

Forum

Bring back the tap, but give us a bottle to fill

JENNIFER SITTON

I drink a lot of water. Maybe this is because I am an athlete, or maybe it is the result of the dehydration that comes from drinking coffee, but either way, I drink about five full bottles of water during the school day. One day a few weeks back, I forgot my water bottle at home. I made it through my morning classes by taking quick swigs at the drinking fountains, but by the time lunch time rolled around, my throat was screaming for a great, big bottle of water.

To my horror, I discovered that our school does no longer sells bottled water. The only option I had was to buy a bottled sports drink, drink it, and then re-fill the plastic bottle with water from the water-filling station.

Last spring, the district took the initiative to have water-filling stations installed in the high school. At that time, they discontinued all sales of bottled water in all

schools. This applies to all

Services Manager, said. "No



Photo by Austin Cummins
Scott Senkel, senior, uses one of the recently installed water bottle filling stations to fill up his water bottle. While the filling stations have helped the school become more eco-friendly, they don't help students if students don't have bottles to fill.

incorporated into the concoctions. Why would the district be willing to offer

us sugary sports drinks in plastic bottles but not water?

According to Abel, because the district still offers other beverages for students, plastic will continue to be the main packaging for sports drinks and juice. Glass bottles are not considered a safe option in schools and not all beverages are offered in cans. While this is acceptable, if we are going to use plastic bottles for anything, I would rather it be for water.

I would suggest that the district re-think its priorities as far as student health and protecting the environment are concerned. District officials have taken a great leap into being more eco-friendly by suggesting that students use their own refillable water bottles in school, but what about those of us who forget our bottles? Should we have to chug a Powerade before we can have a refreshing drink of water?

The district should

consider replacing the sports drinks with bottled water. If this is not possible, how about selling non-disposable water bottles at schools during lunch and break time? They would not only help the district move forward with their promotion of reusable water bottles, but they could be designed in a way to help school spirit and the funds raised could even be used for special projects at each individual school.

The district is making headway in ensuring our sustainability and again, I applaud them for that, but that day when all I wanted was a bottle of water, I wasn't thinking of how I was keeping plastic out of landfills, all I could think of was how thirsty I was. This article isn't a condemnation, this is a plea. I haven't forgotten my water bottle again this year, but if I do, I don't want to sit in my classes all day thinking of nothing but how thirsty I am.



ELISE'S SOAPBOX

LET THE BUSH TAX CUTS DIE

It may not seem relevant to complain about George W. Bush after his presidency has been over for two years, but one of his so-called "achievements" is in the news again, and this needs to be said.

The American public was told in 2001 that tax cuts for earners making over a quarter million in income every year would be wonderful. It would spark the economy and create lots of jobs and everything would be peachy. It was a foolproof plan according to its supporters.

The argument went something like this: if the top earners and corporations have more money, they will invest in more jobs. If businesses are successful, America's successful, they insisted. As they say in the sitcoms, what could possibly go wrong?

Since then, a lot has gone wrong. The stock market dropped 777 points in late 2008. Banks that were "too big to fail" failed. The national debt skyrocketed, along with unemployment rates. The nation entered the "Great

Recession."

One huge reason the "Great Recession" started was the huge deregulation that the Bush administration approved for huge corporations. Institutions like CitiBank, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Lehman Brothers were convinced that thanks to fewer rules and less taxes, they were home free. They could grow forever, and growth was good, they said.

