

GET USED TO IT

I suspect the best response to Michele Walter (“Area Code Bullshit,” 1/21) is “that was then and this is now.” Used to be, my partner and I and our roommate(s) had one phone. Period. Now my roommate has a cell phone, I have a cell phone, I have a landline (home phone) and I have a separate phone line for my computer. My partner, saner than I, rarely uses a cell phone and won’t have an extension phone in the shop because it messes with his concentration.

The point is, I think my household is not at all uncommon. Cell phones, in-home faxes/computer lines and landlines all require separate phone numbers, and there are only so many combinations that seven digits can morph into. And the seditious thing about cell phones is that you don't have to be using them all the time for them to be damned handy. So you keep them instead of deciding that you can do without them.

I think it's possible that we have actually got enough numbers in 541 taken up that we may have to have another digit. And maybe it looks like the extra digit won't last but a year or two, and they don't want to bother us again in two years, 'cause we'll just get crankier than we are this time. And it's annoying as all hell right now, but in six months likely we will all be dialing the prefix automatically.

Margaret Weller
Eugene

FOLLOWING PROCEDURE

Wouldn't it be nice if every worker had even half of the protections, pay and benefits that the police are given through their union contract? The Eugene government just signs off on whatever they want. Constant raises above the cost of living. A shoot first and ask questions later policy. Let God sort them out, right?

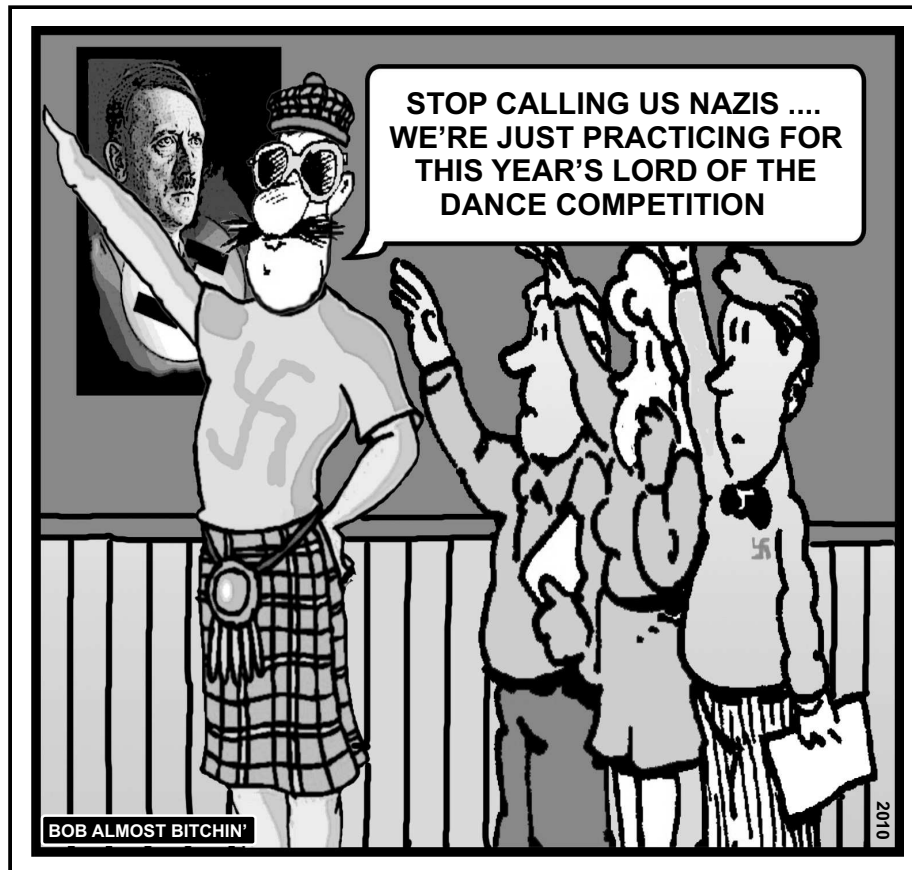
Lara and Magaña proved that a couple of serial rapist cops can continue their crime spree for years until 15 of their victims were willing to come forward and testify. Up until then their actions were considered “reasonable.” Right, Chief Kerns? All the public needs to know is that Proper Police Procedure, as described by the union (God) was followed. A lifetime “get out of trouble free” card.

Can we all join this union? I wish.

Spencer Hicks
Eugene

SPEAK UP, LOWELL

Do we or do we not live in a republic? As voters, are we so unimportant that those we voted in to office can ignore our vote? That is just what the city councilors of Lowell are doing. They proposed an urban renewal plan, spending thousands getting it on to a ballot for a special election. It was defeated. They wrote in the local city publication that we as voters need “re-education” because if we had “understood it we would have approved it.”



