

## HOLLOW PREACHINGS

I grew up a broke, male WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) who regularly attended a fairly conservative church. Many of my friends in church, as it happened, were gay and subsequently pushed from our congregation via informal excommunication, to borrow a Catholic phrase, and were no longer welcome.

This impacted me immensely, and I came to view both the theological and social preachings of the church as hollow. My church friends changed into my “gay friends,” which I wore with a badge of pride, shamelessly parading this fact before others to show my rebellion against other churchgoers and as a philanthropic credit to me.

There comes a point where my “protected class” friends ceased being “gay friends” and became simply my friends and their chosen partners.

Many of these friends want to get married. While I’m glad Oregon will permit their marriages, I look beyond our borders to the country, continent and beyond. In the name of liberty, justice and even God, why the hell wouldn’t we allow such state marriages?

I have neither the desire nor right to prevent my friends from enjoying the same legal benefits or candor and respect that

we should show everyone, and that the Christ of Galilee — who I no longer view as a God, but as my favorite member of the carpenter’s union — would show anyone.

Steven Coatsworth  
Eugene

## JUST GIVE HIM A FISH

Give a man a fish, they say, and you will feed him for a day. But teach that man to fish, my dear, and he’ll spend his days just swilling beer and swapping lies with lazy friends and making plans to go again. Up at dawn and gone all day, gotta get that one what got away.

Oh, he’ll need poles and reels and nets, vests and hats and don’t forget hooks, lines, sinkers, dry flies. Shoot! New hip waders and dry fit boots. There’s bait and bobbers, license, lunch and, you know, I have a hunch that charter fees will get his goat and just like that you’ll own a boat! Then comes the trailer, truck and hitch and then the selfish son-of-a-bitch will find his sport is best enjoyed when he is not fully employed. If you should say “You can’t retire!” he’ll either get laid off or fired. Forsaking wife, son and daughter just to get back on the water and drop his line down through the brine pursuing fish of every kind: halibut, salmon, sturgeon, trout, catfish, squawfish, eel, horn-pout,

sailfish, marlin, mackerel, tuna, bass or pickerel.

And don’t forget lobsters and clams, crabs and oysters, man, oh man! Now he’ll need traps, rings and pots; a smoker, too, ‘cuz he’ll catch lots. Weather will not slow him down (for it’s in water that fish are found). He will not quit because of age, infirmity or spousal rage. Frozen lakes won’t bother him, he’ll drill a hole and fish again.

And the years will keep on passing and he will keep on casting until you’re old and tired and cramped, impoverished in some fishing camp, and your one, true, fervent wish ... is that you’d just GIVEN him a fish.

Dave Perham  
Eugene

## PROTECTING THE SYSTEM

According to Pat Coogan [Letters, 2/27], I am one of the “self-righteous fools” whose unerring tendency toward internecine warfare constitutes the proverbial circular firing squad and thus safeguards the dominant order. Especially regarding Lierre Keith, with whom we are in “99.9 percent” agreement.

But in no way am I in agreement with her public and well-known transphobia or with her Maoist-like Deep Green

Resistance cult. Many have broken with her and DGR for these reasons.

Coogan sees in unity the key value and counsels against us fighting each other. The point, however, is that what really protects the system is the lowest-common-denominator approach that accepts so much — and hence the system itself.

John Zerzan  
Eugene

## MORE LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Other films shot in and around Eugene [see EW cover story last week] include *Emperor of the North Pole*, filmed in 1972 mostly in Cottage Grove, directed by Robert Aldrich and starring Lee Marvin, Ernest Borgnine and Keith Carradine; *Animal House*, 1978, filmed on and around the UO campus, in Cottage Grove and at the Dexter Lake Club, directed by John Landis and starring John Belushi, Tim Matheson, Kevin Bacon, Karen Allen and others; *Stand By Me*, 1986, shot in Brownsville, Cottage Grove and Eugene, directed by Rob Reiner and starring Will Wheaton, River Phoenix, Corey Feldman, Jerry O’Connell and Keifer Sutherland, and *Grand Tour: Disaster in Time*, shot in 1990 (released in 1992) in Drain and Eugene, directed by David Twohy and starring Jeff Daniels.

