

THE ASHLAND

2006

FREE PRESS

New Year

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Where Have All The Patriots Gone?

On Monday, December 19, 2005, the President of the United States said something new and surprising: the Constitution authorizes him to tap your telephone and read your email without a search warrant. Many Americans found themselves immediately wondering if the President had been reading the same Constitution that our teachers so proudly taught us includes a "Bill of Rights," that protects us from "unreasonable searches and seizures," and precludes searches except pursuant to warrants issued by an impartial magistrate. Search warrants, all good lawyers

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Ashland Fiber Net: The Imbroglia Ripens

Present at the Creation

The year was 1995. Lance Pugh was standing in my office in the Old Ashland Armory, waving his arms and explaining vociferously that I needed to understand that because the City of Ashland had been farsighted enough to back a municipal fiber network, the Armory was going to be wired to the world wide web. Once this marvelous fiber was pulled into the building, I would be

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A White Knight For AFN?

At last Monday night's City Council meeting, John Gafey, the implacable foe of the City's role as provider of Internet and cable TV service, was poised like a bullfighter to deliver the *coup de grace*. His arguments were sharp and unyielding, his voice tough and persuasive. He told the City Council they didn't have to think anymore (what a relief). They could just pull the trigger, put this baby on ice, and return to ... what? The days before

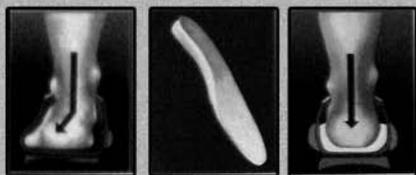
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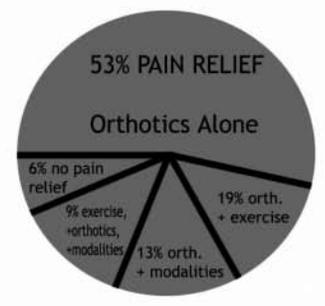
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-R. Donatelli, C. Hurlbert, D. Conaway, R. St. Pierre, "Biomechanical Foot Orthotics: A Retrospective Study," Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Therapy, 10(6):205 (1998).

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AFP's New Year Edition

We heard from some of our readers that the articles are good, but the typestyle is too small, so we've bumped it up a little in hopes of saving your eyesight. The response to last month's Che Guevara biography was overwhelmingly positive. A lot of folks said they liked the State of Jefferson article, and that it opened their eyes as to why it's so nice and white around here. Nevertheless, one clarification was requested by my friend Will Lewis, who called to ask if Jefferson Public Radio really was owned by Clear Channel, as was suggested by author Cyrus Magee's reference to JPR as "that yuppie Clear Channel station." Cyrus called it "yuppie Clear Channel" not because it's owned by the same people who kicked Howard Stern off their network, but rather because JPR's programming is virtually all

produced in LA, New York, and other places far from here. Its musical selections do not mirror the tastes of many locals, and while it affects a folksy feel, broadcast content is designed for a very broad audience of generally warm, fuzzy, politically correct - uh - yuppies. So thanks Will, for helping Cyrus clear that up.

Announce Events In The Calendar

In our February Issue, we will add a Community Calendar illuminated with an image of our patroness, the Roman Goddess Fortuna, designed by Armando Busick of Sunwheel Productions. Fortuna was carved into the prows of Mediterranean ships thousands of years ago, and merchants addressed their prayers to her, hoping that "their ship would come in." Certainly everyone in business in Ashland can agree with that sentiment, and no, Fortuna didn't wear a bra. Thousands of

years ago, breasts were considered normal. Event ads on the Calendar page will be full-color, 1/8 page.

Color Advertising Same As B&W
We've gotten comfortable with our new color pages, and are eager to get more advertisers using them, so for the February issue our ad rates for new advertisers are the same for Color and Black & White! Call your designer and have 'em create a new, eye-catching ad. Remember, though, we run a limited number of Color pages, so this offer is "First come, first served."

Advertising Rates

Ad Size	1 month	2mo	3mo
Full page	\$250	240	230
1/2 page	140	135	130
1/4 page	75	70	65
1/8 page	40	35	30
Calendar	100	90	80

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Where Have All The Patriots Gone?

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know, are issued only after a judge receives sworn testimony from law officers that "probable cause exists to believe that evidence of a crime will be found" in a particular place, and specifying the evidence they expect to find.

The President was not happy to be so explaining himself and his actions. It was a most inconvenient time to step on a land mine, but there he was, knocked ass over tit by a leaked story in that damned New York Times. Somebody had been talking out of school, and it wasn't Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, or Scooter Libby, because this wasn't just some trivial leak about whose wife happens to be a CIA agent, but something important, something that if terrorists knew it, they would use it against us. And they did! Just when he was about to get his new, improved Patriot Act through both House and Senate without a whimper of resistance, kaboom! Terrorists were celebrating everywhere!

He was angry, you could tell, but that didn't make him think any more clearly. So what if he circumvented the Constitution thirty-six times by giving the National Security Agency the go-ahead to tap phones without even calling a judge for permission? Under Reagan, Oliver North's NSA repeatedly circumvented the Boland Amendment with a nod from the Old Man. The Boland Amendment had been adopted by a unanimous Senate vote, specifically forbidding the provision of weapons to Nicaraguan rebels. The NSA also broke the narcotics, arms-trading, and foreign bribery laws, that don't allow anyone, even the President, to swap cocaine for guns and corrupt influence. Reagan sailed through that. So what was all the flap about?

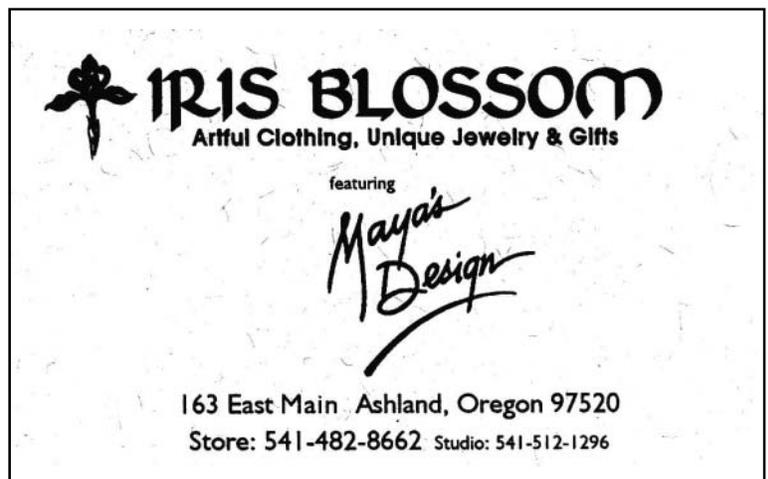
They say Scooter Libby broke the law, they say Tom DeLay broke the law, they say Bill Frist broke the law, they say Mike Abramoff broke the law, they say Karl Rove may still be indicted. What the hell, it's a witch hunt! And it's irrelevant! Who the hell did those Senators think they were, holding up the reauthorization of the Patriot Act, the bulwark of security and therefore, of freedom? The Patriot Act is the law that made the president king for the protection of the homeland – how could they think of allowing the sun to set on his beneficent omnipotence before the end of his term? What would other world leaders think? He just got their nations to enact laws granting them huge intelligence

powers. They'll have them and we won't – it's a nightmare. And people wonder if the president is out of touch. They'd be amazed.

We may need to realize at this point where our President has been sitting for the last five years -- in the middle of a circle of sycophants (ass-kissers), neocons (secret Nazis), lobbyists (lawyers with checkbooks), generals (deranged individuals), corporate chieftains (scam artists), bankers (loan sharks), televangelists (amoral sociopaths), and other such people as have haunted the halls of power since long before the French Revolution. As the truism goes, nobody who wants to keep consuming either law or sausage should see either one being made. It is notable that since the current president took office, the hamburgers have gotten a lot dirtier, too. We have gotten about as close to a free-market economy for influence-buying in Washington as has ever been seen. When such an atmosphere reigns, there is no point in being honest -- you'll never get anywhere that way.

Look at the powerful these days -- a rogue's gallery of robber barons has never feasted so sumptuously in the public eye, or with greater impunity than during the current era. The nation employs costly mercenaries to fight a war of empire, mercenaries pulled from the dregs of the planet, who have killed around the world -- in South Africa, in Lebanon, in Palestine, in Turkey, in Bosnia, in Sierra Leone, in Haiti. These people change sides, discard old identities, buddy up with old pals in new outfits, another day another cutout corporation, another million dollars. With eight billion gone missing in Iraq already, you can just imagine who will be shooting their way out of the Green Zone today, loaded with cash, headed for a boat in the Bahamas, or maybe a little job in Colombia. And for those young men who enlist today, fleeing uneducated poverty, we offer them the assassin's

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Local Business Owner Teaches Snowboarding to High Schoolers – Volunteers Needed

Joel Glimpse, one of the family owners of the Lowdown Boardshop, gives snowboarding classes to local high-schoolers at Mt. Ashland.

AFP: Joel, can you tell me about the program?

JG: This will be the fifth year I've been working with kids from North Medford, South Medford, Crater High School, Phoenix High School, St. Mary's, and Cascade.

AFP: How did the first Saturday go?

JG: It went well. There's fifty-eight kids, about the same as last year, so it was an evaluation day, where we evaluate their skills and set up groups according to ability.

AFP: Are you working toward any competition?

JG: We do six competitions throughout the year at Mt. Ashland. We'll be training for all of those, and hopefully to go to State, which is at Mt. Hood Meadows.

AFP: Who's handling the Ashland team?

JG: That's Matt Froust, who works through Ashland High and also works here at the shop.

AFP: Do you need any more volunteers?

JG: Yes, particularly on event days.

AFP: Shall I tell them to contact you at the shop?

JG: Sure. Just have them call 488-8969.

Movie Reviews

Team America? -- One Sick Movie!

I looked forward to watching "Team America," a puppet-show satire of American foreign policy by "the makers of South Park," even going so far as to actually watch the movie the same night I rented the DVD. Usually I'd rather read, but on this night, I had something I wanted to see. But having seen it, I must caution you to handle it with care, like a dead gopher your cat brought you. And please don't leave this around kids. It's loaded with sick ideas that are insidiously communicated using

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The Ashland Annual Musician's Swap



I learned about the Annual Musician's Swap the day before it happened, and glad I was that I did. Held at Bellevue School during a Saturday in early December, the place was pretty well packed from the opening bell, and if business wasn't too brisk, the atmosphere of friendship more than made up for it. I found myself a great little Fender Acoustisonic amp with inputs for mike, drum machine, guitar, and one more instrument. A real portable ensemble machine. Now if only I can learn how to play that darned guitar. Real musicians abound in Ashland, though, and if you can't learn by hanging out with them, then at least you can enjoy their company and pick up some inspiration. For the ride back to our respective places, Casey Bourgeois, Dave Hampton, his wife Sage Meadows and I all managed to squeeze into my car, along with several thousand issues of freshly-printed copies of the AFP. Just shows, when you get into music, you've always got friends. Here's a few photographs of the event. If you know these people, then wow, you're hip! And if you don't, like Louie Armstrong said, "I can't tell you." CC



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Ashland Fiber Net: The Imbroglia Ripens

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able to contact clients around the world. Lance envisioned the Armory becoming an online entertainment emporium, with live video feeds streaming out live shows from the Armory stage. Lance imaged something on the order of "Ashland City Limits." Lance was right on with his prophecies, but a little ahead of his time, and what visionary isn't? I still think he had a cool idea.

