

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Frequently, significant events are supported by a long history of effort. That is true with the upcoming visit of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

In 1998, members of a diverse community formed under the name of the Universal Peace Celebration Committee. Many civic, business and political leaders endorsed our efforts to bring the Dalai Lama to Eugene and to Oregon for a second visit. Our efforts are now coming to fruition.

Special thanks must go to former president Dave Frohnmayer and Barbara West of the UO. Additional thanks goes to Sen. Ron Wyden and Field Representative Juine Chada, Congressman Peter DeFazio, former gov. Ted Kulongoski and his staff, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy and her staff, professors Judith Baskin and Mark Unno of the UO Department of Religious Studies, Thea Albright, chair of the Interfaith Prayer and Reflection Service, the Rev. Sherry Lady of the Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries, the Rev. Inge Tarantola of the Unity Church of Roseburg; Robert Bushman, coordinator of the Eugene Institute of Noetic Sciences, Friedrich Burkert, John Lawrence, David Jones of McKenzie River Lodge #195, Bro. Kevin

Colum of the Anamchara Fellowship, the Office of Tibet, and most importantly, humble appreciation for Honorable Mother Amala, His Eminence Tulku Ngaglo Rinpoche, Tulku Jigme Rinpoche and the Nyen-Gyud Samten Choe-Ling Center.

These communities and the citizens of greater Eugene/Springfield have succeeded in doing what some said was impossible. May this fruition of labor and love bring blessings to all.

Susan Ferris, chair,
Universal Peace Celebration Committee
& Nicholas Chrones
Eugene

TIME TO PUSH BACK

It seems Liane Richardson sees no need to temper her ambition and arrogance as county administrator. Perhaps the Board of Commissioners should give her that raise she demanded and throw in a new job title: “philosopher king (OK, queen),” “master (OK, mistress) of the universe (OK, county),” “she who must be obeyed,” or some fitting title suggested (OK, demanded) by Ms. Richardson.

Richardson’s efforts to remove Jack Roberts and, in effect, absorb the Lane Metro Partnership agency he heads, represent a clear effort to expand her power and do-

main. I’m reminded of the early Steve McQueen movie *The Blob* wherein the beast engulfed everything it touched, becoming stronger with every successful encounter.

Richardson appears to be a very aggressive bully acting with the support of the majority of the commissioners. It’s clearly time for someone — if not the board, the public — to push back. If, indeed, local law firms are so excited by the prospects of hiring her, it’s really selfish for us to deny them that opportunity.

Gary Crum
Junction City

THE NINNY CABAL

Given that Lane County and Eugene regularly vote “blue” in national elections, how is it that four of our five county commissioners are so bloody “red”? And is anyone else as sick and tired as I am of reading about our own little Sarah Palin, Lane County administrator and prevaricator-in-chief Liane Richardson? This cabal of ninnies is now trying to expand their rotten influence by taking control of Lane Metro Partnership with the firing of Jack Roberts, by all accounts the able, diligent and well-intended executive director of that organization. And worse, the plan is to replace him with the wife

of conservative Eugene City Councilman George Poling! Ach!

Now, obviously not all conservatives are ill-meaning or ninnies or both. But this particular group seems to be just that. A list of quotes by Jay Bozievich reads more like something from *Mad Magazine* than thoughtful comments by a serious public servant. Their most egregious decision was giving the despoilers of Parvin Butte free reign to enrich themselves at the expense of hundreds of neighbors as well as the rest of us. This was sheer moral and environmental lunacy. And there was no human poop in the county building’s Free Speech Plaza until Richardson showed up.

So how did this come to pass? Is it all gerrymandering? I implore *EW* to print an article, a political analysis, to explain this “red” coup in our supposedly “blue” region.

Ronald B. Duber
Eugene

WHO BACKS THE FEE?

