

# Unconstitutional

Rob Handy's district gets big conservative infusion with redistricting

The Lane County Charter specifically states that: In accordance with federal, state or county census figures, the boundaries of the five districts shall be drawn by the Board of Commissioners so as not to deny any person equal protection of the law.

This equal protection of the law clause, a reference to 14th Amendment protection, includes protection against intentional dilution of the "worth" of one's vote. Redistricting which reflects an effort "to gain political advantage" has, as its goal, that diminishment of the value of a citizen's vote. A jurisdiction's charter does not require specific written limitations against gerrymandering to be subject to the limitations provided by our Constitution. Gerrymandering is, by definition, the denial of "equal representation" and violates our Constitution.

In the specific case of the Lane County Commissioners' adoption of "Proposal #8" we see an egregious action to remove hundreds (likely thousands) of Democratic Party-registered voters from the North Eugene commissioner's district and thrust them into the South Eugene commissioner's district. The unique characteristics of both districts and the specific targeting of an easily identified Democratic Party-aligned neighborhood documents this action as blatant gerrymandering.

The South Eugene District is the most heavily Democratic Party-registered voters' district in Lane County. It has, for years, elected and reelected the most liberal member of the Board of Commissioners. It is so recognized as a bastion of Democratic Party and liberal strength that the Republican Party and conservative political groups simply don't bother to run "serious" campaigns to win this commissioner's seat. Therefore, a gerrymandering plan to "pack" this district with more Democrats will not increase the likelihood of a Democratic/progressive commissioner's victory or decrease the likelihood of a Republican/conservative's defeat in the South Eugene district. It's already considered as one of the "safest" electoral districts in the state of Oregon.

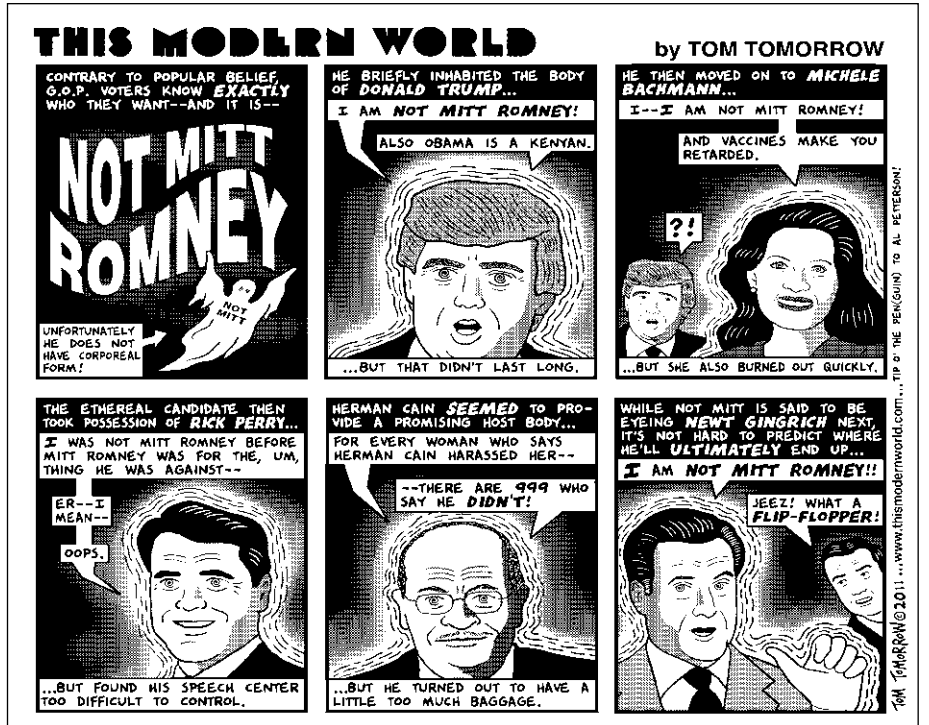
The North Eugene commissioner's district, on the other hand, is a very "mixed" district. While it has a majority of Democratic Party-registered voters, it is far from the left-dominated district the South Eugene commissioner's district represents. Elections have been extremely competitive with the current liberal commissioner seated after a 2008 victory over a conservative incumbent by a margin of about 250 votes. In political jargon, the North Eugene district is very much "in play" for the upcoming 2012 election. Moreover, a very conservative Eugene city councilor has declared his intention to run for the North Eugene commissioner's position. So an upcoming election between a Democratic Party/progressive incumbent and a Republican Party/conservative challenger is virtually guaranteed. That race is also guaranteed to be heavily financed, heavily fought and, of course, extremely competitive.

