

LESS HOT AIR

Casting a myopic eye on the state Legislature, former Sen. Tony Corcoran ["Hot Air Society" column, 2/21] avers that we ought to be optimistic about Gov. Kitzhaber and the Democratic majority he enjoys. He touts Kitzhaber's Oregon Health Plan and Salmon Plan as having "already established his legacy."

Indeed. To address the urgent needs of threatened and endangered salmon for effective legislation, in his first term Kitzhaber prescribed a sugar-coated, voluntary recovery plan. In 2011 he commissioned a "Streamlining and Simplification Project" to undermine the land use protections and public participation instigated by Republican governor, Tom McCall, that, weak as they are, helped Oregon's economy weather the recession better than other states without them.

Further, in 2012 Kitzhaber created an expert panel, primarily of logging interests and their enablers, to facilitate the DeFazio-Walden-Schrader plan to give BLM/O&C public forestlands to the logging industry.

Corcoran would do himself and his readers a service by removing his rose-colored glasses, taking a clear-eyed look at some of the legislators he favors, waking up to an overheated earth, and blowing less hot air himself.

Robert Emmons
Fall Creek

RETHINK OUR CITY

Like Richie Weinman ("Specifics Needed" letter, 2/14), I believe specific recommendations for addressing our city's financial woes are essential if we are to have a reasoned and productive community-wide conversation. I also think that this most recent recession is evidence enough of a need to rethink many of the basic assumptions we hold about how we fund our government and the services it provides.

Here are just a few suggestions for how the city of Eugene might begin to address the current and future revenue shortfalls:

- End tax giveaways to developers. Capstone is just the latest example of the city's ongoing ill-advised transfer of public funds into private hands. The lost revenue alone would have provided more than \$1 million toward the city's 2013 fiscal gap.

- Sunset the Riverfront Urban Renewal District. Not one project has been built in all these years and we lose almost a million dollars in tax revenue every year that would go to 4J, LCC, the county and the city's general fund.

- Rein in spending on consultants, facilitators and public relations staff. The city spent \$2.5 million on a team of consultants for the most recent City Hall plan. In this latest budget cycle the city is spending another \$750,000 for additional

consulting work. Now the city is deploying its PR staff to convince us of the need for more revenue.

- The Police Commission no longer serves its original purpose now that the city has a police auditor. Discontinue that commission, the Citizen's Police Academy, the Seniors Volunteer program and other non-essential advisory committees.

- Make every Tier 1 PERS employee earning at the top of their pay scale an early retirement offer they can't refuse. And also end the practice of rehiring top administrators who've retired with full PERS benefits as "contractors."

- Reorganize the city's staffing plan to minimize managerial positions and adjust the salary schedule to ensure that no employee makes more than the \$93,600 paid to our governor.

Unlike Richie Weinman, I didn't earn a six figure income working for the city before retiring as a Tier 1 PERS beneficiary.

David Monk
Eugene

HELP SAVE OUR BEES

We would like to thank Doug Hornaday for his letter, "Killing My Bees" [2/21] and Beyond Toxics for their help in eliminating pesticide spraying that is indeed killing off our bee population.

We own five acres in the foothills outside

of Junction City where we've lived for the past 11 years. Our property is chemical free as we've tried to create a bee friendly area. Clover is planted between our raised beds as well as a wide variety of plants and herbs that bloom throughout the growing season to entice them to stay on the property.

We realize that even though we do what we can, we can't control where they travel and know that spraying exists on forestlands as well as nearby vineyards.

In the last two years, we've lost three of our hives and we hope awareness will be raised to the extent that our bee population as well as the waterways will be protected.

David and Elaine Kost
Junction City

TOO DANGEROUS?

The Feb. 21 *EW* reviewed five "Top Documentaries." Curiously, however, these were not the five Oscar nominees. Excluded from *EW*'s list were the three films arguably of greatest importance to the "progressive" readership *EW* lays claim to.

The Invisible War dealing with the high frequency and systemic impunity of military sexual assault was ignored by the *EW* review. This film is of considerable interest to all critics of U.S. militarism and its attitudinal underpinnings as well as gender equity proponents.

