

Letters to the Editor ... Continued from A-2

Reader doubles down
I’m a bottom-line kind of guy. And the bottom line is that having public libraries enhances our community. It improves property values; who wants to buy a house in a community that is so short-sighted that it refuses to recognize the value of a public library, a value that has been well-established in America for over 100 years? Who will want to establish a business and bring employment into such a community? When I add in all the benefits: safe places for kids, literacy, and free eBook downloads, I’m doubly convinced. Please join me in voting yes for measure 17-62. We all benefit in the end.

Robert Litak
Cave Junction

Reader says 17-63 is divide and Conquer
By excluding individual households from proposed pesticide ban, Measure 17-63, the authors are employing a “Divide and Conquer” strategy to pass their measure. As noted in the October 8 Courier article, “the ban would apply only to entities requiring an applicator’s license from the Oregon Department of Agriculture.” Though I don’t advocate that homeowners should be included, or that there should be a ban at all, it is confusing that the proponents of the measure exclude residential users, the only group that is not regulated.

If one were to believe the initiative sponsors’ assertion that all pesticides are dangerous, why would we want anyone to use them? This is clearly a tactic to get the measure passed because the largest numbers of pesticide users, homeowners, represent the most voters.

A longer-term goal of the sponsors is apparent in the group’s screening of a film about the dangers of everyday household products. These products found on grocery store shelves are used on a daily basis at our homes.

When people examine this irresponsible measure they might consider that (1) the EPA has studied these products and deemed them safe when properly used, (2) licensed applicators are already strictly regulated and (3) homeowners are evidently next on the Alliance’s agenda.

Clearly we all prefer fewer chemicals to more, but

after thorough testing and strict regulation, we should protect the freedom to use these safe products to keep our public places free of vermin and infectious disease, control weeds, and grow more food.

Kent Chidester
O’Brien

Reader uses library for school
I use public library online databases for school research. They are more accurate than Google and just as easy to use. The information I find through the library is reliable and non-commercial.

Net neutrality and fair access to correct information will be major issues for my generation. Public libraries are a bulwark against the commodification of the truth. Please help keep them open and adequately funded.

Lilyana Molyneaux
Cave Junction

17-63 is bad for forests
Our forests and open areas are threatened by non-native and invasive species such as Scotch Broom, Himalayan Blackberry, etc. It is not natural for these species to be in our area, but they are and need to be controlled. This control is not usually successful using mechanical methods, and many times mechanical efforts such as brush blading propagate the problem. These plants out-compete native species for sunlight and water, and overcrowd native plants, preventing new forests from being established after fires or commercial harvests.

Without the responsible use of herbicides it is virtually impossible to establish and maintain healthy forests and open spaces that benefit us and our native environment. You can take a hike or drive almost anywhere in our region and see where invasive brush has taken over large areas, preventing the natural restocking after wildfires. Natural Pine/Oak savannahs with a carpet of grass that were once a staple for deer and elk, are now Himalayan Blackberries, Scotch Broom and Poison Oak brush fields. This greatly reduces forage and dramatically increases the risk of repeated destructive wildfire.

Landowners who want to selective-harvest their land for sustainable forestry are faced with the same dilemma. Once

they disturb the soil the invasive species take over and prevent restocking after harvest. Without the responsible use of herbicides the successful restocking of our forests is very difficult and sometimes impossible. A poorly stocked forest greatly reduces benefits to people and wildlife.

VOTE NO on 17-63 and protect the sustainability of our land.

