

RADIO FOR DUMMIES?

I spoke with Don Hein, station manager at KLCC, about the abrupt pulling of *Alternative Radio* [see news briefs, 1/21]. In lazy defense of his decision on behalf of NPR, and giving no explanation as to its “shotgun” demise, he brushed *AR* off as “not political ... it doesn’t question or question itself ... it’s antiquated.” He went on to say that KLCC’s target audience is intelligent, insinuating that *AR* was for a less sophisticated, less articulate, less cultured, less than intelligent crowd. In Don Hein’s world, *AR* is for dummies. As antiquated as *Fresh Air*, Hein must mean that the people and views expressed on *AR* are so alternative that they’re just not fit for the increasingly, and dare I say it, insidiously conservative, corporatized bent taken by KLCC and NPR.

David Barsamian offers *AR* for free, so it’s not financial, and *AR* was popular. Hein explained that his “intelligent” crowd loved the “fluff” of *Wait ... Wait* and *Car Talk* so much that he wasn’t willing to replace one twice-weekly slot with *AR*, although those two programs represent

great costs that eat up listener pledge funds. And although Hein belligerently defended NPR, saying that it was not corporate, *Wait ... Wait* is sponsored by the criminal bailout giant Chase Bank. Joan Kroc, heir to the McDonald’s fortune, donated \$200 million to NPR.

More air time throughout the day is given to promoting upcoming news programs, primarily during news programs, yet the reverse cannot be said about what’s left of any music or “alternative” programs. Hein didn’t refute this, he was just dismissive, laughed and scoffed; to which I told him that it wasn’t funny, and that he and NPR were arrogant, insolent, condescending and plain stupid. Oh, and that I was done with KLCC.

NPR for Oregonians? Read “one size fits all.” If intelligence is more of the same, I’ll gladly take an open-minded hike.

Sean S. Doyle
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FLAWED REPORTING

There is a dramatic contrast between *The Register-Guard* front-page article

by Christian Hill Jan. 23 addressing the development of Kesey Square and the *Eugene Weekly* article by Alex Cipolle Jan. 21. One could assume the *R-G* is supporting the commercial development, while *EW* is acknowledging the presence of a large public opposition to commercializing Kesey Square.

The *R-G* article is entirely devoted to the three proposals for commercial development and makes no mention of the flood of emails to the mayor, city manager and City Council during the last month discouraging the sale. I have attended the gatherings at the City Club and LCC downtown when the long-term use of Kesey Square has been addressed in public forums; the opposition to commercialization was the dominant sentiment among those gathered. The proposals for commercialization deserve consideration; however, the short window period of five weeks during the winter holidays for proposals for alternative public space development, with a Jan. 15 deadline, has made the initiation of such a project all but impossible.

The facts regarding the decision making point to a manipulative process by City Manager Jon Ruiz to collude with prospective developers while circumventing the council and public review. This collusion appears to be reflected in the *R-G* coverage as well. This is evident in the absence of any reference in the *R-G* article to the “Save Kesey Square” organizing efforts (see Facebook page) and no mention of the rally Jan. 25 before the council meeting. In the name of good journalism and good government, please provide us with all the information.

The Rev. Gary James
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REDNECK CHECKLIST

In the 21st century, if you use a gun and John Wayne bravado to get your way — trespass, occupy federal property, destruction of federal property, intimidate, disrupt peace, violate civil rights — you might be a redneck! And if (apologies to Jeff Foxworthy):

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

No Grand Bargain

KITZHABER’S DEAL TO PROTECT UNIONS HAS EXPIRED

My, how the world of Oregon politics has changed in two years. Twenty-two months ago *The Oregonian* reported that John Kitzhaber, then preparing to run for an unprecedented fourth term in November 2014, held a press conference to announce a “grand bargain.” In a series of backroom meetings, Dr. John had persuaded rival union and business groups sponsoring several competing proposals to back off from going to the November ballot two years ago. In response to Kitzhaber’s public call for a mutual stand-down on looming 2014 ballot measure fights between unions and business interests, the state’s largest public employee unions and sponsors of right-to-work and dues check-off measures agreed to formally withdraw 12 measures from the 2014 ballot measure process.

The decision to avoid competing ballot measures followed an agreement reached in February 2014 between the Service Employee International Union and many of the state’s largest hospitals. Following that agreement, an additional five ballot initiative petitions were withdrawn. As a result of Kitzhaber’s efforts, the state’s major public employee unions agreed to drop several proposed initiatives that would raise taxes on well-to-do individuals and larger corporations. In exchange, business groups dropped proposed measures that would weaken unions by allowing public employees to opt out of paying union dues. Kitzhaber said at the time: “Instead of spending millions on ballot measure battles, we have an agreement that provides an opportunity for people to work with one another on solving Oregon’s biggest problems.”

Fast-forward to 2016. The national scene speaks for itself. Even if you possibly could have predicted this Republican presidential primary fiasco two years ago, the only person who would’ve believed you would have been your cellmate at the state hospital. And even *he* wouldn’t untie your straight jacket! Here in Oregon, Dr. John is gone and there is no grand bargain in sight. Instead we are likely to see a full array of ballot measures targeted to turn out single-issue voters. In addition to an initiative to raise Oregon’s minimum wage to \$15 per hour over three years, you will also see a measure to require English to be Oregon’s “official language” and a measure to prohibit public funding of abortions.

And Jill Gibson, Portland businesswoman, is sponsoring Initiative 69, the so-called “Public Employee Choice Act” — the current version of the right-to-work (right to starve) measure. The unions have responded with their own version of a minimum wage increase as well as a gross receipts tax proposal that is polling very well. There are campaign finance reform initiatives that are approved to circulate, as well as clean energy initiatives — hell, there’s even an initiative to get rid of Daylight Savings

Time! The 2015 Legislature even sent a referral that allows the city of Damascus to disincorporate! Doesn’t Syria have enough problems?

The anti-union, right-to-work issue took a different twist last week when the U.S. Supreme Court announced it would issue a decision this summer on *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*. Although progressives breathed a sigh of relief over the Supreme Court’s previous handling of challenges to the Affordable Care Act and its protection of same sex couples’ right to marry, *Friedrichs* is the case that public sector unions have been trying to make go away — because it could make the whole public sector “right-to-work.” Conservatives have continually argued that public sector unions are political in nature, because their employers are the government, and that dues going to politics violates employees’ right to abstain from political activity. But the court ruled that an individual’s right to belong or not belong to an organization had to be weighed against the threat to labor peace if “free riders” got the benefits of a contract without contributing. Signing up union members could get a lot harder if the alternative is a free ride. Since Wisconsin’s 2010 public sector right-to-work law (it also barred dues deduction and limited the scope of negotiations), AFSCME has lost two-thirds of its members — dropping from over 60,000 to 20,000. The Wisconsin Education Association Council has lost 30 percent.

Now, what anti-union forces couldn’t win at the ballot box, they might get through the courts. Last week, Chief Justice John Roberts and the Supreme Court signaled it *will* set American union rights back 50 years, doing just what George W. Bush put him there to do. Here in Oregon we’ll face a right-to-work ballot measure attacking public employees in a similar fashion, but it might be moot by November. Stay tuned.

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