

REMEMBERING THE RIV

This is about “The Hammered Lamb” cover story May 14. It may or may not be true that it is the first-ever gay/gay-owned bar. In the 1970s, there was a gay bar/disco here — the Riviera Room — on 10th between Willamette and Olive, just down from what was then Seymour’s Cafe (where the Cabaret Theatre is now). This was a seriously gay bar, but I have no idea if the owner was gay or not; the employees certainly were.

In the ’70s there was a large gay population in Eugene. Everyone went to the Riv Room, as we called it. It had the ambiance of a 1940s nightclub, replete with large, plush booths, a sizable dance floor, strobe lights and great dance music.

Sadly, in the late 1970s, there was a huge exodus in Eugene of gay men to the San Francisco Bay area. I say *sadly* because the timing couldn’t have been worse. A large number of them contracted AIDS and died, including one of my best friends.

My point: No story about gay nightlife in Eugene is complete without mentioning the Riviera Room and the bustling gay scene that was happening here in the ’70s.

Karen Fierman
Eugene

EDITOR’S NOTE: *The Hammered Lamb* is a self-proclaimed queer bar, not a gay bar.

TRICKLE-DOWN WATER

It is an unjust system that allows environmental need to be subservient to

corporate interest. With one hand, the Lane County commissioners asked Gov. Kate Brown to declare our county in a state of “drought emergency.” Then, with the other, they propose to help two Eugene companies — Delta Sand & Gravel Co. and Knife River Corp. — to secure extra Willamette River water for their concrete mixing operations.

“It’s really important that we manage the water coming off the main stem of the Willamette to the benefit of the community,” County Commissioner Pat Farr said.

Farr’s comment indicates that he believes that what benefits business will ultimately benefit the community. We have seen time and time again that this “trickle-down” economic mindset more often results in untold damage. It’s well past time that the environment’s interests are prioritized above those of corporate business.

Zachary Stark-MacMillan
Eugene

THE NEXT MAYOR

The election is now over and it’s time to look forward to the next election. The community will have an opportunity to elect a new mayor. It is an open seat; Kitty Piercy will not be available for the next election.

At the present time I am the only committed candidate for that position. Others are reported to be “thinking about it,” but they are currently reluctant to commit themselves to being a candidate. This time should be an

opportunity for citizens to talk to those who are planning to be on the ballot and ask them what they have in mind for that position. I hate to think that the reason they do not commit is that they are afraid they might not win the race. But I feel they owe it to the citizens to express their views, and not leave it up to the last-minute mailings and advertising to put them in that position.

We have a great opportunity now to make a considered reflection on who will be our next mayor. Candidates are really committing an awful lot of time to give the necessary leadership for this task. It is not something that should be decided in the last few hours.

Bob Cassidy
Eugene

TO THE PATRIARCHY

We met Friday night around 1 am. I was sobering up from a night out with friends. You were on the prowl and made a lewd comment about my appearance. I stood up for myself. You became engaged.

We tried pushing you away, but it didn’t work. After a bit of pushing, we came to blows. You struck me in the eye, split my partner’s lip and kicked my friend in the kidney. Because we aren’t fighters, you walked away unscathed. All six of you. We ended up in the emergency room.

You were also able to convince all of the 30-plus people around us to simply watch.

You’ll probably say I should have walked away, should have kept my head down and

my thoughts to myself. Maybe I should have. You managed to say those things through my partner. What I said to him and what I’ll tell you is this: I am a person. I deserve respect. And I am willing to fight for my beliefs.

To anyone who doesn’t think feminism is needed, or is a joke, please hear my words. The concept was so alarming to you that my partner has a black eye and five stitches in his lip, and I have a black eye. Just because I told a man that I deserve respect. Patriarchy, you are strong, but I am still going to fight back.

Jasmyn Hinton
Eugene

STOPPING ABUSE OF POWER

Ann Kneeland (Letters, May 21) writes that “state preemption is a manufactured corporate tool to keep local communities from deciding for themselves what’s best.” While that argument certainly has merit, it’s not universally true. There are times when state preemption is necessary to prevent “communities” from abusing political power.

