

Raise tab on beer, wine tax

Frank Jordan
The Clackamas Print

A person sits at his or her local watering hole on any given day or night and enjoys a nice glass of beer or wine to wind down from a long day or night. That glass of suds is available at a decent price almost anywhere in the state of Oregon, and that price has not changed much in the last few years.

But have you ever wondered, in this day and age of tax hikes and fee hikes and the government trying to gouge the consumer of every last nickel and dime, how much tax one pays on a glass of beer or wine? We are fortunate that in the state of Oregon, a 16-ounce glass of beer is taxed only one penny. How can this be? Easy.

The beer and wine industries have a very large stranglehold

on the lawmakers in this state, even going as far as paying the costs of lawmakers making trips to Hawaii and other locales around the country, in order to have those lawmakers vote on bills in the legislature that would be advantageous to the beer and wine industries. This is not very good public policy, and poor tax-planning on the part of our legislators.

Governor Ted Kulongoski has proposed raising the cigarette tax (again) another 85 cents per pack, in order to help pay for parts of the Oregon Health Plan that pertains to the health

coverage of uninsured children in our state. This is a good idea and all, but why not raise the tax on beer and wine to help pay for some of these programs? Smokers have been gouged by the state for years for their legal habit, yet drinkers of alcoholic beverages keep paying ridiculously low taxes to partake in their legal activity.

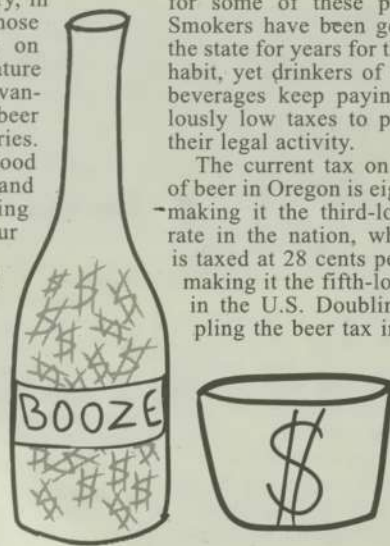
The current tax on a gallon of beer in Oregon is eight cents, making it the third-lowest tax rate in the nation, while wine is taxed at 28 cents per gallon, making it the fifth-lowest rate in the U.S. Doubling or tripling the beer tax in Oregon

would raise millions of dollars for the Oregon Health

Plan and spare smokers another outrageous tax hike. What is paying another quarter for a beer?

The beer and wine industries have helped to shoot down more than a dozen bills over the years in the Oregon Legislature, which would have raised taxes on their products. Those industries have very powerful lobbies in Salem, and our elected officials have been more than happy to kowtow to these lobbyists.

Whoever the next governor shall be Nov. 7 should make it part of his agenda to take a stand against the beer and wine industries and raise the tax on their products. It is way overdue (the beer tax was last raised in 1978, and the wine tax was last raised in 1982) and would send a message to the legislature that all ways to raise money through taxes and fees are on the table. Lobbyists be damned!



by Tavo Stalnaker

Art Bell, the founder and late-night host of the popular call-in show "Coast to Coast AM," or as I like to call it, "Tinfoil Hat Radio," is the inspiration behind "Conspiracy Corner."

When Bell first aired his show well over a decade ago, it was mainly a political talk show. However, after the Oklahoma City bombing in the mid-90s, "Coast to Coast AM" took a huge left turn and became mostly about conspiracy theories. It also became one of the most popular talk shows in history with an average of 15 million listeners per night.

Every night on "Coast to Coast AM" since then, hundreds of people call in to discuss aliens, government cover-ups, the paranormal and chemtrails. Listeners can also expect to hear a lot of paranoid talk about 9/11 being an inside job, as the weekend host, George Noory, is a firm believer in the 9/11 conspiracy theories.

Over the years, Bell has featured many prominent figures in the conspiracy theory world as regular guests. Everyone from NASA conspiracy hound Richard C. Hoagland, to retired U.S. Army major and former CIA intelligence officer Ed Dames, have been regular callers for over a decade now.

One of the most interesting callers is Mel Waters. Waters claims that there's an infinitely deep hole in Ellensburg, Wash. that has paranormal powers. Unsurprisingly, the hole has never been found. For more information, visit <http://www.melshole.com> and have a friendly discussion with the hundreds of "hole hunters" in the forums.

Art Bell has become a cultural icon of sorts. On the band Tool's album *Lateralus*, a clip from "Coast to Coast AM" is featured on their song "Façade of Oiad." The clip is of a frantic caller, who claims to work at Area 51 and says that violent aliens being held there are plotting to take out major cities all over the United States.

The best-selling video game, *Prey* also features Bell. In the game, Bell plays himself and hosts "Coast to Coast AM." Players can listen to the show in various areas throughout the game.

What really made Bell a major public figure was when he was accused of inadvertently starting the "Heavens Gate" death cult. "Heavens Gate" for those that don't remember believed that the comet Hale-Bopp would take them to the Promised Land if they killed themselves on the night it flew over the earth. Bell talked about Hale-Bopp a lot, claiming that an alien spacecraft was flying in its wake, and many people believe that the people in "Heavens Gate" got the idea to form the cult from listening to "Coast to Coast AM."

