

MY OPINION FROM BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Money talks

BY CHRIS BRATT

I hate to put a wet blanket on anyone's future lifestyle, but let's face it, most of you have it too good. If you or others you know have lost a job, seen reductions in pension benefits, felt the crunch of expired unemployment benefits, or experienced declining "entitlements," be prepared for more of the same. Undoubtedly, people are going to have to lower their expectations about what they're going to get in this life because we must reduce the budget deficit.

The above heartless nonsense represents the views being portrayed and talked about by our country's wealthiest one percent. They are also having their lobbyists push for significant cuts to poor people's welfare benefits in the halls of Congress. Recent new reports, studies and accounts show that this small number of greedy, super-rich people and large corporations with unparalleled wealth are tampering with our environment and the well-being and livelihood of everyone across the globe.

About 100 corporate CEOs (the

same unethical CEOs who brought on the economic downturn of the past six years) are now calling for cuts to our earned and welfare benefit programs. These very, very rich CEOs (each of these folks will average \$65,000 per month for the rest of their lives after retiring at age 65) have formed a corporate-funded lobbying group called "Fix the Debt." This group's real objective is to campaign for massive new corporate tax cuts for the large corporations they represent. They expect to "Fix the Debt" by reduced spending on benefits and pensions for millions of workers, retirees and people who really need financial assistance and jobs with decent wages. Their contention is that the burden of fixing our growing economic problems should rest on the shoulders of the middle and lower classes and not the billionaires.

What is happening to our hard won living wages and benefits working people struggled for over the past century? Are we going to go back to a 12-hour workday, child labor in our factories, and no health

or safety insurance? I hope not. And what about our opportunities for achieving the promises of the American Dream for our middle and lower classes? Those dreams—of prosperity, fairness and a better future for our kids and grandkids as the reward to anyone who works hard—have become nightmares. The American Dream is an illusion now that an upper class is running the show by exploiting the poor and shifting the focus of government from the will of the people to the will of the moneyed.

We are repeating the depression-era (1930s and early 1940s) income disparities and joblessness. Again we are allowing the super-rich to frame the future of our society while few of us know or understand the true wealth and power these rich people and corporations possess. They can poison our community's water supply (as they did with the recent chemical spill in West Virginia), endanger the health of workers and consumers, and corrupt our political system with big campaign

contributions. They can conduct these operations with little or no accountability to the public.

As a partial solution to our social and economic woes caused by this top-heavy wealth distribution, I suggest we begin to reform our financial system through restrictions on how much the mega-rich can accumulate. We need to know when enough is enough for the realities of life. Rather than further income tax cuts for the richest people and corporations (remember, "corporations are people, too"), I recommend much higher income taxes. It's only fair that they make a greater contribution to the general welfare of the country that allowed them to become rich in the first place. Also, this will be a good start at equalizing the power that these super-rich exercise over all our lives.

Let me know if you've had enough.
Chris Bratt • 541-846-6988



Chris Bratt

Applegate Valley Community Grange news

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Wonderful news! Mark your calendar for an Upper Applegate Grange favorite tradition being revived. Clue number 1: It is a community dinner that was held in March for many, many years by the members of the Upper Applegate Grange. Guessed yet? Clue number 2: Wear Green! YES, the **St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Dinner** will be happening in 2014 on Sunday, March 16, from 11 am to 2 pm. Bring your appetite, family, and friends to 3901 Upper Applegate Road to join with the Applegate Valley Community Grange (AVCG) members to celebrate. Wear some green and enjoy food from the menu of corned beef, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, drinks and dessert. Much of the food will be local and organically or naturally grown.

Many hands will help plan and put this meal together, including members of AVCG and volunteers from the community. Anyone wishing to help support or lend a hand for a Grange event should make contact with a member (see last paragraph).

Proceeds from this and other fundraisers help the AVCG with the community service projects it supports, the public meetings it sponsors, the programs it presents, and upkeep on the Grange building. The Grange is currently using some of those designated funds to reroof the entry area and the restrooms.

For more updates about this great event, more information about

the Grange or about renting space, or browsing for upcoming happenings, go to our website at www.grange.org/applegatevalleycommunityor839. Put this address in your favorites list and stay current with us year-round. Under "Events," you will find upcoming activities and events lists as soon as Grange members get a date set and planning is under way. Watch for information about ping-pong practices for a tournament at the Grange hall this spring.

Do you remember when there were play performances at the Grange hall in the past years? Well, there is a very local, active theater group looking for a place to perform on stage, so the hall will soon be filled again with the sounds of rehearsals. Watch for the posting of a play at the Grange this year and find out the name of this local spirited group.

Hope to see you soon at the Applegate Valley Community Grange where new activities keep happening and the membership keeps growing. Contacts for the Grange are President Paul Tipton at applegategrange@gmail.com or 541-846-7501; Secretary Connie Murphy at applegategrangesecondary@gmail.com; and Membership/Hall Rental Representative Janis Mohr-Tipton at janismohrtipton48@frontier.com or 541-846-7501.

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Pacifica needs Activity Coordinator

Pacifica wishes to make better use of its facilities in 2014, so is looking for someone to coordinate activities. Weddings, concerts, reunions are some of the events that occur regularly, though sporadically. Ideally the coordinator would live fairly close to the Williams Valley and have experience in supervising and facilitating such events. Compensation and duties can be negotiated. With wedding season close at hand, we'd like someone to come on board soon. Please call 541-846-1100 or send email to peg@pacificagarden.org.

Pacifica would also like to add a few energetic folks to its working board. Contact us by phone or write to ray@pacificagarden.org if you're interested. For more information, go to www.pacificagarden.org.

More about the Medford Food Project

BY ARLENE AND CLAUDE ARON

We mentioned in the last issue of the *Applegater* that we were working on a way for the Applegate community to participate in the Medford Food Project (medfordfoodproject.com). We're now ready to go!

The Medford Food Project serves all of Jackson County. Our own Applegate Food Pantry, which operates at Ruch School, has received thousands of pounds of food through our participation in this project. We hope that those of you who can afford to do so will join in this worthwhile community effort—you will be helping your neighbors who are struggling with hunger and you will feel better for it!

How you can participate

Starting in early February, pick up a green canvas bag at one of these locations: Applegate Fire Station (1085 Upper Applegate Road), Tiffany's Outpost, or Ruch Country Store.

Whenever you shop for food, buy one

extra item and put it in the bag.

Every two months, on a designated Friday, drop your bag at any of the above locations and pick up a new one for the next cycle.

Drop-off dates in 2014 (all Fridays): April 11, June 13, August 8, October 10, and December 12. Please drop bags off on these designated dates only, as these locations can't store them for extended periods of time.

One of our volunteers will pick up the food at each of these locations on the day after the drop-off date and deliver it to the distribution site in Medford. This is an easy way to help your neighbors in need and the Applegate Food Pantry hopes you'll choose to participate. Let's show the rest of Jackson County that we Applegaters are part of the solution to solving hunger in our communities!

Questions? Contact Arlene or Claude Aron at 541-951-6707.



A big thank you to Tiffany
and all who made contributions
to Divide Camp
on the Donation Tree at the Outpost!

Julie Wheeler, Divide Camp

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