

so. Not to do so would be an inhumane act in a humane society.

So bark and hiss at policymakers: Do your duty. Build a new shelter. Make it all better. Then we'll nuzzle and purr.

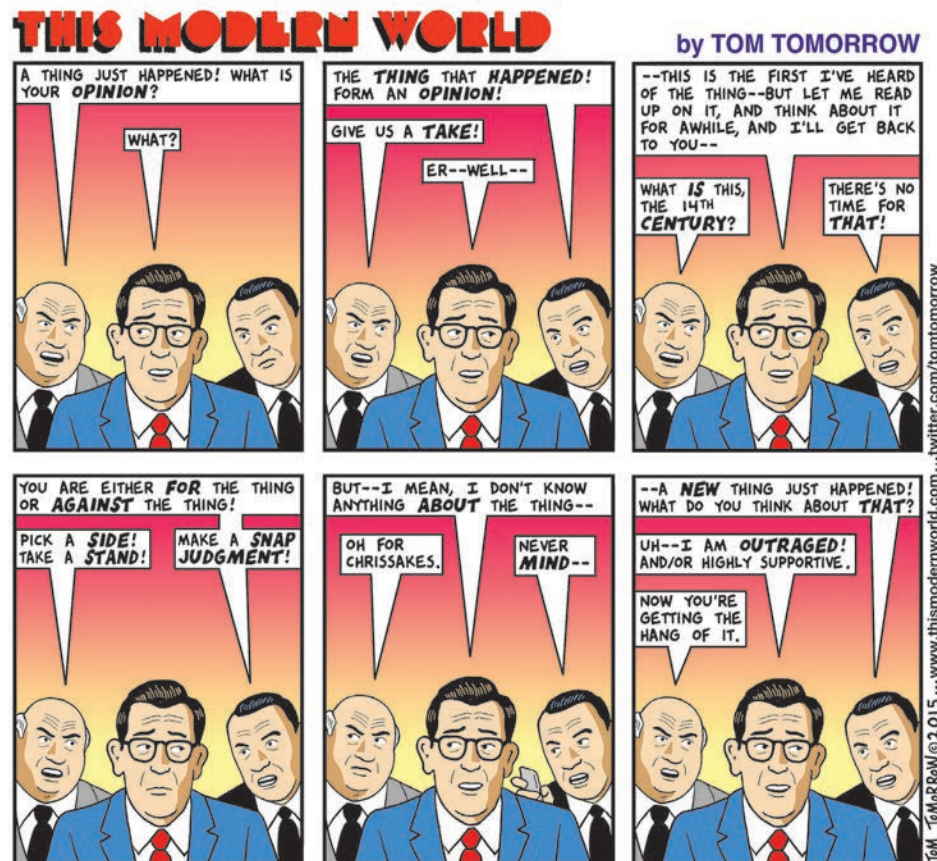
Benton Elliott
Eugene

CAR-CENTRIC CULTURE

The speeding highway that is Main Street in Springfield is unacceptable, having just claimed another three children Feb. 22, and perhaps killed the woman who was trying to cross with them too — she's in critical condition.

I was upset about speeding traffic anyway since my wife and I just returned from a family visit to southeast Florida. We spent two weeks with a rental car along the coast from Jacksonville to Fort Lauderdale. But I observed no pedestrian/automobile conflict in this part of Florida — no conflict because the cars and trucks have won out entirely.

Newer towns had no sidewalks and as a rule no pedestrians. City streets, not just "arterials," were six to 10 lanes wide and when not clogged to a standstill, flooded with fast moving traffic. The giant streets penned in the showy private gated "communities." Just one street bicyclist, a dark-skinned man was spotted near the "inter-coastal" mansions where the Hispanic immigrants landscape



the McMansions for snowbirds and retirees. This man stood motionless beside his outdated bike like a human signpost, stuck on a mid-street island between four lanes of 50 MPH traffic. The hundreds of motorists were no doubt shaking their

heads as they zipped by him: "Who would be idiotic enough or desperate enough to try to cross the street on a rickety old bicycle?"

Other complaints about Florida: It was warm enough to swim in the Ocean only one day. Because of CO2 climate

crisis weather (something Floridians don't believe in), the temperature in West Palm Beach dropped to 29 degrees while we were there. One could only find stores in malls surrounded by salt flat-sized parking lots, "outlets" from corporate chains that shrink-wrapped the fresh vegetables and sold pens, screws or nails only in pilfer-resistant, overkill-sized packets. Home again now, I savor our more human, less corporate Willamette Valley community. But I know that car-centric, corporatized Florida culture is only Southern California on steroids, and is likely to further infest Oregon unless we remain vigilant.