## VIEWPOINT BY MARSHALL WILDE

## Revenue Solutions

LOOKING FOR FAIR WAYS TO CLOSE THE BUDGET GAP

**A**s Eugene looks for ways to avoid serious service cuts, the Revenue Committee struggles to identify timely, equitable and politically acceptable taxes to generate the necessary revenue. We have ample representation from the business community, but we lack vocal representation from disadvantaged segments of our community. This opens us to the risk that our recommendations will fall heavily on those least able to afford it. While business is the ox that pulls the cart of government, it is working families that keep that ox fed. Moving forward requires that we navigate a thicket of legal limits to give the City Council recommendations that put the interest of the community first.

“Why do we need new revenue at all? The overall budget is fine!” In fact, a bewildering array of legal limits often prevents the movement of money from one fund to another to address genuine needs. Others restrict the city’s ability to raise revenue fairly. For instance, federal law prohibits us from using funds from the airport on general fund activities, while state law prohibits us from using parks bonds funds for anything other than parks acquisition. We may differ in our views of preserving Civic Stadium at partial city expense, but the funds proposed for that project can’t be used to preserve city services. The city has done a terrific job at squeezing any expenses that can fit into special funds into those funds to avoid depleting precious general funds. Unfortunately, we have reached the limits of what we can do.

On the revenue side, special interests have successfully lobbied to prevent local taxation of some of the most logical sources of revenue. Localities in Oregon may not tax tobacco products or any form of alcoholic beverage, despite the fact that Oregon ranks 28th in tobacco taxes and 44th in beer taxes nationwide. I like a beer as much as the next guy, but I also accept that increasing taxes on tobacco and alcohol has significant positive public health implications, in addition to raising significant revenue. Further, state law stringently limits property tax levies, which are also not paid by large segments of the local economy and must be renewed with a public vote every five years. Taxes on gasoline and automobiles must generally be used to fund roads and services directly related to transportation. These laws prevent us from using some of the fairest ways to generate revenue.

Several permissible progressive revenue options have already met their fate. A proposal to impose a 0.9 percent marginal income tax on individuals making over \$125,000 per year and couples making over \$250,000 died on the “nay” votes of members who would have to pay such a tax. Proposals for a gross receipts tax, a corporate income tax and a tax on businesses that handle hazardous materials to fund the Hazmat Team also died quickly, opposed by business interests. An amusement tax on ticket sales may yet have a small role to play, despite the UO’s refusal to participate in such an arrangement. Similarly, other government entities will likely support a utility tax, which they would not



pay, but oppose an increase in EWEB’s contribution in lieu of taxes to the city, which they would.

Of course, we all support taxes we will never pay! Property tax measures remain popular with representatives of other government agencies, which don’t pay property taxes. Taxes not usually paid by city residents, such as hotel and rental car taxes, are always popular. We certainly should look to tax non-residents who use our services without

paying taxes, but any tax that could raise substantial revenue must have a broad base. We cannot balance the budget solely on the backs of commuters and tourists.

Some reasonable options remain on the table. A 1 to 2 percent restaurant tax would completely solve the city’s budget gap, tax a voluntary activity and have a minimal economic impact on the restaurants. An earlier study showed that this falls more heavily on higher income people and visitors than the poor. A tax on e-cigarettes would prevent these purveyors of nicotine from benefiting from a loophole in the state tobacco tax and discourage kids from getting hooked. A small per-space tax on parking spaces would incentivize appropriately dense development, use of mass transit and be paid more by big box stores than small businesses.

In sum, we must move beyond self-interest to arrive at a fair revenue solution to preserve city services. The proposals we forward should find equilibrium between a healthy business climate and the need to tax the population justly. I hope that we can reach this balance and provide the council equitable new revenue options to address the budget gap.

*Marshall Wilde is a citizen member of the Eugene Budget and Revenue Committees. The next Budget Committee meeting is March 11 (see Activist Alert).*