

his car. My feet were still on the pavement so I literally started running for my life afraid that if I fell off the front of his car I would fall under his right front wheel. After being pushed 25 feet I finally managed to roll over and off the right of the vehicle onto the ground as his car finally came to a stop.

The ambulance came, though I was up on my feet before it arrived. Two cops arrived. Information forms provided by the officers were exchanged. The driver was apparently more shaken than I, for I couldn't even read his handwriting. I asked the officer to get the man's phone number at least.

I'm extremely lucky not to have suffered any broken bones though lots of aches and pains showed up. But the

crowning touch — the driver didn't even get cited! This has to have been an oversight on the officer's part.

I suppose I should drop the matter, but two things I'd like answers to: Why did it take so long for the driver to stop, and why wasn't he issued a citation? Hitting a pedestrian in a crosswalk?

No longer driving, I carried no insurance so have no agent to take issue with the driver's insurance company. Naturally, I haven't heard "boo" from them so I'm left holding the bag (empty).

*Dave Heying
Eugene*

DO TELL

I have to ask. When will gays be free? I have to tell you that my own house is

divided over the argument whether gays are born gay, or choose to be gay.

One side of the debate quotes scripture to make being gay immoral, a mental and spiritual affliction, repentance and therapy being the "cure."

I believe that sexual gender attraction is a genetic trait, much like skin and eye color. And like eye and skin color, there are many variations.

Our society is still evolving from the dark ages of race discrimination, separating people by color. It is way past time to tear down the wall that seeks to separate and discriminate against people because of their sexual attraction.

*Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain*

DEFENDING PATIENTS

The workers at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center who staged a one-day strike on Nov. 17 are fighting for all of us. The reality is that any of us could end up in the hospital, and our stay there could be a matter of life and death.

The labor unions at McKenzie-Willamette are the strongest force defending good patient care. To find out how you can support the hospital workers, and get other labor movement alerts, you can sign up for the email list of the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice (maybe four to six message per month) at www.solidaritynetwork.org

*Milton Takei
Eugene*

Viewpoint BY ROB HANDY

Charging Ahead

Commission made progress in 2010, but what's coming?

Over the holidays I was asked by several folks whether I still have the heart for being a progressive Lane County commissioner, given the political realities of our time. In answering, I realized I am not discouraged. Politics - even dealing with dirty politics are part of the job. Regardless of political mud-slinging, I remain committed to protecting forest and farmlands, protecting the quality of our air and water, developing sustainable transportation and economic policies that are locally based and protecting services to children and families vital to our community.

What's important is to simply keep going; there is much work worth doing as a commissioner. I am working every day for the things we believe in, and I plan to continue as long as the people of my district will elect me.

Along with sharing some of the highlights from 2010, I want to alert people that the make-up of the commission is shifting in 2011. There will now be a majority of the board with clear connections to land speculators as well as corporate timber and extraction interests. Their campaigns were well-funded by these interests. This translates into a need for all of us to be ever vigilant. We need to keep careful watch over upcoming debates and decisions and not lose the ground we have recently gained to re-localize our economy, sustain our natural resources and provide services to those in the most need.

Handy Highlights from 2010:

- Provided funding to NextStep Recycling, Ninkasi Brewing and Arcimoto to help them leverage investments in local job growth, for facility expansion and to help launch a stage 4 electric vehicle prototype and move Arcimoto closer towards production - and more family wage jobs.
- Advocated for a revitalized agriculture sector, where we grow, process, distribute and consume locally in an integrated food system. We held three town hall meetings on this topic this year and provided funding for Camas Country Mill to help build a new grain and bean milling facility near Junction City, understanding that a 1 percent increase in local food production/consumption equates to an \$11.7 million positive impact for Lane County's economy. Currently, 90 percent of the money spent on food in Lane County goes out of our local economy.
- Expanded primary health care to 20,000 Lane

County residents, including opening our Charnelton Health Clinic in Eugene, and expanding the Riverstone Clinic in Springfield.

- Helped Lane County save \$1 million on safety improvements for the city of Coburg west of I-5, protecting the beautiful Coburg Hills from sprawl spreading up its flanks.
- Advocated to use transportation dollars for improved transit service and for safer alternatives for bikes when traveling on busy arterials.
- Led efforts to protect funding of services for women, children, families and veterans.
- Led efforts to revitalize our Lane County Commission for the Advancement of Human Rights (CAHR).
- Led efforts and worked with war veterans in the LGBTQ community to pass a Lane County Resolution in support of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."
- Helped create the Lane County Area Commission on Transportation (ACT), ensuring designated seats for environmental, land use, pedestrian/bike, trucking and rail representation.
- Worked on the Belt Line Corridor Steering Committee to address interim safety and congestion improvements for Belt Line near Delta Highway and identify long-term solutions.
- Raised the red flag at the county on renaming the Belt Line and spending enormous amounts of money with no public input into the process. I wrote and passed the county resolution that passed unanimously against this decision by the state.

Things to Watch in 2011. With this newly constituted Board of Commissioners, the potential danger ahead is:

- A return to the old ways of tax breaks and waivers for wealthy and large corporations. As a county, we cannot afford it and historically (Sony, Hynix) we have seen that this doesn't work; we need to support the sustainability and expansion of existing businesses in Lane County.
- A shifting of most or all costs from developers to new homebuyers, renters and Mom and Pop shops for roads, sidewalks, curbs. Developers should pay their fair share; they are the ones making the profit.
- Proposals for a law enforcement special taxing district that will divert scarce public dollars to



unelected and unaccountable decisionmakers and away from public budgets. Including public oversight ensures funds for prevention, treatment, community corrections and services for victims of crime. Clearly a need for jail beds is essential, but public safety is more than jail beds - it is a holistic system, and all of its parts need resources.

- Cuts that will starve programs that serve families, kids, veterans, women victimized by violence, people with mental health challenges, the chronically homeless and other extremely vulnerable members of our community. This decision will likely be framed as one of public safety vs. community services. The reality is, the more desperate people are, the more crime increases.
- Rubberstamping of urban growth boundary (UGB) expansions of cities countywide which could destroy more of our shrinking farmland and forestland. There is room for growth - but it has to be thoughtfully decided and never rubber-stamped.
- Lack of support to ensure high standards for air and water quality, leading to higher health care costs and lessening of our quality of life.
- Weakening our unions. Now, more than ever, we have to protect family wage jobs and benefits. The more people we have in that category, the more robust the local economy.
- Eliminating the citizen advisory committees that inform commissioners on a myriad of important issues from human rights to transportation to the epidemic of childhood obesity.
- Eliminating the TV and web broadcasts of commission meetings which will greatly weaken the public's accessibility to our process and decisions.

One important lesson I have learned this year is not to take political machinations personally. Progressive commissioners and other electeds all over the country are being targeted simply to change the political landscape to one friendlier to the far right. I urge us all to be media savvy and vigilant in watching how the Palin tactics of our times are being played out here locally. Support your progressive politicians in whatever way you are able - we need to maintain our seats at the table and look out for the interests of the majority of the people. A robust democracy depends on the involvement of the people - and we need you now more than ever. I look forward to continuing the good fight into 2011 and beyond. Come join us.

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