Let's start by demanding that the state Department of Transportation cut the 45 MPH speed limit on the east end of the Springfield main street — 30 MPH would be much more reasonable. I would also love to see bicycles get a fighting chance on Willamette Street in south Eugene.

Ralph McDonald
Eugene

COST OF DIRTY ENERGY

Regarding biomass vs. environmental justice issues: "Thinking outside the box — isn't that what we want to do in Eugene?" says Lisa Arkin of Beyond Toxics. That is *exactly* what I want from Eugene! These problems of environmental justice cannot be tolerated within this city, and these problems are only being caused

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Salem Moves On

BUT TURKEYS LURK IN PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The mood was still somber in Salem this past week. John Kitzhaber's gone, Kate Brown's sworn in and the political landscape of Oregon settles in after the tsunami. Last Tuesday I took a bottle of Wild Turkey, a copy of my Feb. 12 *EW* column and my retirement announcement over to the Capitol. I knew I wouldn't see John so I searched out one of his closest companions over the years, a state trooper from the Dignitary Protection Unit. We reminisced about John Kitzhaber's parents, Annabel and Albert (my constituents when I served) and his son Logan and how life had changed over 20 years. He reflected on how John told him he was hanging up his political spurs two years ago, until a certain force in his life urged him to run again. Legacy and loss.

I had dinner with House Majority Leader Val Hoyle on Wednesday and she was still trying to shake off the blues and examine what's changed and what hasn't. It appears Kate will be a careful, steady-as-she-goes captain of the ship of state. She brought Brian Shipley in as her chief of staff, a smart, seasoned veteran of the Legislature; but she's also retained Dmitri Palmateer, John's former deputy chief of staff and a former staffer for Sen. Jeff Merkley, well respected in the building. She appointed her deputy at the secretary of state's office as a placeholder SOS and announced she'd choose her successor by March 7. Which leads us back

to the question of what's changed and what hasn't. Who does Kate replace herself with?

House Speaker Tina Kotek already announced she's not interested in the SOS position at this time because of the need for leadership and continuity during the current legislative session. Portland's Diane Rosenbaum, the Senate majority leader, has indicated her interest, issuing a press release about the same time Kate was getting sworn in. And, our own Val Hoyle is also interested, although she's expressing that interest more subtly. Stay tuned.

In her first press conference as governor, Kate told the Legislature to move forward, and they did just that. Senate Democrats passed SB 324, lifting the sunset on Oregon's low-carbon fuel program, against unanimous Republican opposition. The angry debate lasted almost four hours; Democrat Lee Beyer described it as "political theater." And the Senate Dems, with two Republican allies, passed a bill to dissolve Cover Oregon, moving Oregon's Obamacare oversight to the state agency that handles most insurance programs, the Department of Consumer and Business Services.

The House Rules Committee moved HB 2177 to the floor for a vote this week, the motor/voter registration bill, against unanimous Republican opposition. We're the only state in the union proposing such a measure. Dems obviously believe it will help them at the polls with possibly 300,000 new voters.

As the deadlines for submission and passage of bills out of committee approach, I've seen a couple of turkeys we ought to keep our eyes on. My Beaverton friend Rep. Tobias Reed apparently has too much time on his hands; he's proposing a bill to direct the Department of Transportation "to study development of uniform speed bump height and markings."

On his way out the door, the former governor proposed HB 2401, which would tax bird feed and devote the revenue to bird conservation, proving once again, as Grattan Kerans once told me, "Democrats will tax anything that moves!"

SB 176, sponsored by Sen. Brian Boquist, a Dallas Republican, requires a "court of this state may not consider Sharia law in making judicial decisions." Whew, that one comes just in time. Our Oregon Supreme Court is full of suspect characters, and I just read where SCOTUS has six Catholics and three Jewish members! Sharia, indeed? I'm more worried about the Baltimore catechism!

Even my buddy, "Pretty Boy" Floyd Prochoiceski, has a Golden Gobbler nominee: SB 461, sponsored at a constituent's request, would allow a person "to get a replacement driver license or driver permit if person dislikes photograph on current driver license or driver permit." Talk about vanity plates!

Not to be outdone on transportation policy, Sen. Jeff Kruse of Roseburg sponsored SB 420, which allows operators of motorcycles to pass vehicles in the same lane or between lanes during traffic jams or slowdowns. Floyd says he's OK with the bill as long as it's amended to include only Republican motorcyclists. Till next time. ■

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a former state legislator and soon-to-be retired state worker. The views expressed herein are his alone.