John Firth
Grants Pass

Ben Franklin would have voted yes
It seems that recent letters and the radio currently being run by the Citizens for a Constitutional Government are urging a “no” vote for the Library District. Let’s take a quick look at history. Ben Franklin, one of our founding fathers, developed the concept of “free public libraries” to enhance the educational opportunities of the citizens. Andrew Carnegie spent much of his fortune building libraries all over the U.S. with an emphasis in bringing public libraries into the smaller communities. Josephine County Library, 30 years ago, was one of the most utilized libraries in the state of Oregon. In 1997, the citizens of Josephine County approved a three year levy for the library at 33 cents. In 1998, a statewide voter approved measure made that levy a permanent part of the general fund. These 33 cents, added to the 25 cent tax base, became the current 58 cents we now pay. However, in 2007, the commissioners closed the library and used all 58 cents for other purposes

Citizens for a Constitutional Government say any additional tax monies should be used for the Sheriff yet they have voted down for three years running all levies to fund the Sheriff! If the original 33 cents was still going to the library, it would generate \$2.1 million and no additional money would be necessary. However, looking at the current county budget, 2.1 million of general fund money is going directly to the sheriff. The library gets nothing! One can only conclude that library money is going directly to the sheriff!

The only way to guarantee the future of our libraries in Josephine County is to form a separate library district under control of its own elected Board of Directors and

free from the control of the county commissioners. We need longer hours, more current materials, updated computer programs, etc. This can be accomplished by joining me and voting “Yes” on the proposed library district.

Harry T. Mackin
Grants Pass

Vote No on Measure 17-63
As a resident and property owner in Cave Junction, I am concerned about the misleading, aggressive language in Measure 17-63. Of course the use of pesticides should be used with care, but to pass a law prohibiting their use is naïve. I should have the right to keep my property and family safe from pest infestation by hiring a licensed, trained professional as I deem necessary.

As a citizen of Josephine County, I need to feel confident that the restaurants, doctor’s office, veterinary office, hospitals, and all public places I choose to support are as safe from bacteria, virus, rodents, etc. as possible. I also want to feel confident that our schools are free of head lice, bacteria and virus and our teachers, custodians and home school families have the tools to make that happen.

The argument that helicopter application of herbicides is being irresponsibly administered is incorrect thinking at best and harmful to forestry and agriculture businesses in the Valley at worst. As written Measure 17-63 will pose a considerable hardship on these employers. This will result in a negative, trickle down impact on all of us. Do we really want to make family owned businesses, ranches and forestry even more difficult to succeed in a community already struggling economically?

The fact that the measure also allows private citizens to enforce the law is very troubling. Not everyone will interpret the law in the same way which opens the door for a host of other problems for our community and goes against good common sense.

In addition, in order for our roads, bridges and other common areas to be kept safe for public use it is necessary for the county to eliminate noxious weeds and vegetation. If left unchecked this would create a greater fire hazard which could be disastrous

and expensive. Finding new, less effective ways to treat these problems would result in significant cost to the taxpayer.

To vote Yes on Measure 17-63 would be reckless, and in time regrettable. I urge you to vote NO on Measure 17-63 to protect our schools, hospitals, forestry, agriculture and our rural way of life in Josephine County.

Becca L. Harrison
Cave Junction

Measure 17-63 WILL NOT ban ALL pesticide use.
It will, in fact, ban corporate and government use of chemical pesticides (those highly concentrated chemical mixtures requiring an applicator to be trained and licensed).

Let’s be clear:
Veterinarians will still be able to treat fleas and provide preventatives. Hospitals will still be able to use disinfectants. Spray services will still be able to spray, using pesticides that do not require an applicator license.

Some people claim that this Measure will destroy farming. Not true – farming was around long before these harsh and dangerous concoctions existed. Farming will not stop.

You WILL still be able to spray bugs and weeds on your private, residential property. Furthermore, 17-63 does NOT endorse crimes, such as assault, trespassing, property destruction, or anything of the like.

There are, in fact, effective and safer alternatives to the synthetic chemicals being used by licensed applicators in our schools, parks, buildings, roads, farms, etc.

For voters who have not yet decided – Please READ the measure, not the lies. Don’t be afraid to stand up to chemical giants who have deep pockets and hide behind PACs.

These companies are NOT here to protect our health, our lands, or our waters. They ARE here to protect their bottom line. It is constitutional to want to be poison-free. It should be unconstitutional for corporations to have the power to override our rights.

I urge you to vote YES on Measure 17-63 for OUR health, OUR environment, and OUR children.

Gwen Sky
Cave Junction



ZUMBA

Instructor: Lisa Sherier
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