**The neighborhood targeted** by Proposal #8 to be moved to South Eugene is very unique in our community. The West Jefferson/ Whiteaker neighborhood of the North Eugene district is a mix of apartments and single-family homes occupied by working-class voters. It is also one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhoods in Eugene and is recognized across Eugene as a left-leaning, progressive neighborhood. The very heavy Democratic voter registration in the neighborhood attests to this fact.

The commissioner's redistricting plan (Commissioner Jay Bozievich's Proposal #8) removes more than 9,000 residents of this neighborhood from the North Eugene district and thrusts them into the South Eugene district. This transfer removes hundreds (actually likely thousands) of clearly identifiable Democrats (and, therefore, more likely supporters of the liberal candidate in the upcoming election) from the competitive North Eugene district and moves them into the South Eugene district. The redistricting gives a huge political advantage to the conservative candidate in the upcoming North Eugene race.

Bozievich's Proposal #8, adopted by a 3-2 vote of the commissioners, is a poster child for gerrymandering. It gives demonstrable political advantage to the Republican/conservative candidate in the North Eugene district. In fact, if it stands, it will virtually guarantee his election. This action by the conservative commissioners (Bozievich, Faye Stewart and Sid Leiken) represents everything which is wrong with politics today. It is incumbent on us, as responsible citizens of Lane County, to see that it is overturned.

*Gary Crum of Junction City is a retired teacher and counselor who worked with dysfunctional adolescents over a 28 year career in public schools, probation facilities and residential treatment facilities.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### UP IS NOW DOWN

Let me get this straight. The Tea Party majority on the Board of County Commissioners has declared that many square miles of rural east Lane County is in Springfield metropolitan area, that the area of urban southwest Eugene where students attend Churchill High School is in rural east Lane County and that people who live in neighborhoods north of downtown Eugene (and mostly north of the city's geographic center) are in south Eugene.

I have to say, this is exactly what I would expect from the Tea Party, which is bound and determined to prevent progress of any kind, but want to return us to medieval times when commoners were subject to the whims of layers and layers of royalty and aristocracy.

Unlike their predecessors who (mostly) worked as public servants, the Lane County Wonderland Tea Party majority wants to be our masters.

By corrupting our language, the Tea Party majority attempt to disguise their corruption, favoritism and nepotism.

Like Humpty Dumpty, they declare that "when [we] use a word, it means exactly what [we] want it to mean, neither more nor less." Up is down, north is south, east is west, morality is stood on its head.

Where and when will it all end?

*Ann Tattersall  
Eugene*

### NEW KLCC LINEUP

I am writing in reference to the Oct. 27 letter from David Kennedy regarding the changes in the KLCC programming. I could not disagree more with his opinion on the issue.

For years now I have cringed while working as the NPR news segments have ended and *Fresh Tracks* began airing the awful noises that some consider music in this town. I don't want to hear music from some guy with clicks and whistles in his name as he beats on a gourd with bamboo sticks and sings in Swahili, nor do I want to hear the most Caucasian woman on Earth singing some turd of a folk song about Susan B. Anthony!

If that is your genre, I suggest you go to one of the New Age stores around town

that sell world music, or terrible suburban folk music. Buy it and listen to it in your car, because I assure you that you are in the minority; nobody else wants to listen to it.

NPR should be the bulk of the content of KLCC. It is the reason I listen when I do, and I am finally considering pledging now that they have taken most of their daily air pollution off the airwaves. If I want to hear music that I enjoy, I have long since given up on radio. That is what an iPod is for.

*Matt Watkins  
Eugene*

### TRIPPING ON PIZZA

Let's face it: when it comes to pizza, Eugene sucks. But for fuck's sake, let's at least show some discernment (Best of Eugene, 11/3). Pizza Research Institute? I've got news for P.R.I.: the Italians perfected pizza a long time ago, and no one comes closer to this ideal than Provisions (La Perla's a close second). If you're still doing the research, I'd suggest you stop and examine your methodology. As for Pegasus, they've been getting by on their laurels for so long, I think people who haven't been there in 10 years are still voting for them. I appreciate a good nostalgia trip as much as the next stuck-in-the-past Eugenean, but give me a fucking break.

*Bill Shaw  
Eugene*

### THE IMPOVERISHED

Residing within our national borders, scattered and largely unseen, is a Lilliputian country nearly the population of the Netherlands, with well more than 16 million people. One need not travel far to find its diminutive inhabitants: the nearest dental free clinic, urgent care, discount grocer, or public school. They are America's impoverished children, and according to new Census data they now account for more than one in three of our friends and neighbors living in privation.

A record 49 million Americans now live at the bottom rungs of American life. Untold millions more live barely one rung up, hanging on by their overworked and bitten fingernails. Most have worked hard but are unemployed, studied hard