

# DOES ADVANCING UPRIVER ECONOMIC INTERESTS EQUATE TO ENHANCED OR SUSTAINABLE DOWNRIVER LIFE?

BY RICHARD JOHNSON

What is the dominating concern in our culture today? Most folks would probably say the economy and their personal finances. This may well be the highest interest in most of our lives. Certainly it dominates important decisions — indeed, what we do. Historically, the positive economics of a few often has very negative consequences for the majority, for life generally.

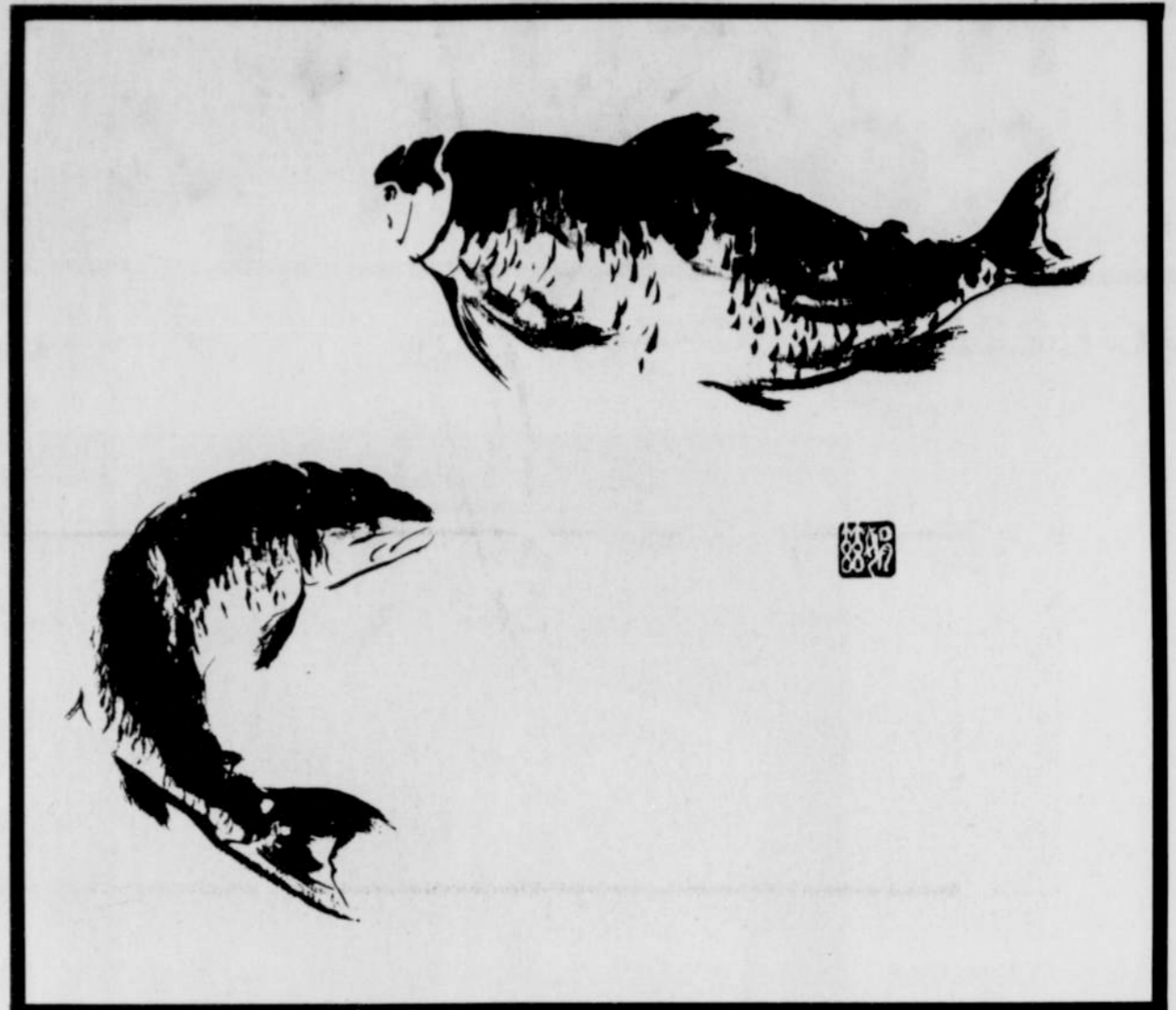
The passion and intensity with which we embrace matters of our economy is tremendous. And the value and benefit from this to the collective *us* is unprecedented in recorded history. We don't need to look very hard to see the rewards, the ease of life things as refrigerators, good cars and roads, great shopping, etc., give us. Understandingly, we place a high premium on such things.

