



TWO-HEADED MONSTER

In your Slant column of Nov. 13, *EW* posted a “WTF” photo of Shannon Wilson’s protest sign objecting to *EW* supporting “Big Timber Lapdog Democrats.” *EW* responded that most Republican candidates are “rotten” about the environment and other current issues. *EW* also said that third-party candidates “are still very much on the fringe.” Both are certainly true statements.

Yes, as *EW* said, the way for a minor

party to progress is to start at the small, local offices and work up. But there is a major glass ceiling for minor parties when they aren’t taken seriously and endorsed by responsible media such as *EW*. (Remember blacks and women trying to be taken seriously for political office in earlier times.)

Media should endorse a candidate (and people vote) because they’re the best qualified, not based on their chances of winning or how many TV ads and

billboards their supporters pay for. Otherwise the “status” will remain “quo.”

Remember, too, that both the Democratic Party and Republican Party are controlled by the ruling plutocracy (who funds their campaigns, then wants favors in return). The Democratic and Republican parties are, at bottom, just one two-headed monster, differentiated only as “good cops and bad cops.” I call them “the Republicrat Party.”

Levelheaded minor parties like the Greens deserve our full support.

Pete Benson
Fall Creek

READY TO STRIKE

Graduate employees at the UO are planning to strike due to a lack of medical and parental leave and livable wages. Many talk about students struggling to pay bills while recovering from accidents, or choices a parent makes when deciding whether to bond with their newborn or return to work.

As someone fortunate to have not faced these situations, I’ll speak to my own experience instead. My education suffers when the diversity of my peers is limited to the healthy, wealthy, male and childfree.

I rely on my peers to collaborate on research, review my teaching, supervise my clinical work and challenge my thinking.

When a sick student can’t return to school, I lose out on the perspective of someone who could have helped me understand the experiences of a client facing a tough diagnosis. When potential parents go elsewhere to study, I lose out on peers whose experiences would have been invaluable in designing our family intervention research. When students without financial means are excluded from my field, my own privilege and class assumptions go unchecked, biasing the work I do.

When we foster intellectual diversity, everyone benefits. I hope our administration can see this too.

Hillel Samlan, M.A.
UO doctoral student

GET THEIR ATTENTION

Shannon Wilson’s protest [WTF, 11/13] pointed out that *EW* does not support the environment by endorsing “Lapdog Democrats.” Voting for the Green Party candidates who would take votes away from the Democrats that propose selling off our ancient forests in O&C lands (Rep. Peter DeFazio) and the Elliott State Forest (Gov. John Kitzhaber) would get the Democrats’ attention. As their margin of victory decreases, their interest in real forest reform should increase.

Ed Cooley
Elkton

FILTH ALONG THE RIVER

As one of the hundreds of volunteers who participated in the annual RiverKeepers Willamette cleanup last month, I, too, was frustrated and annoyed at the huge amount of trash and garbage along the Union Pacific right-of-way. According to Matt Roberts, senior director of community relations at UO, Union Pacific spent many thousands of dollars this spring in cleanup, but hasn’t allocated staff to patrol and maintain their trackside land. The UO is trying to clean and rehabilitate its property, yet it is a struggle to keep on top of the filth that some homeless campers bring and dispose along the river.

Word went out along the river that the cleanup was coming and some campers actually left full trash bags for us to retrieve. Yet along the railroad riverbank we could not possibly manage the removal from small boats and could only shovel garbage out of the river and back onto the land. It was disgusting to see nice Coleman tents surrounded by piles of junk and debris often just tossed into the convenience of the river.

Yes, we are all polluters in many ways, but it takes a special ignorance to squat in the river and let the rest of us drink the water.

Mark Murphy
Creswell



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