications like this, why did my husband spend five years at Harvard to be rightfully called professor? It seems to me that the BS on Feldkamp's resume could stand for the bachelor's degree he received from OSU, or what he's full of.

Erin Landweber
Eugene

THE POWER OF MONEY

There has been an increasing commentary on the big money corruption of our state Legislature; 848 registered lobbyists have shelled out millions to get their bills passed and to block any that might not benefit their sponsors. Oregonians have a very important opportunity to take "big" money out of political campaigns and substitute "little" money. This little money would come from unlimited small donors, as Howard Dean so successfully demonstrated.

It is vital that voters pass companion Measures 46 and 47. These initiatives have wide voter support but are opposed by big money and those in power who receive it. This opposition has a lot of money to spend and is already using distortion, fear, misrepresentation, falsehood and worse. I never thought "Swiftboating" would come to Oregon. They have labeled Harry Lonsdale, one of the stalwarts of campaign finance reform for 15 years, as an "outsider from