

DANCER IN THE DARK

In your Nov. 8 issue you alluded to the alternate reality of Rick Dancer defeating Kate Brown for secretary of state, making him now, in an alternate reality, Oregon's governor ("Best of Eugene").

By some weird coincidence I happen to have worked at two Eugene establishments where Dancer graced us with his presence for one of his programs.

In both instances he demonstrated a deep love for his personal image as well as the sound of his own voice, while on the other hand offering pedantic, condescending lectures to anyone who made the mistake of talking to him.

The duty of governor is to serve the people. From my personal experience with this individual, the only one he seems to serve is himself.

Also, he doesn't tip.

I'll stick with this reality and Kate Brown, thank you very much.

Aaron Kimball
Springfield

NEXT TIME

I was so disappointed to learn there was no "Cutest Rubber Ducky" category in

the *Eugene Weekly's* Best of Eugene issue (Nov. 8).

Michael Billings
Eugene

TIRED OF THE ONE-PERCENT?

We've survived another election, but we all know the politicians will not solve our problems. The corporate politicians and the talking heads keep telling us that we can fix things by putting either a Democrat or a Republican into power. But the reality is that we won't change anything until we deal with the real criminals and crooks, the bankers and the CEOs who have co-opted our government.

If we're going to take back our communities, our country and our future, we first need to put aside the labels that divide us. We are the working class, the 99 percent. It doesn't matter what color or religion you are. It doesn't matter where you were born.

The only thing that matters is the answer to one very simple question. Which side are you on? Are you with the 1 percent, or are you with the 99 percent; are you with the rich fat cats that are destroying our country, or are you with the common working folk who built this country.

At Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network we have a 30-year history of fighting for workers. If you believe in fair living wages for all workers; if you believe everyone deserves an affordable place to live or that it's time to make the largest corporations pay their fair share; if you're tired of working your fingers to the bone for table scraps while CEO's fill their pockets with your hard-earned wages — then join us at 11 am this Saturday, Nov. 17, at Dark & Stormy, 420 Main Street in Springfield.

Lonnie L. Douglas
Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network

BAIT AND SWITCH

The Republican Party used the threat of Obamacare repeal as a political wedge issue for four election cycles, from 2010 to 2016. When the party gained control of Congress and the administration, they "failed" to repeal Obamacare but were successful in a massive tax cut with most of the benefits going to their donors, the corporate elites.

The bait? They ran on health care. The switch? A massive deficit-inducing tax cut for corporations and the wealthy.

The anti-abortion movement was de-

veloped as a political wedge issue in 1979 to rally Christians against President Jimmy Carter, a born-again Christian, in the 1980 election. His administration had determined that racially segregated Southern Christian schools were not tax exempt.

The Republicans and evangelicals have used the abortion issue very effectively to keep the Christian community politically engaged. Now, with the new conservative majority on the Supreme Court, the Christian community expects *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned.

The bait? Overturning *Roe v. Wade*, a very successful but divisive political wedge issue. The switch? Protecting corporate profits and the wealthy's tax shelters.

Don't expect Republicans to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Learn the lesson! It's too successful of a political tool to abandon now.

Patrick Plaia
Eugene

CIRCLE OF COMPASSION

There is an often-overlooked distinction between "humanists" and what could be called the path followed by Mahayana Buddhists. Humanists have the narrow fo-

PILLOW TALK BY KIM MARKS

Consent is Sexy

UNDERSTANDING CONSENT LEADS TO BETTER COMMUNICATION, WHICH LEADS TO BETTER SEX

"Consent." We've all heard the word by now, but what does it mean? How does one get it? What do people mean when they say that consent is sexy? How do I make consent sexy? Consent is an enthusiastic, freely given yes. Essentially, consent means that you have agency over your own body at all times. Consent can always be taken away, and consent to one act may not mean consent to another act.

Freely given means that you can make your choice without fear of consequence. This can mean more than fear of having the situation turn violent. It can also mean fear of losing a friend, of ending a relationship, of losing resources and/or of having rumors spread and losing social capital. In order to give consent freely, one cannot be pressured or manipulated — peer pressure is not a tactic for getting someone into your bedroom. If we lie, pressure or manipulate our partners, we have broken their consent and the person's trust.

For consent to be freely given also requires a sober mind. Drugs and/or alcohol hinder our ability to give consent. I know this may not seem like a sexy thought because many people use substances to "break the ice," but you must be present and sound-minded to give consent. It can be intimidating to make the first move without the presence of substances, but having the courage to do so in the face of that fear is part of the joy of forming new relationships.

Now that you know what consent is, make sure to ask for and obtain consent clearly. If we ask someone if they want to move from the living room to the bedroom and they say, "Yes," that person has not agreed to any sex act, they have only agreed to change locations. If what we really want to know is if they want to engage in some sexy acts with us then simply ask! For example: "I'm having a lot of fun making out, but would you like to go to bedroom and (fill in the specific act here)?"

Many people think that such direct talk will be awkward, or that it will kill the vibe. And sometimes it is, but with practice it becomes less awkward and even

hot! In fact, when you get a freely given "yes" from someone, we know that they really do want to have sex with us. And there is nothing hotter than that! Asking for consent can also be an amazing way to slow down the situation to be more enjoyable. Foreplay becomes longer and much more connective. Every move is a new opportunity to keep reaffirming consent.

Still stumped for things to say? Try these: "Would you like me to take of your shirt?" "May I kiss you here?" "Can we try something new?" "Kiss me here!" "Should we take off our clothes?" "I want to touch you here." "Do you like this?" "How does this feel?" The list goes on and on...

Consent not only creates really good sex, but it also increases communication with your partner and strengthens your relationship overall. The art of consent is really about respecting our partners and ourselves. It helps us be clear on what we are agreeing to and reduces the potential for harm. It may take practice, but once it becomes natural, it becomes a part of us. Many people don't actually know what they want, but in an open and consenting relationship, they can find the freedom to explore and discover that for themselves.

Talking about sex is still taboo. We have a hard time finding places we can talk freely. But the best place to start is with our own partners. If we cannot trust them enough to share our thoughts and feelings with, and they do not trust us enough to share theirs, we may want to reconsider if they are appropriate sexual partners for us. Consent is where all sex must begin.

We at the Eugene Intimate Health Center write this column in hopes of sharing some of our knowledge with the larger Lane County area. In future columns, we will be writing on a different issue that deals with sexual health. We hope to normalize the conversation and share some of our wisdom with you. If you have any topics you'd like to see us cover, please reach out via Facebook to the Eugene Intimate Health Center.

Kim Marks is the director of the Eugene Intimate Health Center and founder of *As You Like It: The Pleasure Shop*. Have questions about intimate topics? Find the center on Facebook and ask away.