Will Work For Net Access

In 1999, I had an office in Medford, a dot-commer client in San Francisco, and a high-stakes lawsuit to service in San Jose. Using dial-up wasn't cutting it. My client offered to do whatever it took to speed up my Internet connection. I ended up with a hybrid system called Perkinet that required a technician to install a satellite downlink into my building, while I still did my uploads by phone modem. Kooky system, but it worked until Internet CDS discontinued the service after about three months. Then I ended up buying Qwest DSL high-speed through a third-party vendor who would have committed seppuku if he'd had an ounce of decency about him. The service cost \$400 per month, and was intermittently

down for extended periods. But it was still better than dial up.

AFN, My Savior

In 2000, I moved my office back to Ashland, when I realized that both AFN and Charter Internet were available, and competing prices down brutally. I started with Charter because they won the race to my cul-de-sac, and stayed with them until a three-day outage brought my clients down around my ears. I switched to AFN and never had cause to look back, although the whole bit with dealing with a third-party ISP seemed bizarre. Why, I asked myself, would the City throw away its ownership of a fiber network by letting third-party ISPs do the easy work of signing up customers to a broadband network? But I didn't think about it long. AFN service was great, cheaper than Charter, that charged me more for extra IP addresses. I even broke down and got cable TV during 2004, but I tired of big media in a big way after watching Kerry throw the vote to his fellow-Bonesman. TV, I decided, sucks. But you can take my Internet away when you pry my keyboard from my cold, dead hands.

It's 2005, and I pay extra for a one-gigabit monthly upload capacity, so the Ashland Free Press and other publishers can put their works out on the Internet. Hosting websites from your own place is a cozy thing to do, not quite as romantic as a crackling fire, but often more remunerative. I went to Vegas earlier this year and met with a group of Internet entrepreneurs, people who run a lot of websites, and make some pretty good money. But they also pay big bandwidth bills, and were very impressed with the low price of bandwidth in Ashland. In fact, they asked if they could buy some.

Welcome to the Bandwidth Business

So what is bandwidth? Bandwidth, my dear fellow Ashlander is the business we are in. Bandwidth is the Internet medium of information transfer. Measured in "megabits per second," it serves the same function as the wooden letters in Scrabble, without which you can't spell anything. Every "bit" is a unit of information – one "yes" or one "no" – one pixel on or one pixel off on a video screen. You need lots of bits to make a letter, and many more bits to record a song, picture, or movie. Without bandwidth you can't send any letters, numbers, pictures, or gambling wagers over the Internet. If you want to send a lot of information, you need a lot of bandwidth.

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Where Have All The Patriots Gone?

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way. Assassins. That is our position in the world today. For those who respond to the killer-android creed, then a time like this might seem the Golden Age of Killing for Fun and Profit. For those who know that Rothschild was right when he said, "The time to make money is when blood is running in the streets," Iraq was a chance they couldn't let slip away.

Even if they had to pay Achmed Chalabi and his London-based Iraqi contingent to manufacture a pack of lies, the war had to happen. For Donald Rumsfeld, it was a chance to show he could have won Vietnam if they'd given him a chance. For Condi, it was a personality coup. For the President, it was a patriotic bubble bath, a Christian love-fest, a "triumph of the will" that the little German would have envied him. Another generation had fallen under the spell of nationalism, had learned to hate the enemy, had rebelled against their parents' pleading arguments, and left home for the battlefield, drawn by the siren song of war. The president assures the nation that our heroes and their families will be well rewarded, if not in this world, in the next and in our memories, for their sacrifice.

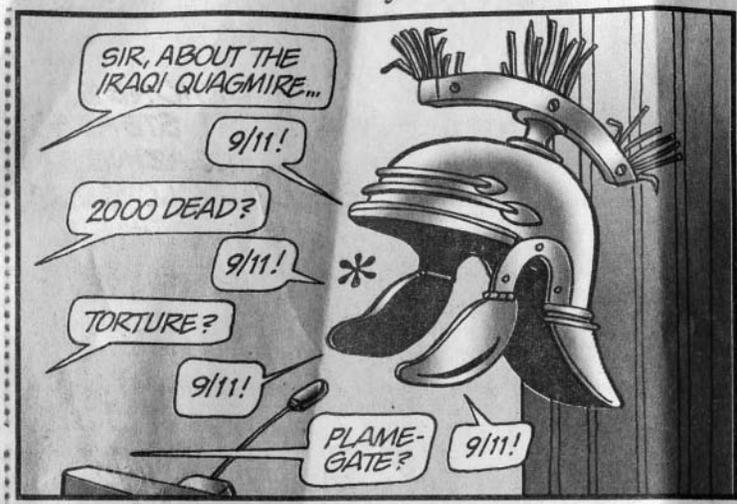
How did we get here? The stirring pageantry, the theatre of international conflict, swept us up. The wind was at our back as we sent our legions forth from the burned ruins of our greatest city, and a mighty cheer went up to see our spears raised high. Oh what televised majesty! Oh what stirring emotions! Credit card debt, marital stress, poor grades, old age and high gas prices, the weights of mundane existence, fell away when we

soared aloft on a flood of endorphins released through repeat stimulation of images of death, revenge, and unity -- patriotic sentiment.

The president had been unmanned by the razing of the towers. Innocent people had been incinerated by the thousands. He had all the justification in the world to haul off and smash the shit out of somebody. And he did. And he started to like doing it. He started to enjoy seeing the Generals and the troops and the military contractors. They were all fine people, who had the best interests of the nation at heart. They were more fun than people like Colin Powell, who wanted to read stuff and discuss the issues in that horribly earnest way of his.

The maps were interesting, and the intelligence briefings were so exciting, just like he had hoped they would be. This was so much better than reviewing death penalty petitions in Texas, even more fun than owning the football team, and all his friends were so helpful. Karl was incredible, and Dick, well Dick was just Dick, ya' know? One thing for sure, Dick knew what was what and that was that. And Dick was really behind the Iraq venture. And after all, Saddam did try to kill Dad. Why wouldn't he have weapons of mass destruction?

DOONESBURY/ by Garry Trudeau





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Legal stuff is always so tedious, and the president had never actually read the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. Like most Americans, he didn't know how many Amendments there were, actually. One had to do with freeing the slaves, another with giving women the right to vote -- Karl had drummed that into his head -- but otherwise, he pretty much drew a blank on Constitutional law. Domestic spying? Well, hell, Karl was always spying on somebody. Nixon had tapes -- that wasn't illegal, but it got him in trouble. Which is why they never made tapes. Not that anyone except Karl would know about that. Alberto explained that wasn't

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Where Have All The Patriots Gone?

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the type of domestic spying he was talking about -- not just strategic dirty tricks to blackmail judges, congressmen, staffers, that sort of thing -- we're talking large-scale wiretapping of American citizens and email interception focussed on uncovering terrorist plots.

At first he didn't understand what the problem was. Why hadn't they implemented the program already? Alberto explained that he would have to sign some papers, because only then would it be lawful for the NSA to tap American phones and computers. While it is true, Alberto explained, that the Constitution makes a wartime president a virtually all-powerful emperor who can hold all civil rights in abeyance in order to protect the nation from terrorism, still he had to sign some papers to invoke that power. Liberty must give way to security, but not without due process of law, Alberto explained, smiling so graciously while extending the pen. As he signed the authorization, the president knew that his position in this office was no accident. The Lord directs the paths of men, and men are but the instruments of their Maker. Of course, only a good man can be

entrusted with the virtually omnipotent power of being a "War President." It swelled his breast with pride and humility at once. It was so important to trust in God. Only God could possibly give a man the wisdom to walk through the snakepit of Washington D.C. and come out with his soul intact. Like the leaders of ancient Israel, he would pray about the invasion of Iraq, and see what the Lord said. Perhaps Arnold Schwarzenegger might have some advice for him. Tomorrow he would call him.

The people who put the president in his position had been worried, before the big operation came down, that the son wasn't a match for the father. When the Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, and other corporate scandals were exploding, the market was tanking, and unemployment was rising, it wasn't looking good. Some wondered whether he was up to the job.



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Then the towers came down. After spending seven minutes staring into space, the president put down that My Pet Goat book, and went to a bunker. Somewhere along the line, he got an injection of vitamins. He went to the scene of the disaster, picked up a bullhorn in the smoking ruins, and began restoring our national pride. He promised to hunt down the perpetrators. He campaigned for endless war like a warrior astride a stallion, seized by a noble vision, and many thought him magnificent. He put on a flight suit, landed on an aircraft carrier. He toppled the man who would have killed his father, declared victory over Iraq, and told reporters that, yep, he'd flown the jet. He worked the same miracle that the little infantry veteran worked for the downcast German people in the 1930's -- he restored the nation's pride. With the nectar of power flowing in his veins, like Reagan before him, the president warmed to his role, became relaxed, jovial, avuncular, and insensible to criticism. He made speeches only to supporters, preferably

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Where Have All The Patriots Gone?

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to military assemblies, gatherings of peace officers, and his party's fundraisers. He refused to be budged from taking long vacations where he could rule from a distance with a majestic manner. Sometimes he is struck by his ability to heal the sorrows of the bereaved. It is a great obligation to be a king, and the accomplishment of kingly duties are made easier by having an excellent security force, so you don't have to meet people unreceptive to a king's healing maner, like that Sheehan woman.

He likes dealing with people on his own turf, and security is easier for his people to maintain with a large free-fire zone and total aerial control of the area. At the ranch is a good time to meet with Condi and get her advice on important policy issues. She had a way of boiling it all down into a manageable package. The war on terror had so many facets. The whole intelligence mechanism, as his father the intelligence director had told him, was like a vast ear for collecting information from everywhere. He was literally astounded by the magnitude of the task

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of monitoring potential terrorist threats. So many people hate America. So many websites out there had money-laundering potential. So many foreign nationals were crawling through the country with terrorism on their minds. Of course, with this evidence before him, he reauthorized warrantless telephone-tapping and email seizure thirty-six times. He will continue reauthorizing until hell freezes over or the terrorist threat subsides, so help him Chief Justice Roberts.

They are lonely days in the White House, so the president is trying something different -- reading a book relevant to his occupation -- "On War" by Clausewitz. He reads that there are times in the battle when the entire weight of the conflict bears upon the General, and his ability to bear that weight will determine the outcome of the battle. But he does not feel this burden. Others are bearing it for him. Or perhaps it is over. Many are telling him to take a page out of Nixon's book. He called withdrawal from Vietnam "peace with honor," but retreat is defeat. Terrorists will hunt us down, and without a king to protect the nation with his all-seeing intelligence eye, we will be defenseless. We cannot go back to the old days when civil rights obstructed the search for the terrorists in our midst. Where are all the patriots of yesterday? Where are all the zealous people eager to advance the anti-terrorist agenda? How could the Senate turn against him? How could they hold out such an unreasonable compromise under the threat of allowing the sun to set on the glorious Patriot Act? A mere ninety day extension would be very dangerous. During those ninety days, the clamor for investigation would grow, civil rights groups would storm in through the breach, and the whole thing, the whole marvelous dream, could dissolve. There can be no compromise. They have to push it through. But how? Karl is working on that.