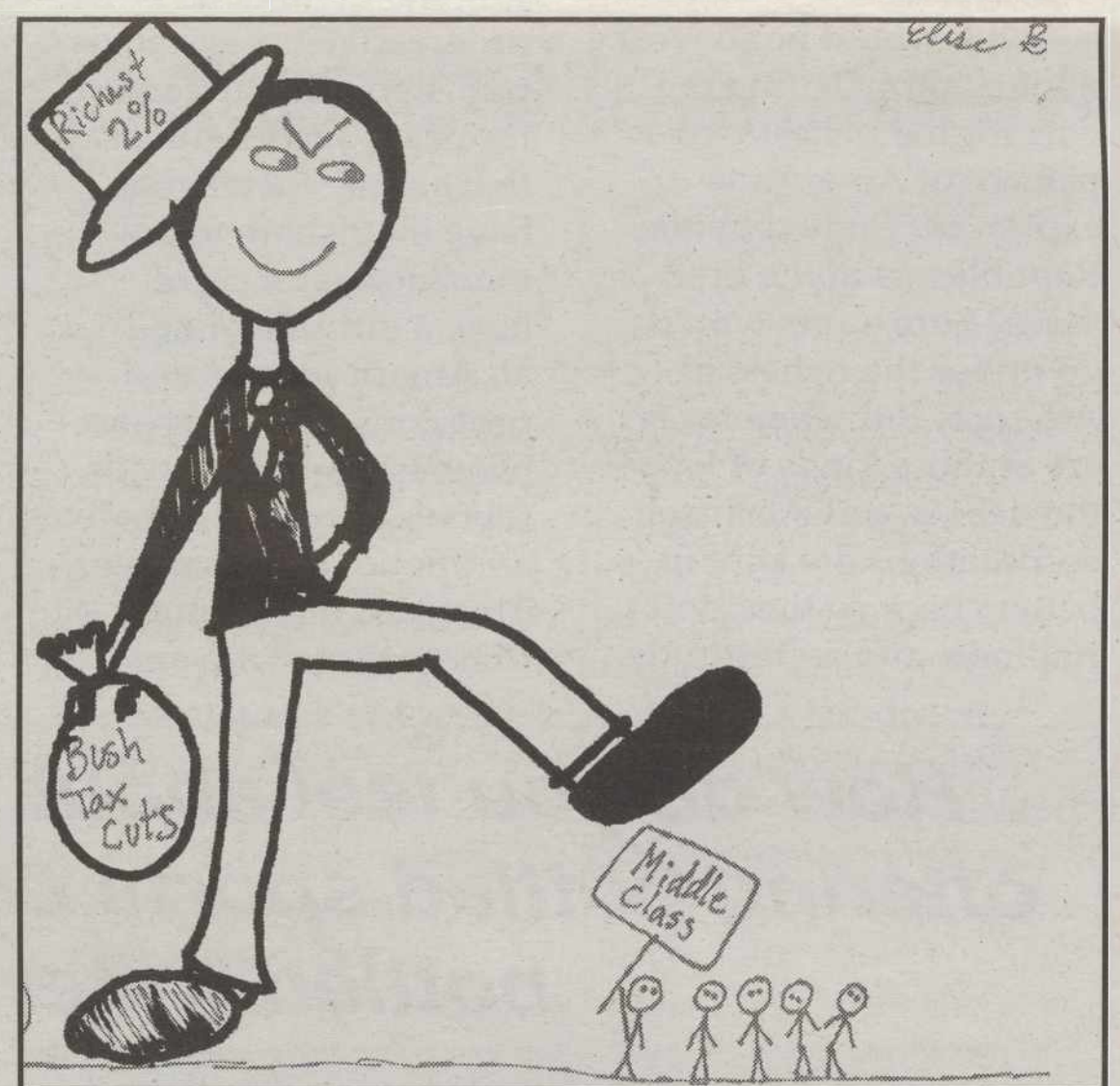
Ultimately, the banks imploded. Goodbye, big lenders.

Let's not forget the national debt. Two wars in the Middle East put an enormous burden on the federal budget, as well as the increased defense and homeland security spending that came with it. The Bush tax cuts did not help one bit.

Common sense dictates that tax cuts need to be paid for by cutting spending in other places in the budget. But government spending, especially on defense, went through the roof under President Bush. This added fuel to the fire that would burn down the economy.

Despite all the trouble the tax cuts have caused, there are voices in the current national government calling for their extension.

The House will officially have a Republican majority soon, and party leaders have been pushing to extend



Art by Elise Brown

the Bush tax cuts. Their argument is the exact same; if the biggest corporations do well, America does well. So what if the tax cuts helped spark a recession and build the deficit? These people are crying foul about the deficit's rise under President Obama, but not under Bush.

Obama has said that he's ok with keeping the tax cuts in place, too. His justification is more reasonable, though, and it only applies to a few of the cuts Bush authorized. He promised not to raise taxes on the middle class, and some of the tax cuts passed in 2001 were for them, too. If the tax cuts expired as the law

stated, he would break his promise.

Progress has been made to solve this particular dilemma. President Obama and congressional leaders recently reached a compromise that will keep all the Bush tax cuts in place for another two years. This is good news for the middle class, who will keep the cuts intended for them. However, the massive tax cuts for the wealthy, which helped spark a massive economic tumble, will stay in place too. It's a particularly frustrating continuation of the tax status quo.

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Amplifier

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The *Amplifier* is published approximately every four weeks by the West Linn High School Advanced Journalism class. Opinions expressed in commentaries and editorials represent only those of the writer, and are not necessarily the opinions of West Linn High School, its administration, faculty, staff, or student body.

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