

**GROWNUPS HAVE SPOKEN**

On May 17, the voters of this community sent a clear message that they couldn't care less about your future. This was not done by crackpot politicians elected from other states to the federal government, or even by people from a different part of Oregon. It was the so-called grownup population of Eugene, people you see in your neighborhood every day, who had the opportunity to save something vital about our schools, and who enthusiastically kicked it down. That had to hurt.

During your many coming "furlough days," you might want to go have a look at some of the fancy houses in the Cal Young area and on the edge of town. The decision was made to make your schools suck so that the people who live there could continue to live in luxury without paying taxes. You're not allowed in those houses. And now, so that they can stay in the lifestyle to which they're accustomed, you won't be allowed in your schools as much either.

The job outlook for our community just took a big hit too. There aren't many employers who will go out of their way to set up in a community with a poorly educated workforce, and we already have as many Wal-Marts as we need.

However, our community has not forgotten you entirely. When you're given a diploma and set loose with no education,

no marketable skills, and no job outlook, the people who voted your school measure down will spare no expense to see that your prison cell is ready for you.

*Andrew Ross  
Eugene*

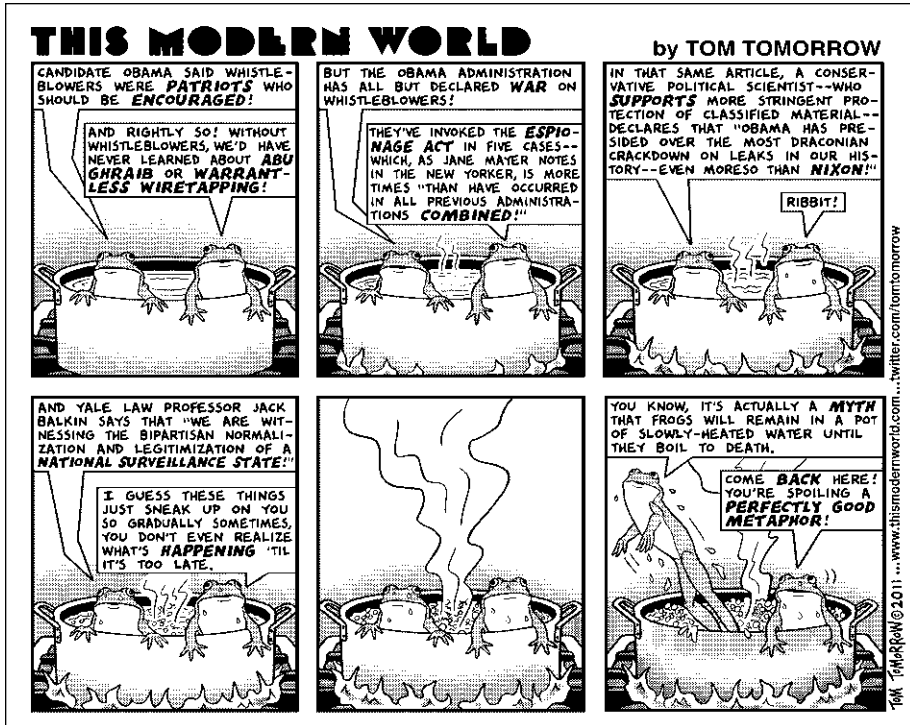
**ORI BAD TASTE**

I am a former masters student at the UO, and I continue to make my home in Eugene after leaving the university. I plan to be here for the rest of my life, and I use and love the riverfront bike trail dearly.

The originally proposed site for the new ORI parking lot (and building) is not in the best interest of the people planning this development. In light of the huge outpouring of public disapproval, if they continue to push the original plan through, they are going to leave a bad taste in the mouth of Eugene and the UO community for years to come. This taste is not easy to get out.

I would encourage the people planning the proposed ORI building to choose a different, more suitable site that isn't so controversial. It seems that 1700 Millrace Drive — a huge open lot within an already existing office park — would be an ideal location.

I came previously from Cornell University, where a strikingly similar affair took place over a proposed parking lot to be built over a small patch of historic



woodland. The administration there refused to listen to public outcry, and sued and sued until they got their way. The affair became national news, the university was very publicly embarrassed, and still its memory lives on.

I would ask the UO president, the head of ORI, and the developers to please consider whether or not they want to repeat this sad story in our town.