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Ashland Fiber Net: The Imbroglia Ripens

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Where, you might ask, is this bandwidth manufactured? As best I can ascertain, it is manufactured in computers called “servers,” that crank it out of their processors, which are called engines for a very good reason. And yes, right here in Ashland, we have a lot of servers, adding to the total bandwidth in the Internet universe. We are producing and selling this marvelous material that can be hammered into anything you can see on a screen, hear through a speaker, and print on paper or even in three-dimensional materials.

Bandwidth – great stuff. This marvelous medium of communication has deflated the record industry’s monopoly, created a new medium of self-expression, empowered young, old and everyone in-between, created innumerable jobs, and given us the means to reduce gas-guzzling hive activities like “showing up for work,” “going to the video store,” and “dropping off that paper to sign.” It probably also launched the Abu Ghraib expose, helped Michael Moore end-run the media black-out of Fahrenheit 911, and got Mike Brown fired. Using this fantastic high-speed network, we can also reduce our long-distance phone bills drastically, and talk to people around the world for pennies, using flat-fee Voice-Over Internet Protocol services like Vonage. People say information wants to be free, and I believe that, but without bandwidth, it’s going nowhere.

The bandwidth in Ashland is very good bandwidth, because it doesn’t run through nasty old copper wires left over from the bad old telephone days, like Qwest DSL and other nasty services. Ashland bandwidth races at the speed of light through 35 miles of buried optical fiber that doesn’t rust, doesn’t wear out, and allows fast, smooth transmission of data. This is an excellent product, and one that can be sold to people from all over the world, through a market that is accessible entirely over the Internet. Ashland could become a home for a goodly number of server farms, which is nice, clean industry that pays good salaries to technicians. We may not have a monopoly, but we have a very nice market in which to compete, and many of us think of AFN Internet access as a way of life. While reselling Internet access through a network of private ISPs is cumbersome and fragments our competitive strategy against Charter, it also provides a substantial number of local jobs that pump money right back into the community. We cannot forget the

good jobs held by many Ashland public servants, union members, in the Ashland Information Technology, Telecommunications, and Computer Services Divisions, with a payroll totaling \$1,830,000, many of whom would presumably have to find a new employer if AFN wasn’t a City enterprise anymore, and who must spend some of that money at Ashland eateries. Heck, if you fire all those people, who’ll be left to pay the meals tax?

How’d It Get So Expensive?

AFN is like a bunion – you don’t know how it got that big, and it hurts. Parkinson’s Law states: “Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.” G. Northcote Parkinson coined the aphorism when he was trying to figure out why the number of Admiralty officials in Her Majesty’s Royal Navy ballooned 78% while the total number of ships under command fell by 67%. Nettlesome as this problem seemed, Parkinson got to the bottom of it. He observed that, regardless how trivial the task, “the thing done swells in importance and complexity in direct ratio with the time to be spent.” That leisure breeds self-importance is well-known, but Parkinson had the groundbreaking insight that “work swelling” results from bureaucratic infighting:

“Picture a civil servant, called A, who finds himself overworked. For this real or imagined overwork there are, broadly speaking, three possible remedies. He may resign; he may ask to halve the work with a colleague called B; he may demand the assistance of two subordinates, to be called C and D. There is probably no instance in history, however, of A choosing any but the third alternative. By resignation, he would lose his pension rights. By having B appointed, on his own level in the hierarchy, he would merely bring in a rival for promotion to W’s vacancy when W (at long last) retires. So A would rather have C and D, junior men, below him. They will add to his consequence, and by dividing the work into two categories, as between C and D, he will have the merit of being the only man who comprehends them both.”

Thus officials vie to multiply their subordinates and outmaneuver rivals, seeking to control bigger budgets, boss more employees, enjoy more prestige, and exercise more power. How does Parkinson’s Law figure into this story? No one in the City wanted another Department

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Socrates Now! by Prof. Mitchell Frangadakis
Cutting Through The Torturer's Dilemma

“...the duty of citizens is to define the real truth of our lives and our societies. If such determination is not embodied in our political vision, we have no hope of restoring what is so nearly lost to us – the dignity of man.” Harold Pinter, Nobel prize-winning playwright.

Leaving out the Iran-Contra scandal under President Reagan, three recent U.S. Presidents have been caught telling whoppers. Think back to that smarmy image of a broken Nixon looking straight into the television camera and saying, “I am not a crook.” Then recall President Clinton pouting and biting his lip as he says, “I did not have sex with that woman.” (The surprising part of that statement is that he seemed to forget Monica’s name.) The third biggie-sized misspeak comes from our current President. Hunched over, that adolescent smirk planted on his face, he says, “We do not torture.”

Demonstrating for the first time in a long time that they can still track the scent of an important story, journalists have been hounding this administration for many weeks, asking for a straight answer about the U.S. policy on torture. The president, God bless his heart, has stayed on message. However, contradicting his words is a Defense Department memo dated March 17, 2004. It expresses frustration with a terrorist being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The memo suggested that the prisoner be sent to an unspecified country that uses torture to increase the chances of extracting information from him. U.S. government lawyers have not disputed the intent expressed in this memo. In addition, the C.I.A insists that it can neither confirm nor deny the rendering of prisoners to secret prisons. Never mind that the flights that carried out these missions are on public record. In the meantime, our Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, is doing her best to change the debate about torture from one of morality to that of semantics. She is out to re-define torture with that special spin that only the White House can offer.

I am not saying we shouldn’t have vigorous debates over the issue. There is a long history of legalized torture in our judicial institutions, and the line between what we call punishment and what we think of as torture was easily erased. It was once legal to torture the witnesses of a crime to make sure they were providing an “honest” account. The first step in this torture was psychological.

Prisoners and witnesses alike were given a guided tour through the chambers of horror. If this proved insufficient incentive for true confessions, then they might have their hands tied behind their backs, a rope tied to their arms. Their bodies would then be suspended in the air and dropped suddenly. With their shoulders now popped out of their sockets, they were interrogated once again. More often than not the “actual truth” was discovered at this point in the legal proceedings.

Of course, the issue of torturing terrorists is related to warfare, not crime. The very act of labeling these people terrorists strips them of normal legal protections, placing them in the custody of the military and our Commander in Chief. (Why do we call him Chief?) This is the main reason that this administration went to such lengths to define the category of *terrorist*. And this is also why the debate over what rights these people actually have continues in our legal system through such agencies as the A.C.L.U. The ways in which we define a person informs us as to how we might treat him or her, and how much license we might take with someone now one step removed from being regarded as a human being. All countries dehumanize the enemy during war, and some groups such as Blacks, gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, aliens, and heretics have been dehumanized when it has served other political purposes.

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Beyond the semantics of the issue lie a few basic moral arguments both for and against the use of torture. The position our administration has taken can be summed up in what is called the Utilitarian perspective. In this view, it is morally justifiable to sacrifice a few in order to save the many. This is sometimes referred to as Spock’s Code.

We have all heard variations of this argument in the

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Socrates Now!

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public discussions. Suppose, for example, that a terrorist had information about a dirty bomb that was set to go off in a major U.S. city within 24 hours. Would torturing that terrorist be justified, even if there were only a slight chance of extracting the information needed to save tens of thousands of Americans? Most of us, the leaders of this administration included, would say *Yes*. The trade-off is worth it.

Our 33rd president, Harry Truman, found himself in a similar moral dilemma when he had to decide whether or not to drop the atomic bomb on Japan. The prevailing argument in favor of doing so was that lives would be saved. More lives would be lost in the invasion of Japan—both Japanese and American—than would be if we irradiated the general population. It was obvious that dropping the bomb would violate the U.S. position regarding the killing of innocents, including women and children. When asked afterwards how he felt about his decision, our Commander in Chief said he “slept like a baby.”

For years afterwards President Truman was hounded relentlessly by the Catholic philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe. She argued that his Utilitarian approach was indefensible. “For men to choose to kill the innocent as a means to their ends is always murder,” she said. To those who objected to her labeling our President a “murderer”, she asked the following question: *If you had to choose between boiling to death one infant in order to prevent a disaster to tens of thousands of people, what would you do?* I would add some force to the argument and insist that the baby in question is *your* child. Then what would you do? For Elizabeth the answer was obvious: The infant must be spared. To do otherwise would not be Christian.

In recent months Senator McCain has argued against torture for different reasons. He argues first that information extracted through torture is unreliable. This, he insists, is a matter of common knowledge to military personnel. As a former prisoner of war he also insists that, when his fellow warriors and he were being tortured by the Vietnamese, what sustained them was the knowledge that our country did not condone similar behavior. Our leaders were holding the moral high ground, and this realization helped steel them against the pain of their ordeal. In addition, every soldier recognized that if our country tortures prisoners, other countries will do the same to their prisoners. If we torture, we will be tortured in turn. Simple as that.

I must say that I understand the arguments both for and against the use of torture. For example, I would criticize Senator McCain’s view because he seems concerned primarily about the consequences of torture. Our intent doesn’t seem to matter. We shouldn’t do it, he says, because in the long run it will come back to bite us. As for standing on the moral high ground, I believe much of that turf is cut out beneath you once you have invaded a sovereign country such as Iraq (I won’t bother listing the others).

I also believe that most of my fellow citizens stand in silent agreement with the policy of our current administration. The risk of catastrophic events recurring, events such as those experienced on 9/11, is unacceptable. Torture if you must, we seem to be saying, but please keep it out of our sight. I say this because so many of us have remained so silent for so long.

Oddly enough, there is one argument against torture that screams out through its omission. This involves what I believe to be the innate sanctity of simply being human. You see, I have not heard one public person, journalist, legal expert, or politician, say that torture is wrong because no one person – King, President, or Dictator – has the right to strip away another person’s dignity. In the same sense that our founding fathers held certain truths to be “self-evident”, I would claim that the right to human dignity is also self-evident. No person may be treated as a means to an end, just as Elizabeth Anscombe insisted. I would add the words of the 18th century philosopher Emmanuel Kant, who said that all people must be treated “as an end unto themselves.”

I also understand that these are difficult issues, and that black and white answers are woefully insufficient. Ethical issues are not necessarily accessible to the ordinary accounts of reason. However, I would say that that it is reasonable to point out that the current administration has consistently contradicted its own stated philosophy. On numerous occasions our President has chosen to make his religious faith a significant aspect of his political mandate. His decisions are ruled by his God. He is, by his own public declarations, a “faith-based” person.

Historical records demonstrate clearly that nearly every religion has sanctified torture as part of ritualized practices. The sacrifice of human beings, be they slaves or virgins, in order to propitiate the gods has been standard fare in religious orders around the world. (Consider God’s command that Abraham sacrifice his son). This ritualized form of torture has slowly shifted from human to animal sacrifice. Tibetan Buddhists proudly point out how their sacrificial rites have been transformed into pure symbolism, a move, you might say, towards a more civilized attitude. Beyond this, most of us are aware of the systematic use of torture by the Christian Church in the prosecution of heretics.

Today, the Catholic Church adamantly condemns the use of torture for *any* purpose. This is an absolute policy grounded upon the very high ground of moral certitude. I recall distinctly both the President and the current Pope stating unequivocally that they are not moral relativists. One cannot accept the word of God, and then go about making up arbitrary moral rules.

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God has his immutable code of conduct, *thou shall not kill* being at the top of his list.

To date, over 40 suspected terrorists have died during interrogation while in U.S. custody. Those are the few of which we know. What is happening to those prisoners rendered to countries like Turkey and Syria we cannot say, because the administration will not even admit that rendering occurs. Given these facts, how is it possible for our President to call himself a Christian and a servant of the Lord? Is he telling us the truth, or is he simply a hypocrite? In my view, this administration is a house divided against itself, and when each of us silently condones stripping others of their human dignity, our dignity is lost as well.

