

NOT THE ANSWER

There are several problems with the change proposed by Andy Stahl to save money by reducing the Lane County board from five to three commissioners, and electing them at-large like most counties (*EW* news, 1/12). With more than 100 county layoffs expected, eliminating two commissioner positions isn't anywhere near the scale needed to balance the budget. While it's true that most Oregon counties have three commissioners, changing Lane back to three would make it the most populous county in Oregon with such a small board, resulting in commissioners becoming more remote from voters. The likely result of going backwards to at-large elections would be a one-party rule that would limit the diversity of perspectives on the board at a time when new ideas are needed to solve pressing public problems.

The recent conflict over redistricting leaves no doubt there are issues with the way the board is elected. Even though there are more Democratic than Republican voters in Lane County, gerrymandering ensures a Republican majority on the commission because Democratic voters are packed into the two Eugene districts. For example, Pete Sorenson received more than twice the votes of Sid Leiken, diluting the relative value of votes in South Eugene by half.

District-based elections are authoritarian, allowing politicians to debase voting by manipulating boundaries to choose their voters. A true reform in the public interest would advance fair and effective representation for everyone by enacting an alternate election method that doesn't require districts, eliminating redistricting and gerrymandering completely.

*Brian Wanty
Eugene*

SHODDY EPUD

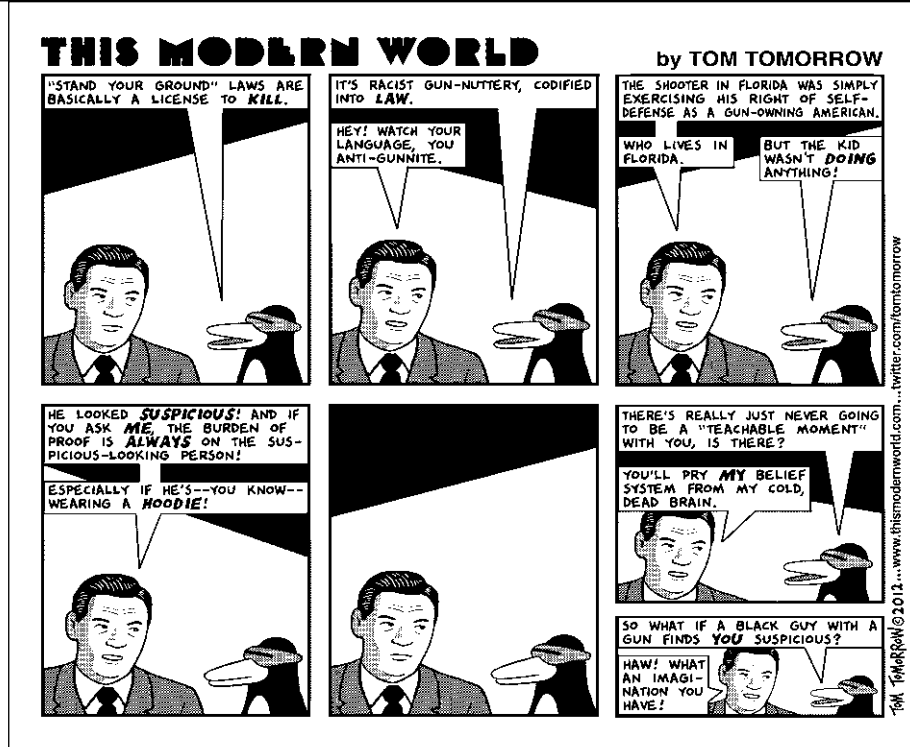
It's time for Lane County residents to demand that the Public Utilities Commission reassign control of Emerald Peoples Utility District. This company is not competent to run an electric district.

While the strength of the March 21 storm was unpredictable, the power going out in Cottage Grove was not. It's a regular occurrence, in all weather conditions.

On March 12, during a light drizzle, power was out. Two weeks earlier, on a partly cloudy night, the power went out in the middle of the night. Nothing like waking up in the morning and the inside temperature is 55 degrees, and dropping.

This shoddy service is not isolated to this year. The same has occurred throughout the four years I've lived in Cottage Grove. EPUD's annual response? Hold a community meeting and bring pizza!

This is more than just inconvenient. For families with very young or elderly at home, a cold house and no hot food can quickly become a health and safety issue. Homeowners should also be concerned that EPUD's growing reputation for unreliability and poor performance will lower property values. Who wants to live in a neighborhood where the power goes out all the time?



EPUD claims these incidents are an "act of God." I say they are an act of incompetence. The entire management team — from administration to engineering — should be removed and a service reliability plan instituted.

*Allan Katz
Cottage Grove*

SITE REVIEW NEEDED

The residents of Dexter are pleased that the hearings official has reconsidered his former decision and now agrees a site review is needed regarding the rock mining operation at Parvin Butte. The intention of the site review land use law is to allow the residents to have their valid concerns taken into consideration.

