

LETTERS

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As to Mr. Fisher's letter, it shows remarkable ignorance of the Forest Service process. Mr. Fisher, it is not the job of Sisters Trails Alliance to contact Crossroads residents. That was the obligation of the Forest Service, which they have admitted they did poorly in that regard. Again Mr. Fisher writes "Then four STA members, including the STA president at the time, got elected to the seven-member Crossroads board of directors without revealing any STA affiliation."

Not sure about other people, but this sounds like one of those communist plots to take over the government. Mr. Fisher: are the only members of the Crossroads board allowed to be persons who are opposed to the trail? Are Crossroad board members required to reveal various affiliations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, etc.?

Ken Serkownek

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

My kids and I frequently visit Cliff Clemens Park, especially lately as this unseasonably warm weather has allowed. It is the perfect park for my kids (other than lack of bathrooms, but that is not the reason for my letter).

What I am disturbed by is the number of irresponsible dog-owners who do not clean up after their pets. My kids have stepped in dog poo not once, not twice, but three times in the past few weeks directly inside the bark-chipped play structure area. And I've seen it happen to others, too.

What is worse, is that once stepped in, if not noticed right away (which is the case usually with kids) it gets tracked up and around the whole play structure, leaving a trail of poo for others to step in or touch. Completely unsanitary. What upsets me more, is that this park provides free doggy bags and a receptacle in which to dispose of dog waste. So it comes down to just plain laziness.

Please, take pride in the beauty and cleanliness of our town. Don't be "that" dog-owner. Take responsibility and clean up after your own pets. Realize that little feet play in and around the playground and shouldn't have to worry about stepping in it.

Karissa Bilderback

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To the Editor:

I have observed with dismay the noisy furor that has unfolded over the last year regarding the proposed paved trail to Black Butte [Ranch]. Astonishing claims have been made as to why this trail would be so terrible, as anyone who has followed along will remember. The approval process was flawed, granted, but what do you actually have when the layers of catastrophic imagination are stripped away?

All of us know paved paths; there are 18 miles of them in Black Butte [Ranch] — smooth, curvaceous, compelling. No cars. Lots of smiling hikers and runners and cyclists, old and young, enjoying their surroundings and each other. There's a well-loved paved trail in Tollgate itself, though initially it too was bitterly contested. A subset of every community assumes the duty of imagining and asserting fearful outcomes.

The smothering of the paved trail initiative has been a NIMBY success, if you think of it like that. A loud and dogged minority faction from a neighborhood along the proposed route has prevailed. If you think, as I do, that a solid majority of the wider Sisters community would favor such a beautiful, useful and compelling community amenity, then indeed the smothering has been "a victory of selfishness over the best interests of the community."

Is this the best we can do?

Whatever negative impact to the natural world there might be from 10 feet of asphalt through the forest is dwarfed to insignificance by the adjacent major highway, four times as wide and full of traffic, within clear sight and earshot of the entire proposed route. I wish for some kind of official referendum, so we could once and for all gauge the public will and proceed accordingly.

John Rahm

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To the Editor:

I was one of Mr. Holcomb's students at Homer High School.

I remember being late to his class (U.S. History, right after lunch) a couple of times in my first week at HHS. I received a stern, "You're not off to a very good start, young man." Suffice to say, I was never late to one of his classes again, through two years of high school, and two semesters of college courses.

Mr. Holcomb had a profound influence on my views of history and government, and how to carry myself as a human being. He taught me that everyone is entitled to an opinion, but not to be slavishly devoted to it, blind and unconsidering; and should you learn more about a matter, don't be stubborn and afraid to change that opinion.

Since those days, Mr. Holcomb has always been missed, obviously more so now. My warmest thoughts and deepest sympathies to his family and friends.

Jason Doscher

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

The merits of food carts are not the issue yet. We have not yet followed the proper procedure. The merits have not yet been reached.

What is at issue is the city's administrative decision to treat food carts as restaurants for purposes of the zoning code. Maybe this is a good idea or at least defensible. But it is a huge change to make without public input, a hearing or any adopted findings of fact based on such input and hearings.

The city also failed to notify all of the stakeholders about this issue. Many business-owners were not notified because they don't own the land they occupy. But these business-owners are present on a day-to-day basis and land-use matters affect them as much or more than the absentee property-owners. The business owners are important stakeholders in this issue. They should be notified.

There is also a conflict-of-interest issue, or at least the appearance of one. This has not been dealt with, either. The city should avoid the appearance of insider manipulation. Public hearings and review would help here, too.

Many citizens have voiced concerns or objections to treating food carts the same as restaurants. Those writing for Sisters Voice have raised similar concerns. A public hearing is the best place to air these objections. Perhaps these points will ultimately be shown to have no merit. If so, the planning commission will explain this in an appropriate fact-finding.

It is possible that after proper hearings have been held and written findings of fact adopted, that the same result might be obtained. But hearings and fact-finding make it more likely that a good result is obtained. For those dissatisfied with the result, there is still the satisfaction in knowing that a spectrum of ideas and positions were considered even if they were not adopted.

I urge the holding of hearings before the planning commission so that this commission can determine whether food carts should be treated as restaurants for purposes of the zoning code.

Tom Parks

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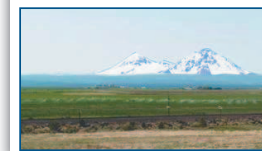
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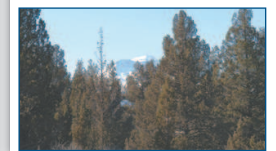
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