Socrates Now! is a regular column authored by **Mitch Frangadakis**, local philosopher who is also found at www.socratesnow.com.

Industrial Revolution

We piled into the future
like college boys in a phone booth
not thinking whether
we could get out again
and couldn't.

Tom Brill

Ashland Fiber Net: The Imbroglia Ripens

Continued from page 11

Head, least of all a "AFN Cable & Internet Department Head," who would have a big budget, lots of subordinates, and according to the financial predictions, a cash cow to manage. Such a person would be an unbearable rival within City government, so it just did not occur to anyone that, however unpalatable, AFN needed someone to lead it.

Sun Tzu said that before going into battle, a general must ask:

"Which government has the right philosophy?

Which commander has the skill?

Which season and place has the advantage?

Which method of command works?

Which group of forces has the strength?

Which officers and men have the training?

Which rewards and punishments make sense?

This tells when you will win and when you will lose.

Some commanders perform this analysis.

If you use these commanders, you will win.

Keep them.

Some commanders ignore this analysis.

If you use these commanders, you will lose.

Get rid of them."

So much the worse if you have no commander at all. You can't even get rid of them. But we have only ourselves to blame. We funded AFN in a feel-good mood, and it took off like a colt that saw the barn door open. Since then, we haven't had a chance of catching up. We started off on the wrong foot. Without a top manager, AFN was nobody's baby, and everybody's excuse. No one's professional fate was personally bound up in getting AFN built within a specified time frame, so Parkinson's Law ate up all the slack that the City allowed.

Time is the enemy of profit. Incomplete systems don't operate, and an inoperable system cannot generate a profit. Every day a project drags on, the more likely it will not be completed or will fall short of expectations, the day when you start earning any money from operations is set farther off. The failure to complete on-time was the first operational failure of AFN, and it was no due to the fact that no strict schedule for completion was adopted or adhered to. Instead, the job was done in the usual public-contracting style, by union City employees and private contractors receiving prevailing wage.

Of course, no one was clamoring for prompt completion of AFN. By contrast, in an effective private organization, when construction fell behind, the AFN sales chief might remind the Construction Director and AFN top brass, that "delayed deployment" means "delayed sales" means "delayed revenue" means smaller bonuses for all of them. Delay in deployment is daily death for the sales chief, who lives from sales, who hopes to send his children to medical school with the proceeds of sales.

Salespeople read Sun Tzu because selling to consumers is a war, a fiercely competitive enterprise that should never be engaged in by amateurs. War is managed by successful commanders. Selling is managed by sales chiefs. Commanders are supposed to produce victories, and sales teams are supposed to produce cash. What do you do with commanders who fail to produce victories? "Get rid of them." The same thing happens to sales chiefs who don't produce bucks. They get into something different, and the business finds someone who can sell. This job of actually *getting the money* is indeed a very difficult one, that is fairly analogized to fighting a war. But from what I can tell from researching the City's website and news resources, AFN had no Sales Director. So no high-level AFN employee ever actually faced the nitty-gritty business of getting Internet and cable users to choose AFN over Charter. Instead, City employees went about the business of providing services and charging fees for them, the only model with which they are familiar. Unfortunately, Charter had a sales director.

Nobody's job at the City of Ashland was on the line when advertiser revenues fell markedly below projections. Worst of all, no one fought for a marketing budget, which is analogous to failing to give your soldiers any weapons. No one was worried they'd lose face if Charter stole our customers using predatory pricing (underselling your competitor even though you lose money in the short run). Even though AFN pays \$460,000 per year for "Central Services," usually described as "legal and accounting," AFN never got a formal legal opinion about whether the City could sue or otherwise challenge Charter's discriminatory pricing policy, under which it delivers Internet access and cable services at lower prices in Ashland than in Medford. Nope, we just sat there while Charter ate our lunch, even though their service is inferior. And most definitely no one's job was imperiled by the City's failure to roll out Internet telephone service, thus kissing off a half-million of forecast revenue in a single inaction.

So how has AFN been run at all? AFN has been run by remote control from Lee Tuneberg's office, with nods from Alan DeBoer and City Administrator Gino Grimaldi, who signed off on all the debt that we're now carrying.

So why is the project everybody's favorite whipping boy? Everyone wants to blame the debt, but I want to talk about AFN's unexploited value first, because frankly, the debt is not killing us, we have no way of getting rid of it but to pay it off, and all the negative talk is just driving down the price of the asset in question. If we are going to sell, we should not be broadcasting our despair about the financial imbroglio we have gotten ourselves into. A recent interpretation of Sun Tzu for salespeople says, "If you are struggling, you must seem calm." We are struggling, and we must seem calm. We are sitting at the big stakes table, here. The vultures are circling, and we are what's for dinner. We need to kick a little.

Nowadays everyone wants to know: should we dump AFN, or what? When you talk about selling something that is valuable, that works, that is already built, and that is buried under your house, you should have a good reason for doing it. The fact that it cost too much to build it, and it's costing you to keep it, doesn't necessarily mean you should haul off and get rid of it. You need to do an economic analysis, and that analysis really doesn't have anything to do with how much money you have into the project. This economic principle is expressed as "forget sunk costs."

What are "sunk costs?" Sunk costs are money that you're not going to get back no matter what you do. My only economics professor, Armen Alchian, explained it by saying: "Imagine you had a million dollars, and you invested nine-hundred thousand of them in a stock that went belly-up and you lost it all. The way that you lost the nine-hundred-thousand should have nothing to do with how you apply the remaining hundred-thousand, except that perhaps you should not throw good money after bad." In fact, people have a tendency to fixate on a loss, and it destroys their ability to evaluate how to dispose of the remaining asset.

As the owners of AFN, the citizens of Ashland find themselves in a similar situation. We have invested far more than we were told it would cost to build the fiber network. In 1999, it was estimated to cost \$6 Million, and we are told it has cost \$15.5 Million. To explain this

Pentagon-sized overrun, City employees disclosed to the AFN Options Committee that, among other blunders, construction went way over budget because the City Attorney failed to inform the City that it would have to pay prevailing wages to contractors working on the project. The ballooning expense was not disclosed to the public. Rather, in July 2002, based on a memo from Lee Tuneberg, the City's top bean-counter, then-Mayor Alan DeBoer authorized "internal borrowing" from the Water Fund and the Wastewater fund to keep AFN going through 2003. Tuneberg sent a copy of his memo to DeBoer to Gino Grimaldi, City Administrator, but didn't even send a copy to Dick Wanderscheid, the City head of Electric, who has pretended to be the head of AFN since 2001, reading scripts prepared by the accounting office. Wanderscheid has mainly been useful in hiding AFN's financial problems during his tenure, since he developed the habit of issuing AFN Quarterly Reports that describe only rosy conditions, then dropping a financial bomb (like a \$2 Million deficit in AFN funding) shortly after each new budget is passed. Thanks to Dick's idea of how to fund things (secretly, after the fact, and when it's too late to say no), AFN has earned the reputation of being a

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Movie Reviews: Team America

Continued from page 4

established techniques of subliminal persuasion. It doesn't make much difference that puppets, rather than human actors, collapse in their own vomit, engage in sex that culminates with the girl shitting on the guy's face, hack each other to bits, set others on fire, and are decapitated, detonated and impaled in the course of the movie. Indeed, the effect may be worse than seeing actors engaging in this stuff, because in that case, we'd just turn it off as "too violent." But with puppets, they've got you off guard, and the traumatizing images stun the mind while explicit, implicit, and subliminal notions establish cross-currents of confusion, rendering you vulnerable to the really sick ideas that the creators of the movie want to disseminate.

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By using puppets with large heads, about four times larger than a normal adult head, the puppeteers cause us to perceive the puppets as little babies, invoking our instinctive response to find them endearing. Mickey Mouse, Tweety Pie, and Joe Camel also exploit this hard-wired feature of human response to feel protective and emotive toward children. Such characters, that manifest child traits in adulthood, are called "neotenic." "Neoteny is a term in developmental biology that describes the retention of juvenile characteristics in the adults of a species." (Wikipedia entry for "neoteny.") In simpler terms, these puppets are cute. "Cuteness is usually characterized by some combination of infant-like physical traits, especially small size, a large head, large eyes, a small nose, and chubby limbs. ... Konrad Lorenz argued in 1950 that infantile features triggered nurturing responses in adults [citing as evidence] that humans react more positively to animals who look like infants — with big

eyes, big heads, shortened noses, etc. — than to animals who are less cute. ... Another way to phrase Lorenz's point is to say that humans prefer animals which exhibit neoteny." (Wikipedia entry for "Cuteness.") It's traumatic when creatures that we find endearing and worthy of protection are blown up, dismembered, splattered, and burned before our eyes.

However, if we are already laughing when this happens, we may tend to keep laughing even as it happens, telling ourselves that, after all they are just puppets, and it's all just in good fun. Right, like simulated child pornography would be fun. No, the violence in this film is really pornographic because it is so mean-spiritedly directed at movie-industry peace activists. It's not actually funny, or in any way connected to reality, to depict Alec Baldwin Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins, Sean Penn, and Helen Hunt, as murderous terrorists who will kill to establish world peace. It's demented to depict Michael Moore, smeared with mustard, waving a hot-dog, a slice of pizza, detonating himself in a suicide bombing of Mt. Rushmore. It's tasteless and disgusting to splatter an effigy of Holly Hunter into a bloody mess, to decapitate Samuel Jackson, and split Alec Baldwin's braincase open to expose the contents, and to repeat the image three times. Serial imagery of extreme death and mutilation of the brain cavity? How hilarious! Sure they're just puppets. But if you found a puppet of you hanging from a rope in your front yard, you wouldn't just think it was a puppet. It would be a threat. This movie is an assault on each of those individuals, an expression of mortal hatred elaborated with millions of dollars of effort to deliver a personal insult and an explicit threat. Shut up, or we'll kill you.

There is nothing to recommend this movie, and life is too short to spend on a movie like this when you could be doing something really worthwhile, like petting your dog, picking your nose, or breaking wind. The thesis of the movie is far too banal and degrading to be worthy of my recounting. While ink and newsprint cost are cheap, your time and mine are worth something. My suggestion is to boycott anything the South Park hoodlums produce. Put these shitbags out of business and send them back to the Home for Retarded Republicans who actually are such nerds they think they're cool. And for a minute they had me thinking it, too. Until I realized the joke was on me.

Mozzle Tauve

Ashland Fiber Net: The Imbroglia Ripens

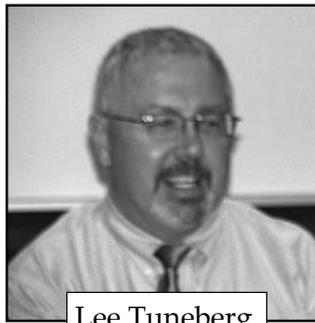
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boondoggle. Now it has to live that reputation down, and somehow get its neck out of the noose that John Gafey and his band of fiscal vigilantes had slipped 'round its neck.

The "sale of AFN" that many believe will get the City out of debt will not. The Daily Tidings ran a financial analysis in its December 3rd edition clearly showed that selling AFN for \$5 Million and throwing away its operating revenues would increase yearly AFN payoff expense from \$755,000 to \$985,000 per year – from three-quarters of a million, to a million. The damage to local business from a sale could be substantial. We have a goodly number of businesses built on AFN Internet access, first among them the ISPs, whose fortunes, and those of their owners and employees, are based on the continuance of the existing order. We have a public resource that is still in our hands, over which we can yet exert control.