At the public hearing and at the next City Council meeting, the majority again said no. They refuse listen to the voters and continue to push their *own* agenda. I know some folks who will not be reelected if they continue to ignore their constituents. Speak up, Lowell!

Rich Peters
Lowell

GILMOUR NO HACK

I respectfully submit that whoever wrote the blurb for the Pink Floyd Experience does not know what he or she is talking about. I am not disputing the genius of Roger Waters or the ascendancy of Pink Floyd's classic albums, but there are some good songs on *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, and *The Division Bell* is solid throughout. Calling David Gilmour a "hack" is like calling Dali a doodler. It was Gilmour who saved Pink Floyd during the crack-up of Syd Barrett, and one of the best songs on *The Division Bell* is "Wearing the Inside Out," a tribute to Syd.

I was hoping Floyd would produce another album and tour (their stage set for the last one was too big to fit into Autzen) but the passing of Richard Wright makes that unlikely. At this “Experience” show at the Hult, I’m obviously psyched to hear the Floyd classics mentioned in your blurb, but “Astronomy Domine” and “Learning to Fly” would take the show higher for sure.

Tom Cantwell
Eugene

EXCUSING PREDATORS

Jonathan Guske's response ("Thieves Are Us," letters, 1/21) to my letter of Dec. 31 is incomprehensible at best. To justify

the actions of predatorial thieves who wait for their “marks” to leave a parking lot so they can smash windows and steal contents from their cars is unconscionable! It’s like saying “Oh, the poor darlings, they must be worse off than us. Let them continue their struggles to survive by preying on innocent victims. After all, they need their next fix.”

What bullshit! Predators are predators, no matter what their circumstances. So the county jail is overcrowded; thus, we should not try to catch these people? Are you serious?! Furthermore, to perpetrate the notion that homeless = dishonest benefits absolutely no one.

It is a grand insult to the homeless and disadvantaged to pin what appears to be an ongoing crime spree (witness the dozen or more piles of shattered window glass I saw in that parking lot) on one of them. More likely a local criminal enterprise is behind this, and they're probably not hurting for money, since they continue to get away with their misdeeds. In Guske's world, apparently, such lowlifes are welcome. In mine, they are not!

Peter Holden
Eugene

REPLACING CAPITALISM

Keith Stanton's letter ("We Want Higher Taxes," 1/21) is very, very interesting. Bureaucrats vote at *every* election, and there are more than 300,000 career bureaucrats in Oregon. Guess who is really governing Oregon?

Apparently the people who are *not* bureaucrats have given up any hope of every participating in their government? I wonder what is going to take the place of

capitalism in Oregon? Can the bureaucrats
do the same job?

Frank Skipton
Eugene

HISTORY LESSON

The Supreme Court's decision to allow unlimited corporate contributions to political campaigns is consistent with the Constitution, but it has nothing to do with free speech. Its roots are in the revolution.

In colonial America, the British were not monsters. They did not kill hundreds, imprison thousands, destroy the culture or even expropriate resources as they would in other colonies. They merely levied taxes.

Though the unilateral taxes were broadly unpopular, what American patricians found intolerable was the insolence: The British were not treating them as equals. The founding fathers cloaked their rage in the language of rights and spread unrest to ordinary folk (see Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*). The gentlemen's revolution took off.

The constitution these gentlemen wrote kept power away from the people. States decided who could vote for representatives — the landowners. State legislatures voted for senators. State legislatures chose electors and electors voted for president and vice president. Senators representing a minority could block legislation — a practice that has evolved to give less than 10 percent of the population absolute veto power.

Cut to the 2000 presidential election: The Florida legislature was moving toward nullifying the popular election and voting George Bush into office. This threatened to expose the U.S. Constitution as undemocratic, which was unthinkable. The conservative Supreme Court had to step in.

Ironically, the Constitution says nothing about the court's composition or its duty to review laws for constitutionality. There is no mention of political parties either, presumably because the fathers thought of the country as a private club. What comes in for special attention are the rights of slave owners.

Only when the people blocked ratification of the constitution did the fathers tack on the Bill of Rights. This afterthought has been the focus of legislation and litigation ever since, and this has forged the real American revolution.

For the court's originalists, though, the Constitution remains holy writ. In creating a permanent Republican majority (see Karl Rove), they are looking out for their class, which distrusts the people and sees no need for two parties. We should call them on it.

Douglas Brown
Eugene

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