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

A Collection of Nuts

THEY COME IN MULTIPLE FLAVORS

During the first two months of any Oregon legislative session, early in the game, the fringe usually shows up. Single-issue, uncompromising intimidators beat their wedge issue drums for all to hear. The self-righteous anti-choice wackjobs — with their red roses and plastic fetuses — for example. And the angry Second Amendment crowd — with their paranoid delusions. These folks collectively make the Capitol building look more like a concentrated confederacy of dunces than usual. They are followed, of course, on April 15 by the tax nuts, another subgroup we'll discuss later.

There is a Bonnie-and-Clyde feel during gun battles in the Capitol, funny but ultimately tragic. The anti-government constituent screams at you; in the case of the elected official, he challenges your most basic assumptions about cooperation and good government. Hostile, threatening if they want to be, I saw every type of citizen and lobbyist behavior, especially on gun issues.

Gun nuts, as you know come in two flavors. Left-wing gun nuts, like Democrat Sen. Ginny Burdick, are out to confiscate and melt down all our weapons into plowshares and maybe a few Volvos. Right-wing gun nuts on the other hand, like Republican House member Tim Freeman, would require a howitzer in every Oregon household. There is no moderate, tweener gun nut in Oregon anymore. They used to be called hunters.

Ginny Burdick is the Anti-Annie Oakley of Oregon. She drives the NRA crazy and that's a good thing. She's the kind of Portland "nanny government" liberal who invented those famous ODOT traffic signs you see at Willamette Pass: "Do Not Pass Snowplows On The Right." Helpful, really, but somewhat obvious.

But apparently Ginny is hardening with age. Recently, she became so frustrated with slow drivers who don't stay in the right lane on interstate highways that she's introduced a bill that would make it a illegal to drive in the left lane unless you're passing someone. With a \$1,000 fine possible. Seriously! Several rabid Republican senators jumped on the bill and added a few friendly amendments: allowing drive-by shootings of slow drivers if the faster car has a semiautomatic rifleperson riding stagecoach as long as he/she is not concealed. Obviously, for safety reasons, it would be crazy to allow a possibly distracted driver to shoot, so that is specifically

exempted. I mean, what if the driver was also on a cell phone? Talk about being a distracted driver!

In the House, Roseburg's Tim Freeman has a bill that would invalidate all federal gun restrictions! Oregon law enforcement officers would be required to ignore them. Seriously? Oh, and get this. Rep. Freeman is so clever! He requested House bill number 3006 — get it? 30.06 or 30 ought six, everybody's favorite rifle cartridge! Such a good ol' boy.

Now, I know a lot of you are like me; honestly, you kinda look down at the House of Representatives, sort of a House of Commons — with commoners. But, just so you don't think the Senate is any brighter, Sen. Brian Boquist from Dallas, a former federal congressional candidate, has cutely proposed a bill requiring background checks on knives; the Oregon State Police would be required to keep a state registry of all knives transferred in state. Get it, you nanny liberals? Dare I say "overkill"?

As I've said before, these silly measures would ultimately have to go through a Senate Judiciary Committee chaired by my friend Floyd Prozanski. We are all lucky in that regard. Floyd, a former prosecutor and a crime victim himself, has an amazing personal story regarding guns. His sister was shot to death by her boyfriend when she was 21 years old, a classic domestic violence case. She told him she was leaving; he killed her. Floyd was 18 at the time; he went to the morgue to identify the remains. That experience, in part, motivated him to become a lawyer and a legislator.

Floyd and I went into the House as freshmen together, along with Kitty Piercy and seven other Democrats in 1995. Floyd knows his way around guns. We have a skeet thrower and 20-gauge shotguns and Floyd's been out to our place with his 4-10 shotgun blasting away at the clay pigeon population; and — believe me — clay pigeons are not an endangered species based on our marksmanship.

Anyway, hopefully most of the absurd gun measures will disappear as this session of the Hot Air Society unfolds in Salem. I think Floyd Frank will see to that. Next up: Ways and Means.

Tony Corcoran is currently a state employee and his observations in this column are those of a private Oregon citizen.