Cooler heads want a fix before the vote – a sale, a lateral, a spinoff, a face-saving, time-saving fix that will prevent the issue going to a vote – what the powerful think of as a roll of the dice. But we are the voters. We paid for, and will continue to pay for this thing. We need to look at all the facts and make up our minds with a cool head.

The Options Committee has recommended that the City get rid of AFN, because it could never learn how to run it, but this sidesteps the politically untenable truth – the City has allowed Lee Tuneberg to call the tune that AFN has been required to play, and that tune is heavy on accounting expense. The "Central Services" expense of \$460,000 per year keeps AFN underwater. The Options Committee report recommends spinoff because the members believe that, if a separate nonprofit were buying these same services, they would pay less than \$100,000 per year. One might ask, then, if AFN has to be rescued from City government so they won't be overcharged for accounting and legal work, what kind of a City government are we running, and where are the savings going to come from that will prevent us running up more debt? The answers to this question is simple. We are running a very expensive City government. And getting rid of AFN won't fix that.



Lee Tuneberg

Russ Silbiger's Speech to the City Council in 2001

In October 2001, the City Council approved Dick Wandscheid as "AFN Director." Russ Silbiger, now on the City Council himself, made a speech to the Council, strongly cautioning against hiring Dick for the job. Since Russ' analysis has proved prescient, we are revisiting this piece of Ashland oratorical history.

It is ironic that the approval of this position is on the consent agenda. If any of you have seen the film Manufacturing Consent by Noam Chomsky, you will know what I mean. Dick was picked as the best candidate of 4. I have little doubt, given 4 choices, Dick could be perceived as the best. Greg made it clear he was looking for simply a manager, someone to "operate the system." Given the need for 15 years of non-stop growth that AFN will require to pay off the rising debt load, now predicted to reach almost 13 million dollars in a few years - and that is if we do well - we need more than just a manager. We need someone who understands the market, the market place and the technology. We need a leader. We are not getting one. I have to ask: Why is this Department Head position being treated so different then all the others? Paula, Lee, Keith, Mac and Scott not only have management skills, but specialized skills, education, and experience that qualify them for the position. Do you believe Dick could replace any of the other Department Heads? Department head positions are not merely management. I also note that Greg never bothered to ask the AFN advisory committee its advice on what we thought AFN needed for the person in charge.

As you know, Dick has been in charge of AFN for 5 months. We have a little bit of a track record. First the good news. Cable TV and cable modems hook-ups have proceeded at a reasonable pace, although far below the projected rate. However the high-speed customers have dried up to zero. We are (or were) budgeted for 60 this fiscal year - about 400,000 in revenue. As far as I can tell - staff won't answer - We have added zero.

Here are a few specific concerns with Dick's performance as interim director. A question that came up in the advisory committee was why we lost a couple of major deals. One of these was with the Rogue Valley Manor, worth about 130,000 per year. Staff first claimed we lost the deal because Charter made a better deal. Then Dick told the Tidings, Quote "It never materialized beyond some

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Russ Silbiger's Speech

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initial discussion." That statement was completely false. We were on about the 12th revision of the contract, and the deal fell through because The City was in no position to fulfill the terms of the contract. How can the advisory committee evaluate AFN and future business opportunities if we are being misinformed and misled? How can you?

I point out that the advisory committee was never shown an independent evaluation of AFN that was commissioned by Pete - at a cost of \$9,000 in March. This report detailed some specific problems that needed attention. It would have been a good place for the committee to start. It was never mentioned.

Another problem still not addressed fully is inventory control. In the last year the department has seen the misappropriation of a television set, and more recently, a generator. There was also a major problem with a vendor. Somehow about 400,000 dollars worth of inventory came in the door over a period of a year was never inventoried properly or paid for. While the City did budget for an inventory control person, the fact is access to City inventory is far too easy. Two months ago, I pointed out to Dick that Hunter Communications drives in, loads up its truck and leaves without any monitoring what so ever. In fact, it is all too easy for anyone to do that. Dick responded that he knew that was a problem and needed to do something about it. Two months later, the gates are as wide open as ever.

One thing Mike asked from Utility Billing/Finance was a weekly activity report. This would include information such connects, disconnects (and reasons), levels of service etc. as it was agreed that this was very important and should be done immediately. That was about 3 months ago. It has yet to happen.

I will give Dick credit for finally listening to staff's plea to increase the sales force. He did do that. On the other hand, the staff for the underground build out was cut back, further delaying the completion of AFN. The latest estimate is we should be getting close to being finished by next June - yet another year's delay. Finishing the job should have been a top priority. We have lost revenues, credibility, and opportunities.

Dick has had 5 months to take the bull by the horns. He is still sitting in the pen. Dick could have chosen to end

the misinformation that has plagued AFN since it was proposed. He chose to continue it.

You may ask why after four months you have yet to see an advisory committee report. The fact is staff is in charge of the process. Perhaps there is a good reason results have been delayed until after a department head was chosen.

Perhaps I have completely misread Dick's abilities. Perhaps he has just been waiting to see if he got the job before he started to take charge. I hope so, I really do, because from where I sit I see a department head that brings to the table virtually no business experience, no marketing experience, and no real cable, IT, or telecomm experience. Given the current financial status of AFN, that gives me little hope. The citizens of Ashland will pay dearly for the mistakes of the past, and the mistake you make here tonight.

Book Review: *DMT, The Spirit Molecule*

I just finished reading "DMT: The Spirit Molecule," by Rick Strassman, M.D. who practices psychiatry in Taos, New Mexico and is a Clinical Associate Professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Dr. Strassman managed to finagle permits to administer DMT, "an extremely short-acting and powerful psychedelic," at the UNM School of Medicine. Beginning in 1990, and continuing for five years, he administered 400 doses of DMT to 60 human volunteers.

Dr. Strassman has great intellectual credentials, including degrees from Stanford and Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University. He interned in general psychiatry at U.C. Davis Medical Center where he received the Sandoz Award for outstanding graduate resident in 1981. He has also been a Zen Buddhist for over 20 years and is deeply interested in the liberating spiritual potential of psychedelic drugs. Dr. Strassman's avowed purpose for his DMT work was to find ways to do good things for people with psychedelic drugs, but he was compelled to follow strict bio-medical protocols that ultimately hamstrung his research efforts and made him question whether there was any point in continuing. He left the project after his wife contracted cancer, and the promised additional support for his psychedelic research from other medical professionals failed to materialize. Dr. Strassman makes it clear that a great way to screw up a promising scientific career is to become interested in psychedelic research. He recounts a telling conversation

with an anonymous "Dr. K," at the San Diego V.A. Hospital. Dr. Strassman was on his fellowship, and was having a "rambling and wide-ranging" conversation with Dr. K., when he ventured one of his pet theories: "Do you think," I offered, "that the pineal [gland] might produce psychedelic compounds? It seems to have the right ingredients. Maybe it somehow mediates spontaneous psychedelic types of states -- psychosis for example." Dr. K. stopped in his tracks and turned on his heels. His brow furrowed and he peered at me intently through his glasses. A palpable menace glinted from his eyes. "Ooops," I thought. "Let me tell you this, Rick," he said slowly and firmly. "The pineal has nothing to do with psychedelic drugs."

Dr. Strassman learned his lesson, and did not speak the words "pineal and psychedelic in the same breath to anyone" for the remainder of the year.

Of course, we expect scientists to be uptight, because they have grants to protect, wives to support, kids to feed, and politicians to please. However, Strassman never expected to discover that his fellow Zen Buddhists were even more uptight than Dr. K., who just didn't want anyone screwing up his reputation in the pineal gland business.

Strassman's experiments utilized intravenous injections of DMT at dosage levels calculated at .05 mg./kg. of body weight for a low dose, and .4 mg./kg. for a high dose. The onset of psychedelic effect after injection is immediate with doses of .2 mg./kg. and above. What Strassman discovered in his experiments upended his hypothetical appletart. He expected people to have mystical and near-death type experiences. He did not expect for many of his experimental subjects to declare with certainty that they had met other beings during their experience, whom they described as "clowns" or "elves," who took an intensive interest and delight in the experimental subject's appearance in their dimension. These beings reside behind the brilliantly colored curtains of psychedelic light that immediately invade the visual sense field within seconds after administration of the drug. Ultimately, Dr. Strassman seemed to give up on his efforts to interpret these beings as projections of psychological features, as one subject after another refused to accept that characterization, insisting that the beings were real, the place where they met the beings was real, and they did not reflect mere inner experiences in a Freudian or Jungian sense.

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Dr. Strassman was also surprised when one person after another recounted experiences strangely reminiscent of alien abduction stories when receiving a high dose of DMT. Admittedly, Dr. Strassman was administering the DMT in a large hospital, where medical hardware was everywhere present, and bio-medical protocols required that he take blood draws, blood pressure readings, and even EEGs and MRIs of people tripping their brains out. Nevertheless, lots of people recorded experiences that involved detailed visualizations of large numbers of intelligent beings, often reptilian or automaton-like, tending huge machines in vast illuminated complexes, and performing examinations of the experimental subject. They often bonded with one of the strange beings and were regarded indifferently by the rest.

This reminded me of my friend Ernesto's DMT experience that he recently recounted. Depositing the DMT powder on a bed of dried *Psychotria viridis*, which has a small amount of naturally occurring DMT in it, and putting another layer of *Psychotria viridis* on top of the dust (to prevent it from bursting into flame) he applied a butane lighter flame and consumed the entire bowl in one breath. The effects were as fast as promised, and as

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he exhaled the white smoke, complex colored patterns appeared in the smoke-swirls. His entire psychosomatic system began to vibrate, from the inside out and from the outside in, and the only thing he could hear was a mantra, a single word repeated endlessly. This mantra seemed to protect him from disorganizing energy, keeping him collected around his center. He felt a bit of anxiety that the experience might get out of control, but it did not. With eyes open or closed, he saw colored patterns of an extremely complex geometric structure that gradually began to resemble reptilian structures such as scales and bones. After around five minutes, Ernesto got up from his seat and laid down under a blanket. There, for around the next 1-1/2 hours, he continued to experience a reptilian presence. This reptilian presence was somewhat disturbing to Ernesto, because of the conditioning we have against reptiles, but the reptile presence spoke to him gently, encouraging him to appreciate the reptilian history in his body, and its great strength and resilience. The reptilian spirit told him that it was a source of strength he needed in order to succeed as a living being. Ernesto accepted this understanding, and gradually dealt with the tension between conditioned repulsion and wholesome self-acceptance. He saw images of primitive spears, the extensions of reptilian talons and claws. In days following, Ernesto's strength and resolve in the course of ordinary life seemed strengthened and smoothly directed. A few nights later, he advised, he had brief DMT-like colored visions in his dreams. He stated that the experience had not been anywhere near as frightening as common stories had caused him to expect, and if given the opportunity, he would try another DMT voyage.