If anyone wants to listen to "Coast to Coast AM," they can tune in every night at 11 p.m. to 1190 KEX and hear the gaggles of loonies call in and talk about their latest probing

Have bad credit? Then vote YES on Measure 42

Rev. Sam Krause

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Bill Sizemore is back ... and he's making sense?

I've never liked Sizemore. Many Oregonians have a reason to hate Sizemore, from capping property taxes to crazy (and questionable) methods of signature gathering.

This time, though, he might be on to something.

Measure 42 would keep insurance companies from using credit ratings when determining premiums.

That makes sense. In Oregon, insurance companies can only use credit information when a consumer initially purchases insurance, and to determine if a consumer is more

likely to file a claim.

At this point, the Oregon legislature has passed laws restricting insurance companies from using credit scores to raise rates or drop someone from their policy. Is there any reason voters can't take this a step further?

Right now, an Oregonian's credit score is a factor in applying for a loan and insurance. In an editorial supporting the measure, *The Oregonian* cited a study stating that people who have a low-income are more likely to have a low credit score.

Oregonians Against Insurance Rate Increases, who

are against Measure 42, noted a study that found a relationship between low credit and a greater probability of making a claim.

If you're poor, you have bad credit, which increases your insurance rates. When you get in an accident, you have to go to your insurance company for financial support because you can't afford to fix whatever you broke, which increases your interest rates.

Opponents say that, if the measure passes, those with good credit will subsidize insurance for people with

bad credit. They neglect to mention that people with good credit can have abysmal driving records, while people with bad credit can have a superb driving record.

I think a better question is why someone with bad credit and a good driving record should pick up the slack for a person with good credit who got trashed and crashed his or her car.

Here's an example: You go to the bar, and only three drinks gets you drunk, but your buddy needs about nine drinks to feel anything. When it comes time to pay the tab, your buddy suggests splitting it evenly on the basis that he tips the bartender better than you.

Whether you prefer beer or lower insurance rates, vote yes on Measure 42.



Photo Illustrations by Adam J. Manley Clackamas Print

Letters to the editor

A note from the ASG prez | Dean applauds 'Diversity'

Fellow Students:

I want you to understand one thing; if you don't vote, you'll have to live with the consequences. Democracy is not a spectator sport. I have had the pleasure of working on numerous political campaigns in the past few years. All I've come to know is that each politician running for office works tirelessly every day for votes. All the money they can raise is just to get votes, nothing more. I come to you as a student, with an understanding that our political system is not flawed; but politicians aren't looking out for students' concerns because we don't vote. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, there are over 517,000 18 to 19 year olds eligible to vote in Oregon. Yet, some young people are apathetic, and they just don't care. Only 42 percent of 18 to 24 - year - olds vote. When you compare that to other ages and their percent voting: 25 to 34, 56 percent; 35 to 44, 64 percent; 45 to 54, 69 percent; 55 to 64, 73 percent; 65 to 74, 73 percent; 75+, 69 percent. With the average of all voting being 64 percent, students wonder why it is so expensive to

go to school. It's because politicians won't fund something they aren't getting personal benefit from. If we weren't funding them into office (or out), why would they go out of their way to fund something that doesn't help them? At the federal level, we have such important things as social security for our retired, the new Prescription Drug Plan that President Bush signed into law, and Medicare. All of these programs are aimed to benefit older people. The surprising and upsetting fact is how bad tuition and the cost of education have increased in the last few years. Tuition at Oregon community colleges has increased by 63 percent since the Fall of 2000. It's the highest of the western 15 states. Overall, 12.5 percent of course selections have been eliminated at Oregon community colleges. We also happen to be the 26th in the nation for funding per student. These are alarming facts. We as young people, as students, need to do something about it. We need to make our voices heard through contacting our elected officials and, most importantly, voting.

Tim Lussier, ASG president

The views expressed by the two students in the recent article on college diversity were thoughtful, yet limited in their scope of how diversity is defined. The college's Diversity Committee commends these students for defining their issues and expressing them so openly and publicly, and we commend the *Clackamas Print* for providing the forum.

The committee is also very impressed with the work towards awareness that has been demonstrated by the recent student postings in the Community Center, expressing personal views on diversity. It is through such dialogue that mutual understanding and appreciation of all forms of diversity can develop, and we encourage others to participate.

Clackamas Community College is committed to building awareness of cultural diversity on our campus and in our community. This focus includes the right of all persons to live with dignity and freedom, and to freely express themselves through their various cultural norms without fear of restricted access to the opportunities available.

The college, through its Diversity Committee and through personal

commitment by its staff, promotes communication and understanding among people of differing beliefs, color, gender, cultures, lifestyles, age and backgrounds in order to foster and develop a climate of tolerance.

Such a climate only develops through ongoing, concerted and systematic efforts to create the opportunities that foster understanding of and between different people. It is our belief that providing a forum for this type of open dialog presents opportunities for each of us to hear a multitude of voices and experiences, and through that process perhaps change some of our conceptions and our fears.

This approach greatly expands the concept of diversity beyond simply race tolerance into the much broader arena that recognizes all people have a basic right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Bill Leach,
Dean of Campus Services

Send letters to the editor to chiefed@clackamas.edu