*Ethan Rainwater  
Eugene*

**WOOD WASTE**

I built houses for nearly 20 years. Houses are big, so instead of making them in a factory, they are made on site using factory mass production techniques. Contractors are paid by the building, meaning you make more money the faster you are. An essential element to all this is dimensional lumber, because like McDonald's, uniformity means speed. So 8-foot sheets of plywood and 8-foot sheets of drywall land perfectly on studs and

**viewpoint** BY GORDON LAFER

**It's Not a Deficit; It's Robbery**

If I hear one more rich person complain about how we can't afford healthcare or education for the little people, I'm going to shoot someone.

"We're tapped out," cries millionaire heiress Jennifer Solomon. Schools have to "live within their budgets, just like we have to." Sure — if only those whiny kids and their loser parents would follow Solomon's example, and go out and inherit their own timber companies!

The truth is that we're not "broke" — neither Oregon nor the country as a whole. There's plenty of money in the country. The problem is that it's being hoarded by the people at the top — who buy off politicians to make sure that they keep getting richer while the rest of us live in growing fear for ourselves and our kids.

Almost every state is now facing huge budget crises, with devastating cuts being forced on communities around the country. In Arizona, the Governor has proposed cutting off health insurance for nearly 300,000 people — including some in the middle of chemotherapy or dialysis treatments. The city of Camden, NJ has laid off half its police force, and in Cleveland five firehouses are being shut down. Texas is contemplating closing 850 of the state's 1,000 nursing homes, forcing the frail low-income elderly out into the streets. There's no question that people will die as a result of these cuts.

Here in Oregon, thousands of people who are struggling to make it through the recession are being cut off from healthcare, food stamps and nursery school for their kids. Training and treatment programs for developmentally disabled people will be eliminated. And employees at the UO are being

asked to take a 20 percent cut — a setback that will doubtless force some into bankruptcy and others to lose their homes.

But none of this is necessary.

The entire budget shortfall — for every state in the country — could be made up by doing two simple things.

First, end the tax cuts created by President Bush for people who make more than \$250,000 a year. We're now giving up \$50 billion a year to help these people who need it the least. Second, make the rich play by the same rules as everyone else. Ninety percent of the money earned by buying and selling stocks on Wall Street goes to the richest 10 percent of the country — most of it to people who make more than a million dollars a year. But incredibly, these people pay a lower income tax rate than do regular working Americans. The price of letting the Wall Streeters off easy is almost \$90 billion a year. Those two things together add up to more than the total budget deficit in all the states in the country.

That's it. The rich pay their fair share and the deficit is gone. Teachers are back in the classroom, the elderly infirm are back in nursing homes, cancer patients are back in chemo, cops and firefighters are back on the street, and hard-working UO employees can continue to earn a modest but decent living.

But the Republicans have pledged their undying opposition to both these proposals — raising taxes on the rich is "unacceptable," insists House Speaker John Boehner — and the Democrats are too spineless to force the issue.

As a political scientist, I'm sometimes asked how it's possible in a democracy that laws get passed that run against the interests of the majority. But you don't need to be a professor to know the answer: Politicians are in hock to the rich.

If you thought you had a voice in the political process because you gave someone \$20 over the internet — sorry, but you've been played. In last year's Congressional elections, more than two-thirds of all campaign contributions came from the top 1 percent of the population. There's no place for the little people in this process. Even the labor movement — the only serious voice on behalf of normal working Americans — was outspent 20-to-1 by corporations.

It's no wonder that a majority of Americans are so disillusioned with both Democrats and Republicans that they believe the country needs a third party. I think that part of what people on both the left and the right long for is a sense of honor in politics, rather the clever manipulations or weaselly evasiveness that have become the hallmark of elected officials.

I've long since accepted that we live in an Orwellian era, where people who want to destroy schools and undercut job standards get to call themselves "Citizens for Jobs and Schools."

But once in a while I still fantasize about what it would be like if politicians actually told the truth.

If John Boehner had the guts to man up and be honest, here's what he'd have to say: "I believe it's so important to give more money to the richest people in the country that I'm willing to have kids kicked out of daycare, old people made homeless, and cancer patients denied treatment in order to pay for it." Because that's the truth, and anything else is political spin designed to keep us all clueless sheep. As the old saying goes, don't piss down my back and tell me it's raining. The money's there; the only question is whether we use it on teachers for our kids and nursing homes for our parents, or to help out poor Jennifer Solomon in her moment of need.

*In 2009-10, UO professor Gordon Lafer served as a senior policy advisor to the U.S. House of Representatives.*