According to his grant proposal, Dr. Strassman was not supposed to be giving therapy, but leading people through the inner world always requires the intuitive skills of a healer. He never knew when one of his experimental subjects would experience a terrifying upheaval. One poor fellow, a happy raver-type with charming looks and a light-hearted attitude, who had consumed lots of MDMA (ecstasy) in recreational settings, suffered a nightmare ordeal on a high-dose trip. The drug kicked in, his feet convulsed in a kicking motion, and he remained rigid for ten minutes. Then he opened his eyes, sat up, and declared that he had just been raped anally by two crocodiles who sat on his chest and immobilized

him so completely that he was unable to sit up or reach out for a comforting hand. As he put it, when the experience began he thought it was a dream but "then realized it was really happening." Of course, with the time distortion effect added in, this was a monolithic exercise in agony. Interestingly, this subject considered the experience fundamentally beneficial, in that it increased his appreciation for ordinary life. He cut down on his ecstasy-taking in trivial social interactions, moved in with his girlfriend, and assumed a quiet lifestyle.

Whether covered with contrived nonchalance, or with a veneer of spiritual sophistication, the soft underbelly of the human psyche is quickly exposed by this substance. A woman who prepared for her session by flipping through the *New Yorker* had an extremely miserable trip on a very low dose and accepted no further injections. A modern-day shaman named Carlos kept trying to explain away his high anxiety before each administration of the drug, which induced violent shaking notwithstanding his profession that his first dose was nothing much. Eventually he had a full death experience that he considered fully valid spiritually, but wished he had been with friends out in the mountains when it took place. But some of the most enthusiastic were unable to continue. In certain cases, DMT high-doses induce huge spikes in blood pressure, in one case so severe Dr. Strassman was ready to call the cardiac team, and diagnosed the slight headache that the subject felt after the trip as the result of extreme vaso-dilation in the large blood vessels that enter the base of the skull. But the experimenter was pleased with the experience, and notwithstanding his disability, wished to take further trips. Though he was not permitted by Strassman, the subject remained grateful and considered it a very important experience that confirmed the rightness of his spiritual direction.

Under the guise of trying to determine whether DMT administration develops a tolerance in the user, Dr. Strassman developed a protocol of four high-dose injections approximately one hour apart. These doses were .3 mg./kg., not the highest dose but plenty psychedelic. Dr. Strassman said that everyone who was given the opportunity persevered through all four doses, a moderately exhausting experience.

First, the answer to the tolerance question -- DMT does not build up a tolerance, and each successive dose was just as powerful as the first. What changed was the character of the experience, which seems to profit from

familiarity. The first high dose trip is the shocker, when people don't know what they are going to see and aren't sure they like seeing it. The second and third trips grow increasingly familiar. And by the fourth trip, many people felt cleaned out, healed and freed of persistent anxiety. One young woman in her early twenties who professed a lesbian orientation and was highly attractive to people of both sexes, had a persistent pain in her belly. She had been raped repeatedly by her step-father at sixteen. During her four sessions, she met the beings on the other side, whom she called the elves, and discharged the pain in her midsection, which she connected with the rapes. She valued the experience very highly and felt that she would now enjoy her life a great deal more.

In addition to the powerful psychedelic effects, which caused people to blurt out things like, "Here we go!" and "They were on me quick," DMT releases large amounts of vasopressin, prolactin, growth hormone, and corticotropin, all of which may have psychological effects. During the drug effect, pupil diameter doubled within two minutes, and body temperature would rise. Dr. Strassman's theory that the pineal gland may produce DMT seems unsupported by the information in the book, but it is an intriguing theory, an explanation for why this organ, centrally located in the brain, contains so many of the precursor substances that create DMT.

Reasons for joining the experiment were the expected -- people wanted new experiences, wanted to understand the nature of their own existence and God, and wanted to deepen their understanding of life. Interestingly, many of them found a bit of what they were looking for, or at least thought they had. Dr. Strassman himself became increasingly uncertain as he looked for concrete changes in behavior, beyond expostulations of enthusiasm. From my point of view, Dr. Strassman may have been looking too hard in the wrong places. When it comes to judging how we are doing, it's hard to say that anyone knows better than we ourselves.

After years of doing the work, Dr. Strassman indeed was getting tired. One can imagine the stress of responding to the heightened mental states and emotional reactions of sensitive people questing for self knowledge. Then his wife got cancer and they moved to Canada to be closer to her relatives. Dr. Strassman started commuting to Albuquerque from Canada every couple of months, jamming in as many psychedelic sessions as possible. The fatigue took a further toll.

As I mentioned, Dr. Strassman is a long-time practicing Zen Buddhist, and like many Buddhists, had talked with other Buddhists about how LSD had led them into the search for enlightenment. He had a number of friends, long-time students in an unnamed Zen Buddhist organization that we could possibly identify by connecting the dots: the group is based in the midwest, the teacher died recently, the head of the organization is now a woman, and the organization chooses its leaders by election. It is a large group. Also, they are a bunch of assholes.

How do we know they are assholes? Because they dumped shit all over poor Dr. Strassman when he needed it the least. He had shared his thoughts about his work, and his hopes and aspirations to connect the spiritual path with psychedelic methods, disclosing deep thoughts to a person he thought was his spiritual counselor. Within the DMT sessions themselves, he incorporated attitudes of modeling equanimity and projecting compassion, Buddhist attitudes that helped subjects to benefit from the experience. Additionally, he selected for the experiment numbers of persons who had experience with psychedelic drugs and meditation, believing that they were best adapted to deal with the jarring effects of the experience. For all this respect and the place of honor that Dr. Strassman accorded Buddhism in his life and work, he was rewarded with the most arrogant, presumptuous declaration of insult that I have heard delivered from a Buddhist source in recent years. His former Buddhist pals derided his work with DMT as "not right livelihood," and denounced his plan to administer psychedelics to the terminally ill as an "appallingly dangerous" effort to "play God." With the full confidence of having reached enlightenment themselves, they decreed: "An attempt to induce enlightenment experiences by chemical means can never, will never, succeed. What it will do is badly confuse people and result in serious consequences for you."

This pronouncement certainly confused Dr. Strassman, who until then had been receiving encouragement from his old stoner pals who had put on Buddhist robes. He realized that there was a succession struggle going on within the Zen group, because the old abbot was dying, and "senior monks were lobbying for elected posts," each vying for the position of "most zealous defender of the teaching."

Then Dr. Strassman really stuck his foot in it. He

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published an article in *Tricycle*, Fall 1996, calling for "a discussion of integrating psychedelics into Buddhist practice." As Dr. Strassman put it, the "article sealed my fate ... my lifelong affiliation with the order would implicate it as contributing to these new ideas." In order to distance the Zen group from Dr. Strassman's vile heresy, his erstwhile friend, a nun who had been elected new chief poobah, "sent copies of the *Tricycle* article to members of my new meditation group as well as to other groups and the monastery [including] scribbled comments" Dr. Strassman had made during their private conversations. She also "wrote to the local congregation telling them not to enter my house because there might be psychedelic drugs kept in it." (This reminds me of James Thurber's mother-in-law's fear that electricity might leak out of the sockets and electrocute you. It also reminds me of Timothy Leary's statement that LSD is a substance well-known to cause insanity in those who have not taken it.) This betrayal by his old spiritual comrades was apparently the last nail in the DMT experiment's coffin. Says Dr. Strassman, "Although I could see beyond the hypocrisy that motivated much of the monastery's repudiation of my work, it took its toll." Shortly thereafter, he wrote closing summaries on all of his projects, packed up his drugs and mailed them to a secure facility near Washington, D.C., where "the supplies of DMT, psilocybin, and LSD remain ... to this day." Probably right next to the Ark of the Covenant, left there by Indiana Jones.

Carlos Ramone

Meter Maids Are From Medford

I overpark sometimes. It's a problem, but not a big one. A parking ticket is my small way of rebelling against the tyranny of time. The moon and stars give no parking tickets. An old car left in the rain, all to itself, will collect nothing more than rust. Parking tickets are things of man, a sign that the dark, satanic mills described by Blake are yet turning centuries later, though more quietly, with digital gears destroying our peace of mind.

There's even something a little fun about paying a small fine. For a long time I felt like I was tipping the City for having a nice parking lot and indulging my desire to have a longer coffee break than any human should be permitted. I was raised Mexican Catholic, and nothing is for free that is worth having. However, I hate to be gouged even for a luxury item.

Last Thursday I was snapped out of my cozy daydream, my fond belief that my little habit of civic naughtiness, this leaving-my-car-too-long-in-one-place addiction, was a mere innocent indulgence. I had parked in a hurry, but happy to find a two-hour place open on the narrow slice of Third Street that runs behind the Astro station downtown. Just the day before I'd been slammed for two tickets in a green fifteen-minute zone right next to the two-hour spot I'd just nabbed. I ran in to meet Brad the carpet guy, and his lovely wife Jennifer. After we measured the new AFP location for carpet and discussed the details, I sauntered on down to Dave's coffee place above Bloomsbury, met with a friend, and had a cup of coffee before sauntering back to my parking spot. Damned if I didn't have a ticket. Make that two tickets.

One ticket was for the standard, claiming I'd overparked my two hour limit, but it was the second that caught my eye. Fifty-five dollars! What the hell for? Because it was my "fifth ticket in a year." Oh, and here I thought I was doing them a favor, throwing them a little loot in exchange for the nice parking lot, smiling at the meter maids, and all along they were keeping score, waiting to get bonus points! So I scrutinized the "fifth ticket" carefully, and realized that it had been issued less than two hours after my arrival, when I still had time left in the spot. But how to prove it? I called Brad and asked when I arrived. He answered and said he could help me out, because he'd made a cell phone call at 1:05 on the way to the meeting, arrived five minutes later at Third Street, and then had to wait for another five minutes for me to arrive. That made my arrival time 1:15 pm, and this vicious, unwarranted ticket had been issued unlawfully at 14:55, aka 2:55 p.m. for those of you who don't sprachen sie digital.

So I called up Linda at "Parking Enforcement" in Medford, and told her the whole scandalous story, and that third party testimony and cell phone records were available to back it up. Linda was polite, but confessed amazement, since the number has to be logged in to the computer before the ticket can be issued. Well then, I explained, it would be Brad's cell phone against their handheld machine, and may the best computer win. She suggested I write a letter to them and they'd get it to a judge, who could decide on my claim. Sure, I'll do that.

Suffice it to say, my romance with meter maids is off. I always thought they were local gals taking my money. It's just no fun anymore.

Anonymous

Charter Communications, Paul Allen's Toy

"Everybody knows" that Charter Communications is the "natural buyer" for "AFN," even though nobody knows precisely what portions of AFN would be for sale, if it were for sale, which according to the City Council's pronouncements, it isn't. The primary proponents of selling AFN (to Charter) are Gino Grimaldi, Ashland's outgoing Administrator, and Lee Tuneberg, the City's top accountant. Their reasoning is – they've borrowed all the money the banks will lend, and then borrowed more money from their friends the municipal bond bankers, who charged the City a mere \$250,000 to underwrite our \$15.5 Million bond issue. They've played hide-the-budget-ball with three generations of City Councils, and managed all this without ever hiring a real head of AFN, and the whole game is simply played out. They can't bear the idea of giving up control over this financial behemoth, but they don't want to deal with it anymore. They spend all of their time explaining why they did what they did, and they can't get any other work done.