The problem is that too often community decisions are made by appointed bureaucrats with no direct accountability to the public and who could care less what the public thinks. A classic example was the city of Eugene deliberately annexing streets to create “islands.” Islands could then be forcibly annexed with no vote of those targeted. Annexation requires planning which can mean job security for planners.

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Last Rites

LEGISLATIVE SESSION GOES UP IN SMOKE!

No, unfortunately for you, dear readers, it’s not “Last Writes.” Yes, sports fans, the geezer moment has come. If you open your May 28 *EW* and read this after 5 pm, I will officially be free at last!

No more state employee subtlety: Every one of my previous 100 or so *EW* columns were written by a fearful, nervous, cautious, sensitive, puppet-like, obsequious puddle of professionalism. Hah! No more, baby! I vow to tell it like it is! Goodbye, State of Oregon Employment Appeals Board. Hello, retirement. Hello beekeeping, deck building and feeding my birds.

Also, I understand from my recently retired friends, Hoss and Don Key, that 9 am “happy hours” are perfectly normal and appropriate *now*, for example. And you don’t have to know what *day* it is, either. Which is good news because, in a recent practice session for geezerosity, I turned on KLCC last Saturday morning precisely at 9:40 am to listen to puzzle master Will Shortz! Then I forgot to listen on Sunday!

Oh well, back to Salem. As we approach June, the last month of the session, I’m struck by how quiet things are. There’s no energy. There’s some talk of Gov. Kate Brown trying to get some traction on an “infrastructure” agreement to create some statewide jobs, or some variation on a transportation plan. But it would require possibly messing with some budgets and

a gas tax; and because a lot of the substantive issues have already moved, there’s not much else to negotiate.

Also, Republicans are determined to sidetrack any plan this session — bluntly, any success for Kate — because of next year’s governor’s race. Their leaders, Sen. Ted Ferrioli and Rep. Mike McLane, continue to relentlessly blame the Democratic leadership for shoving the carbon fuel standards bill down their throats, therefore making *kumbaya* impossible. They don’t know the words.

Ironically, the R’s are all over the board in terms of creating a message they want their next gubernatorial candidate to carry, other than: “No jobs, no gas tax, no progress, no business, no economic development, (no shit!).” Not to mention, they don’t have a clue who will run against Kate.

The only advice I continue to give any Democrat who would have the bad judgment to listen to me is: Do what you’re supposed to do as a Democrat, advance good citizen bills, even if they don’t stand a prayer in the super-majority environment, and get the Republicans on some bad votes. Like kicker money, for example.

So what *do you do* for shits and giggles when you’re in Salem watching this bad drama slog through its final act, feeling roughly like you’re sitting on your thumbs waiting for a colonoscopy? You go to the marijuana hearings, silly!

Sen. Floyd Prozanski and Rep. Val Hoyle let me in on the hilarity that accompanies red-eyed testimony. If weedophiles had trouble keeping up with the schedule of the former Joint Committee on Marijuana Reality prior to last week, then they must’ve been devastated when the “Joint” disappeared, and budding new committees arose in the House and the Senate.

Excise tax, sales tax, local preemption — too big

a dilemma for Sen. Ginny Burdick and Rep. Ann Lininger’s committee — they split. Now the House and Senate Dems will lob bills separately to each other in the waning days of the session.

Meanwhile, hempheads are left wondering if they’re present at committee meetings to discuss *medical* or *recreational* marijuana? And if so, why? Apparently, droves of activists signed up to speak at these public hearings, waited in interminably long lines, got herded up to the microphones, then, late in one House hearing, as Val reported recently, one citizen/witness blurted out one sentence of testimony: “I didn’t read the bill, so I have nothing to say.” Thank you for that input, sir. (Who said sometimes it is better to remain silent and appear a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt?)

Speaking of fools, retirement is a time of retrospection. As I reflect on my work history, my 30 years in the labor movement and 10 in the Legislature, I feel like a very lucky guy. I want to thank *EW*’s co-owner Anita Johnson and Editor Ted Taylor for letting this fool write “Insider Baseball” and “Hot Air Society” for you. I was stupid enough to run for office, and lucky enough to get elected. And because of that I got to serve with the best, the brightest, the richest, the poorest, the Buddhas and the badasses. It’s been an absolute hoot. ■

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a freshly retired state worker and former state senator.