The Demers' and McDougals' rock mining operation is doing everything it can to bypass this important process. This is not a typical location for a rock quarry. Looking around at other quarries, there are no homes or towns nearly as close as those near to the historic Parvin Butte. There are many serious issues that need to be addressed such as well water quality, Lost Creek salmon habitat degradation, noise and air quality to name a few. Some of the residents have health issues that would require them to move and have to sell their homes at greatly reduced rates if this quarry operation takes place.

Neighbors of such destructive land use must be allowed, without hesitation, to have their concerns addressed in a formal fashion. A company with integrity and morals would comply graciously with a site-review process. Something is seriously wrong with our land-use laws if a site review does not take place.

*Donald Alexander
Dexter*

FOREST LAND-GRAB

A test of the mettle of a person occurs when he chooses the correct course of action, despite the fact that it is less convenient. This is the case with Pete Sorenson's opposition to the foolhardy O&C trust scheme to convert federal forests into private-lands logging reserves in order to fund county budgets, and to deliver a bonanza of federal timber to the timber industry.

Sorenson is not someone who would ever advocate nullifying all federal environmental laws, as the O&C Trust scheme requires.

For the 15 or 20 years I have known Pete, he has been a consistent, reasoned advocate for protection of our environment: clean water, clean air, abundant native fish and wildlife, and adequate supporting habitat.

Funding counties via a land-grab resulting in the clearcut logging of 1.5 million acres of federal forests is certainly convenient — just let Reps. DeFazio, Schrader and Walden have their way, and the money will flow.

But convenience isn't what matters; integrity is what matters. It is no surprise to me that Sorenson will take the time to patiently work out alternate measures for funding county services — measures that meet the county's needs while protecting prime environmental values.

Sorenson is a leading advocate of logging federal forests where that is appropriate, for example, thinning all the clearcuts created (and planted with Douglas fir) from 1960 to 1995 — 35 years of logging, with planted trees now as old as 52 years.

Pete Sorenson has the fortitude to make the correct choices, even if they are difficult.

*Tom Giesen
Eugene*

PLASTIC BULLIES

To the Corvallis mayor and council: I reiterate my strong support for all our citizenry and our environment — through the Corvallis City Council's original request of the Administrative Services Committee to develop a plan to reduce the use of plastic bags in the Corvallis area, through a retail plastic bag ban.

Our city's distinction as a recognized progressive leader in sustainability and liveability through reasoned and objective planning and application will be severely compromised if we can be so publicly bullied by aggressive out-of-state corporate interests, such as Hilex Poly, who share neither our vision nor our integrity. Whatever obfuscation and adversity these profit and waste-based interests throw at

us, we can know that current operating bag bans have worked well and are sustainable — if we have the will, fortitude and integrity of purpose and vision.

Corvallis' sustainability goals and our distinctive reputation are solely on the line with this issue. Yes, please do the right thing and represent our local interest above corporate profits and waste. This is a small, yet very significant step towards sustainability for Corvallis, our region and the planet.

Do not let your love of wisdom and reason be eroded through opposing tactics of greed, fear and complicated ignorance. It is past time to ban the bag now!

*Ralph Penunuri
Corvallis*

KNOWLEDGE OVER FEAR

The mainstream media is fraught with omissions while frequently straying from the truth. It is also owned and controlled by a group of wealthy power-brokers who are not looking out for the best interests of the people and planet earth. Given this reality, we must actively seek truth that resonates with us.

At <http://bit.ly/y5Kzh0> you will find an article listing story headlines on 320 CEO and executive resignations from banks and financial institutions, internationally, in the last half year. There were 92 resignations in February and 77 resignations in the first two weeks of March.

At <http://bit.ly/xEqqlw> is a scientific study which shows how a tightly-knit 'super entity' of 147 financial institutions control over 40 percent of the global economy. This was published Oct. 11, 2011 in the *New Scientist*.

Goldman Sachs has seen 14 executives resign, Bank of America six, J.P. Morgan six and Citigroup three. Twelve executives from central banks around the world have resigned or been killed. Russia has issued an arrest warrant for George Soros.

This has not been analyzed or reported in the media, because the media is being controlled. The cabal who has brought us environmental destruction, war and poverty will no longer be tolerated on earth. There is much backstory to this. I encourage you to seek knowledge over fear.

*Adriane Myers
Eugene*

PHOTOSYNTHESIS DIVINE

I did my eighth and ninth grades in a Catholic school. Even though my education included religion, we did have the benefit that the principal, an ordained priest, had been trained in biology which he taught for a while before taking on the robes. One time while he was visiting my classroom a student asked "if it's true that humans come from monkeys." I was expecting to have to defend evolution in which I deeply believed but was pleasantly surprised when the priest said that Darwin's theories are not in conflict with the belief in God or in a higher organizational intelligence.

My main interest was chemistry and to this day I remember the first equation which I learned and which would guide my transformation into an environmentalist. These teachings explained the most important secrets of how all forms of life,