So Charter to the rescue, at any price. Although Charter is not a financial behemoth, with the total value of all its outstanding common stock under half a billion, it has one important stockholder whose personal finances dwarf those of our tiny burg. The largest holder of Charter stock is Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, who has acquired 29,165,526 shares. Allen's interest in Charter is as current as his rumored romance with former Countess von Bismarck Laura Harring. He is a mighty chieftain of the business world who invests seven and eight-figure sums in various companies through Vulcan Securities, a private investment house dedicated entirely to investing Allen's money. Like all investment houses, Vulcan pays big salaries to MBAs and CPAs to produce intensive financial reports on prospective investments. Since July 2004, Allen he has bought and sold millions of shares in private transactions that value Charter stock at up to 30 times its market value. A May 2004 Business Week article entitled "The \$12 Billion Education of Paul Allen," noted that Charter was one of a select group of technology assets Allen retained in his portfolio after deciding to cut his losses on a broad array of wired investments that had not panned out. The article indicates that Allen

takes a personal interest in Charter that is unique among his investments:

Allen, who had long suffered from a sort of investor's attention deficit disorder, has made a big effort to become more focused. Never married, he says he is spending more time than ever on his investments. He holds weekly meetings with his financial advisers; before, he met with them only on an ad-hoc basis. Now he lunches with the senior members of his investment team every Monday to get updates on deals and discuss strategy. Allen holds another weekly meeting to catch up on developments at Charter, his biggest holding after Microsoft. "I've been through the fire in the last few years," says Allen. "Now I get involved and ask questions that are a lot more pointed and specific and probing -- and, I think, insightful." ... The devastation of the tech bust led Allen to some serious soul-searching. Last fall, he distilled his thinking into a 26-point memo setting out ways to improve his investment management..."
Already, some outcomes are changing. One of Allen's bullet points is a reminder to "negotiate hard" but walk away from overpriced deals. ... Adds Allen: "I wish we had the 26-point memo five years ago. Things would be in a different place today. Those lessons were learned at a significant cost."

This snapshot of Paul Allen's thinking shows that Charter's main shareholder has been badly burned in the tech meltdown, and if we think Charter is going to buy AFN, we had better plan on giving it away – after burning through twelve of his thirty-billion dollar Microsoft haul, this billionaire has turned into a skinflint. As the article discusses, in a recent non-deal, Allen invested in Magis Technologies, an HDTV technology R&D startup, watched it slide into bankruptcy, joined other vulture investors making lowball offers, and was outbid by Sanyo for a lousy \$3.5 Million. Fundamentally, companies are Paul Allen's toys, and he is getting bored. He smashes them up, throws them away, and generally treats them like disposable entertainment.

As a result, you would never want Charter to buy any

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Charter Communications

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thing large from you, because it's losing money faster than the Titanic was shipping water when the rich people were stealing the lifeboats, and I bet Paul Allen has already commandeered one with oars, biscuits and fresh water. The statistics on Charter are so bad that it is clear that, but for Allen's support, the company would be defunct. Although it has over \$5 Billion in annual revenue, it has a negative profit margin of -18.7 %, negative net income of -\$974 Million, and a negative book value of -\$14.35 per share.

Allen's not much a civic giver, either, if you were wondering. Turning his knack for screwing up businesses to the field of professional sports, he bought the Portland Trail Blazers. Under Allen's mismanagement, a string of players started getting more time under the police photolamps than the gym lights, and the team earned a new name – the Jail Blazers. The Jimi Hendrix museum he paid Frank Gehry to design looks like a piece of stainless steel attempting to morph into an enormous amoeba, another abandoned toy, and his plans to renovate neighborhoods never produced any concrete fruit. Given Allen's history for turning his back on bad investments, if Charter acquired AFN, that would cast us, the owners of AFN, from the frying pan of having to manage our own ISP into the fire of being owned by a collapsing gas giant that will strip our asset, jack up our prices, and give us service like you've never imagined.

Marti Mandelbratt

Mt. Ashland Association Drops the Ball, Again

I have been riding Mt. Ashland for the past ten years, ever since I moved here. Over the years I have become disgruntled with the manner in which the Mt. Ashland Association runs our Mountain. High lift ticket prices, dangerous conditions on the mountain, rude middle aged employees who think they are police, overcrowded parking lots, ice covered roads, dishonest managers (when I was employed there), and complete disregard for the fact that this is a locally-owned mountain, have led me to write this article. The opening day of 2005-2006 season put in perspective how bad it really is.

I awoke at six-thirty on opening day, with a Cheshire cat grin, to get fresh tracks on our mountain. I ate a hearty breakfast of hot rice cereal and some mate. With board

under my arm and boots on my feet I hiked down to Siskiyou Boulevard to hitch a ride up the mountain with some fellow riders. The drive was quick and beautiful as always. While going around dead man's curve, or what ever you call the dangerous last curve when ascending the mountain, I was admiring the full view of Mt. Ashland and then I noticed: tracks everywhere.

I arrived around nine, which was good because any earlier and the Mountain wouldn't have been open, right? I waited inline for my lift ticket only to find that the printer was down in the outside ticket office. No matter, I went inside to the rental office to purchase my thirty-nine dollar day ticket. Before purchasing my ticket the gentleman in front of me attempted to buy a morning half-day pass, which Mt Ashland doesn't provide. Over the years Mt. Ashland has done many things to address the desire for half day morning passes except issue them. My favorite (illogical answer) to the dilemma was issuing vouchers good for a few dollars of the difference between a half-day afternoon pass and a full-day pass. Why not just issue a half-day morning pass? There are many locals who work jobs that only allow them to ride their mountain in the morning. No attempt this year was made to provide the service the gentleman in front of me asked for; he was told it was a full day wait three and a half hours until twelve-thirty. Having already heard the answer to my own question I bought a full day-pass, and promised myself to get a full thirty nine dollars of use out of it.

The Cheshire-cat smile I awoke with at six-thirty was still plastered across my wind-blown face when I stepped into my bindings and took my first run. The snow crunching beneath me as I rode is a familiar feeling at Mt. Ashland, where we have more ice days than snow days in the beginning of the season. I thought to my-self that the snow seemed soft enough to enjoy though, especially once I get to the top where it should be some untracked runs at nine fifteen in the morning on opening day. To my surprise while riding up the antiquated aerial chair lift I saw, again, that every trail worth riding had been tracked up. Suddenly I remembered the view on the ride up, tracks everywhere. I figured it was some employees and ski patrol riding that morning before the town arrived, a right often enjoyed by employees at ski resorts (something I myself have done). To my utter shock though was that the majority of the tracks I encountered were at least twenty-four hours old, which I could tell by their hardness, created from the freeze the

night before. The Cheshire-cat grin was finally gone. How could this be that the top of the mountain was entirely ridden the day before? The top of Mt. Ashland is only accessible by lift, snow mobile, or snowshoes. The tracks were too numerous and spread out to be from people with snowshoes. The only thing that came to mind was that employees had been riding on Wednesday and Thursday when the snow was fresh and the mountain was closed. While riding back up on aerial chair I heard two older gentleman (season pass holders) talking about the same tracks I had just noticed. They had come to the same conclusion as I had but with additional knowledge. It seemed that one of them knew a member of the ski patrol and that on Thursday he had let him know how nice riding the snow was up on the Mt. I continued to listen to their conversation and conclusion that the Mt. is no longer run for the people of Ashland; now it is run for the Association. Just about this time the lift came to an abrupt stop that left the chairs swinging so wildly that I had to grab the post between the chairs and hold on tight as first I saw the ground then the horizon and back and forth until my chair finally stopped swinging as roughly. I am used to these stoppages on the lift but this felt different, more violent. I could here the lift ops screaming back and forth trying to figure out what happened, apparently no one had turned the switch to stop the lift, it happened on its own. I noticed another peculiar sight on the mountain while swinging from the aerial chair, the two foot tree tops that were sticking up out of the snow on the aerial chair-line had nothing marking the danger they presented, just an open run. I started to wonder if the mountain should even be open yet. My next run was down Caliban, a run which I enjoy high speeds. I was able to find some good snow because the run had not been groomed but as soon as I had enough speed to be having fun the groomed part of the run came into view and the golf-ball sized chunks of ice came under my feet.

Everywhere on the mountain that had been groomed was covered in ice balls. Do the employees know how to use their equipment? The runs became very dangerous because of this faulty grooming. I am an advanced rider that can tackle most conditions, however balls of ice littering the run was a new challenge even for a ten-year rider. After managing not to break anything on the bottom half of Caliban I decided to go into the lodge for some tea. As I walked into the lodge I noticed that they had done

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A White Knight For AFN?

Continued from page 1

the Internet? Dialup service? Charter service? As John's argument wound to a close I remembered the image of Wile E. Coyote, just about four feet beyond the edge of the cliff, not realizing that he had run just a little too far. John's ideas were clearly not going to carry the day with a City Council eager not to avoid past mistakes, and willing to do homework past administrations let slide.

Then it got worse for Gaffey, as the unexpected arrival of a White Knight completely scuttled his hopes. Ron Kramer of JPR revealed a proposal that was, to some people, quite palatable. JPR would assume operational authority over the AFN system, both cable TV and Internet access. JPR would preserve the existing system of reselling Internet access through third party Internet Service Providers, such as Infostructure, Open Door, and JPR itself. Since these ISPs are important community members and employers, this is a vital deal point. Finally, JPR believed that it could contribute perhaps \$360,000 or more per year to the City's debt repayment plans.

After the City Council meeting, when asked what prompted JPR to make the eleventh hour proposal, Kramer said he had been shocked to discover that, despite the AFN Options Committee suggestion to "spinoff" AFN into a new nonprofit corporation, everyone seemed to conclude that a "sale to Charter" was a foregone conclusion. That jolted JPR into action.

Paul Mace, Options Committee Member, expressed support of the AFN/JPR alliance, and agreed with Mr. Kramer's assertion that "synergies" in operations could immediately save hundreds of thousands of dollars for AFN while improving operations. While Councilors Dave Chapman and Russ Silbiger believe that AFN should simply "get out of the TV business," an alliance with JPR, which already runs a TV station, would make that unnecessary. The AFP asked Mace why the Options Committee is so set on a sale or spinoff. Was it because AFN is being destroyed by the high cost of obtaining legal and accounting services through the City of Ashland's "internal billing" system, that currently costs AFN \$460,000 annually? Mace agreed that reducing these "Central Service" charges imposed by City administration is essential to AFN's survival, and added, "When I got into this thing, I thought for sure they had a revenue problem, and they needed better marketing. But now I realize they have an expense problem." CC



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The Hour of Dave



Dave Hampton is a new man since he discovered podcasting. Each Friday night, he makes his way to the AFP podcasting studio, carrying microphones and other sundry equipment that he hooks up to the computer. The station is comfortably arranged for maximum podcasting power, which is to say, he can download music off the desktop and record it to the same desktop using the free Audacity recording program.

There are two microphones, one for him, and one for his Vanuatu lawyer, pictured at left in a compromising situation that actually worked out just fine. However, they have to share the keyboard and mouse. Enjoy the truth and the free podcasting music on The Hour of Dave, a fresh issue online every Saturday morning at <http://dave.ashlandfreepress.com>.



AN IDEAL ACHIEVED

Winter's the time most geometric
When things, divested of their flesh,
Reveal the simple symmetries of bone.

The hogwire fence, its horizontals crushed
Together, exhibits a complex surface of invisible
Planes, windows to light and air,
evolving from each other.

The pure white rhombus of a salt-box roof
Evenly covered with inches of snow, rounded
All along the edge, lies silent, an ideal achieved,

Displayed against the mutating density
Of gray sky-surface. And if a bird
Were to sing now, its voice would find
No competitor.