Endorsements don’t always matter, but sometimes they clarify, so: Measure 20-211, the Eugene city service fee, has been endorsed by SEIU 503, AFSCME 1724, IAFF 851 (firefighters), the Democratic Party of Lane County, Mayor Kitty Piercy, Rep. Paul Holvey, Councilors Alan Zelenka,

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Here’s to
Bad People

HACKING UP MY CURRENT
HAIRBALLS OF THE WEEK

Oregon daily newspapers are hardly worth reading anymore. The bias against public employees, the woeful reporting/analysis of the current legislative session by both *The Oregonian* and *The Register-Guard* is bloodthirsty and pathetic. Reporting last Wednesday, the most significant votes of this session — PERS reform and a \$275 million tax plan — in their zeal to blast Democrats and Speaker Kotek, both papers lost sight of the pyrrhic nature of the victory the Republicans won in the opening skirmish.

The next day, the *R-G* headline screams, “Democratic tax plan scuttled.” *The Oregonian* is no better: “Democrats’ tax plan shrivels” (at least its male readers could relate). Why not lead with: “Republicans vote against PERS reform”? Or “Republicans unified against school funding, public safety and seniors and disabled”?

Please be reminded the Legislature has until July 13 to adjourn and House Democrats have already succeeded in getting a tax measure over to the Senate. Remember, that requires 36 votes and there are only 34 Dems. Not too shabby for “Speaker No.” Good job, Madame Speaker, thanks for having the “eggs” to expose the Republican attack on school funding, public safety, seniors and disabled, etc., and making them go on record with their protection of the wealthy and their unrelenting attack on public employees. I hope

readers caught the irony in the *R-G* editorial headline that same day: “Where the money is: PERS” — a clever paraphrase from Willie Sutton, the bank robber. So, steal away guys, just call it what it is.

Ten years after my last session in Salem, I reflect on issues our current Legislature faces that didn’t even exist in 2003, like Facebook. The House passed HB 2654 that would bar employers from seeking access to the social media accounts of job seekers and employees. Apparently, the bill is a response to media reports of employers seeking access to the Facebook account of job applicants during the interview process. It’s unclear if the practice is widespread, or even still ongoing, but the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Margaret Doherty, D-Tigard, wanted to make it clear that bosses couldn’t cajole their employees into granting them access to information posted online. The bill prevents bosses from requesting passwords from employees or requiring them to “like” them online. Thinking of some of my past bosses, not to mention countless Republicans I’ve served with, I’d be reticent to offer up my Facebook password — if I had a Facebook page. Too damn ugly. Scary. Make a freight train take a dirt road.

Let’s move from Salem’s Hot Air Society to its much older Lane County branch where our prairie schooners circle the Cornucopia brew pub. Basically bored out of our skulls on the lone prairie, our local Hot Air Society has a proud tradition around the campfire barstools: each time we meet, we raise our glasses and toast the really bad persons of the week. So please hoist a mug to our current hairballs of the week: The Association of Oregon Industries and Oregon’s branch of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, two lobby groups aligned with Karl Roves’ Crossroads GPS and the Koch brothers.

AOI and Oregon NFIB have officially weighed in against HB 2950. This bill simply expands the Oregon Family Leave Act to include up to two weeks bereavement leave, protecting employees from being

fired for missing work when a close family member dies. Its sponsor, Rep. Shemia Fagan, D-Portland, told her House colleagues that seven years ago she had her best lunch date ever: Her dad drove from The Dalles to help her celebrate her admission to law school. Two weeks later he died of heart failure. She took a week off from work to take care of funeral arrangements in Eastern Oregon and grieve her father’s death. When she returned to work she was terminated.

This bill had plenty of public support, including hospice organizations, the Oregon Law Center and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. But, typically, AOI simply opposes any expansion of any rights to any Oregon worker. But Oregon’s NFIB specifically cited its continued opposition to Oregon’s expanded definition of family beyond federal law to include domestic partnerships, in other words giving gay Oregonians the right to take time off when a domestic partner dies. Really? Who says business doesn’t have a heart? Can’t you guys go find something helpful to do? Dirtbags.

Cheers. ■

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