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Technorati Rally In Support of Ashland Fiber Net

The technorati were out in force to support the Ashland Fiber Network at the December 20th Monday-night City Council meeting. Their testimony was useful to the Council, as Mayor Morrison made clear after public comments were concluded. A slide presentation by former Mayor Cathy Shaw, who left the hall before the photographer started snapping, provided a detailed, concise summary of financial and social benefits to the community, so much so that the Council directed City Administrator Gino Grimaldi to direct his staff to make a written assessment of those benefits.



John Dowd
Infostructure



Dave Chapman
City Council
John Gaffey
#1 Critic



Alan Oppenheimer
Open Door Networks
Paul Collins
Gracion Software



Ron Kramer
JPR
Paul Mace
AFN Options Committee



Jim Teece
Project A
Paul Westelle
JPR



Mt. Ashland Association Drops The Ball

Continued from page 27

some remodeling during the summer time, adding a wall to the right of the entrance to control the flow of customers and a new staircase that looked very nice (although I'm not sure that there was anything wrong with old stair case). I waded my way through the customers that had just paid stadium prices for institutional food and attempted to order some tea. The cute young girls at the counter exchanged bewildered looks with each-other. Finally one of them rustled around under the counter and pulled up two bags of tea. "Orange or Raspberry?" she asked with a giggle. Apparently these choices struck her as odd as they did me. I denied the tea and sat down to rest.

A friend sat down next to me and plopped his bagel down with disgust. "What's up?" I asked. He proceeded to tell me that they only had plain bagels, they didn't toast it and the cream cheese was grossly inadequate and not spread. I looked closer and saw a quarter size blob of cream cheese stuck between two cold halves of a small plain bagel. Unfortunately this is the standard *modus operandi* for the Association.

The Mt. Ashland Association seems more interested in cutting corners than they are in providing a service to the residents of Ashland. With my experiences on opening day I started to ponder the question of the multi-million dollar expansion to be overseen by the same Association that can't groom its mountain properly.

This community is exceptionally divided over the issue of expansion. We have seen protests for and against the expansion, we have done exhaustive environmental impact studies that have yielded mixed results, we have changed environmental standards that were deemed too hard to reach, and as of now the expansion moves forward without ever asking if this Association is competent enough to handle a project that could feasibly pollute our fragile water shed. Our watershed already makes Bear Creek unusable in the summer because of low oxygen and high temperatures, which would most likely be added to by sediment from more treeless areas. It has been said that the expansion is for Ashland and surrounding area residents. However when you look at the proposed expansion there are numerous beginner (green circle) and medium (blue square runs) and not one full expert (black triangle) run is being added to the mountain.

A proverb exists on Mount Ashland and it goes as follows, "If you can ride Mount Ashland you can ride anywhere." Because of the technical nature of our mountain, we are very advanced riders who do not need more beginner runs to lure more people to the mountain from out of the area, to fill up our lines and our parking lots and our septic tanks. Is this expansion really for us? Recently the Association has stated it no longer feels that it is necessary to publish their financial records for citizens to re-view. Why the un-accountability? Transparency is imperative to community programs. If they are not willing to share their financial records why should the city (the citizens) support bigger and better financial endeavors? Moreover, the Association is looking for a new manager this year? Why on earth would a business want to undertake an expansion and the hiring of a new Association manager in the same year. This is just another on the long list of inexcusable, irresponsible behavior from the Mount Ashland Association.

Before any expansion occurs on Mount Ashland the Association might want to consider the following suggestion (just one) from a long time local rider. Instead of spending millions on expanding the mountain, make what we have better. Please update our lifts (maybe use the high speed lift the Association has in the shed), ask the city to negotiate a new contract with the forest service that allows us to stay open later in the spring when all the good snow is, buy adequate grooming equipment and learn how to use it, \$199 season pass all year long for residents of Ashland, work closer with the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide better service on heavy snow days, put up a new sign on "dead man's curve" that says five miles per hour and slow in big letters, adequately train your employees, and last but not least provide free ski corral in order to deter the rising number of thefts on the mountain. When the Mount Ashland Association finally starts running our mountain for us, then maybe, just maybe, we should expand into the watershed above our town.

Moksha Mokma



Two Poems of Transformation

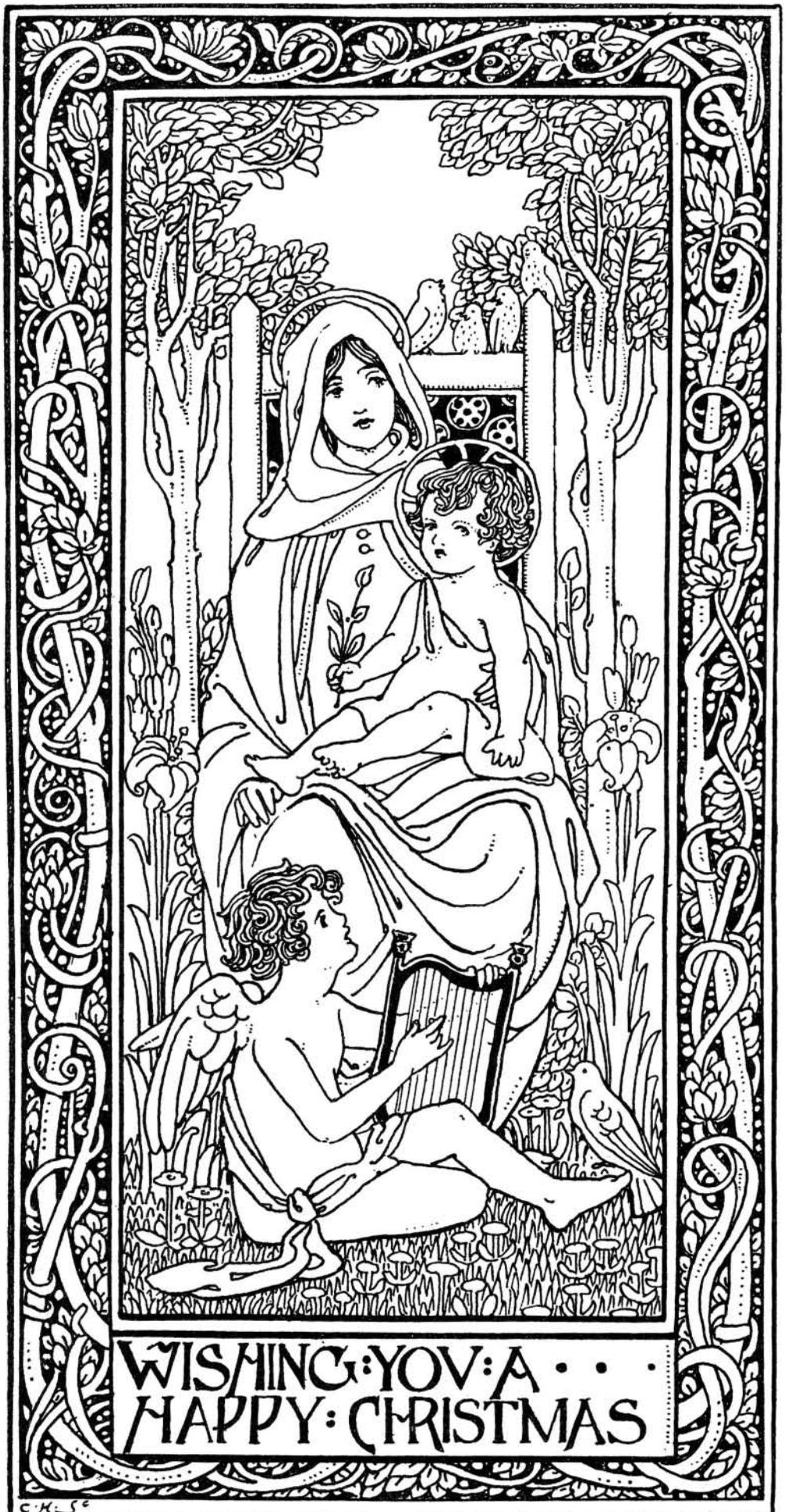
by Michael Wear

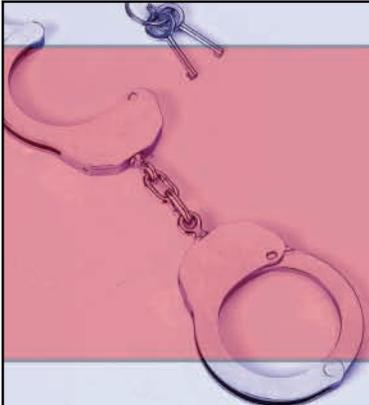
UNBOUND

*When Our Parents pass away,
Our illusion of Stability ...
Rings Mortality, peeling from
The bells of Belief and Doubt,
Reverberating throughout the deep
Spaces in our Hearts ...
Alas, alone again and drifting,
In a World which stretches wide
Beyond our Senses into the Realm
Of Imagination and beyond again,
That All and Everything ...
Extends its Apparent point,
As Everchanging Form to break
The finite Shape which binds it,
To Reveal Unbounded Will. ..
Free from the Fetters we Impute.
That Intelligence cannot Be
Contained for long ...
Though Sleep and Death delay it.*

DAWNBORN

*As Nature Labours in Darkness,
Giving Birth to a new Day ...
I sit and Listen to her moans,
That fade in cries of bliss ...
Soon she holds the newly born,
Gently at her breast.
Dawn the Tender Youth ...
Who mellows well with Age,
And Passes On ... when his time has come,
To leave us with a smile.
I would live my life with Day,
And celebrate my birth at Dawn,
And learn to mellow as I grow,
So that I may smile ...
With the setting-sun,
An Old-man Tired ...
From a hard days Living.*





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Peter Carini
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Do you know what to do if the police officer asks if you have been drinking?

Call today for your free driver's rights card.

You Drink. You Drive. You Lose...Another Government Lie?

It is legal to drive a car after drinking alcohol. That said, you may be arrested anyway because of the factual distortions and omissions taught to our local police by mandatory training and testing on the written materials provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). When truth and science gets in the way of the agenda of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, NHTSA yields. MADD definition of drunk driving is driving after drinking any amount of alcohol...period. In essence, this is what our police are instructed to believe, and why you will probably be arrested if you admit to drinking alcohol...even though you are fine! To that extent you do lose, but you shouldn't.

DUI is considered by some to be the witch-hunt of the new millennium. If you thought that the public had been riled up against citizens accused of being communists during the McCarthy era... think about what the governments "public service announcements" have done to strip us of the presumption of innocence in DUI cases? You Drink. You Drive. You Go To Jail! If You Drink And Drive You Will Lose More Than Your License! You Drink. You Drive. You Lose! These

government paid for, MADD endorsed, advertisements are pure scare tactics and have an insidious, subconscious effect on potential jurors. This increased hysteria and the "dumbing down" of the definition of what is an "impaired" driver to include responsible social drinkers has logical yet absurd ramifications. Based on the current police officer (MADD endorsed) definition of the term "impaired", some people (logically) are asking why isn't a crime to drive while fatigued, or ill, or old, or on the cell phone, or with screaming children in the car, or animals in the car, or eating, or drinking,, or smoking, or taking allergy medication, or taking prescribed medications even when you doctor says it is O.K. to drive, or speeding... because each one of those driving factors cause the same if not more "impairment" than the social drink. Should those folk go to jail? THINK IT OVER. Do we have to drive with the precision and coordination of Air Force fighter pilots on pure, military grade, methamphetamines in order to be deemed "safe" drivers by law enforcement?

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