The problem with all this wonder and apparent enrichment for the collective *us* is in the process of creating it. We have failed to recognize and instill into our collective 'active' thought process the importance of *life*, all life. And so we are, often destroying 'life' by the minute at an unprecedented rate, in our lust for an expanding economy and our enrichment.

Most of us know to some significant degree of the environmental destruction and degradation which has gone on in the past at the behest of certain economic interests. Albeit, much of this is and has been identified, and much is being done to correct the error of our ways (at a colossal financial cost to us) we still persist in embracing activities which are harmful to life, even in the face of solid science that clearly shows us the folly of these ways. We are still willing to trade the appearance of economic gain for life — that is the loss of life.

How much toxicity exists in the three to four feet of Columbia River bottom that is to be dredged up and relocated? What will be the impact of this toxic dislocation, the long-term effects of activating millions of tons of highly toxic sludge into the river system? Is there not serious danger in unearthing hundreds of square miles of terrible contaminants into our water? Do we really know the consequences, the unmeasurable subtle ramifications here?

Years ago when the great Columbia River was to be dammed up for the 'economy', many protested and provided some pretty good science and common sense view as to why



ANGIE DIXON, 'SALMON' (1981)

this might be ill advised and why one day we would regret doing such. Yes there has been great benefit to the undertaking, but at what cost to life? When our main concerns are economy, we will always justify our actions no matter how inappropriate or ill conceived.

And now we are poised to take the next huge and maybe very fatal step to further deepen the river, and what cost to life? Just because we do not notice in any immediate and obvious way the terrible destructive impact this may have to 'life', does this make it any less invasive? Any less abhorrent to a compassionate people supposedly committed to the preservation of life?

And what about five or ten short years from now when the next generation of *mega*-freighter is here and in need of three or four more feet of river depth to make the short journey east? Where does it all end? When do we see that 'life' must take precedent over economy if in fact we are to survive in a healthy environment?

Small and seemingly inconsequential creatures and micro-organisms may not hold weight in our collective 'economy oriented minds' in relation to moving larger than life vessels up a river. But if we stop and evaluate further what we are considering here, and what is truly important to life, then wisdom, common sense, some history review, and some heart, will show us our long-term well being and healthy economy are only likely when we value life when we make *living* a higher priority than more \$\$\$.

We live in a democracy — or so we think. Shouldn't matters of this magnitude, something that affects so many millions of people and so many ecosystems for such a huge area of the earth and such a tremendous resource which we all own by rights, be brought before us in some kind of referendum vote so that "the people" decide their fate, not a select very small powerful group whose only real concerns are economic, *their* economy? Do we matter, really? Does Life?

Richard Johnson lives in Warrenton, Oregon.

## CLUELESS

BY JESSI DUNKIN

Men are stupid. Don't get me wrong, I have plenty of male cousins and uncles that I love, but guys who are trying to get girls can be *really* annoying. I've decided to write this letter to the entire male population and clue them in.

First of all...you know how you follow girls that you like? How you're always *right there*, watching them? Butting into their conversations with other girls? Cut it out. Stop it now. It is *incredibly* annoying and will cause the girl to extremely dislike you and ignore you. What are you thinking? It absolutely will not work unless you have solid proof that the girl has it bad for you. And even then, be careful with it. It's enough to make the girl want to strangle you. I speak from experience.

Second: never tell a girl that you're trying *not* to fall in love with her, especially if she has just told you she has feelings for you. It will cause a whole lot of problems for you, the girl, and her friends.

Third: belching, scratching, spitting, and cracking knuckles in front of girls is enough to make them puke. Don't do it.

Fourth: Never say "I love you" to a girl unless you mean it. She will find out and it will break her heart, not to mention ruin your reputation. You will be treated like scum for the rest of your dating career.

These are just four really stupid things that guys do, but there are billions more. Be careful. Just don't do any of these things and you will have a *much* better chance with women. Men are dense. I've clued you in, now stop being such...*men*.

Jessi Dunkin is a freshman at Astoria High School. She plays 'Virginia Sweet' in the Summer 2000 season of *Shanghai'd in Astoria*.



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## LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

Dear President Bill Clinton:

I'm 11 years old, and have a question for you. I just read a book about Hiroshima. It was extremely depressing and it made me wonder what are you doing with my parents' taxes? Are you giving them to military funds? If so, how do you sleep at night, knowing that...there (are) factories making bombs that could literally destroy intelligent life? Are you just trying to make worry, violence and anger? I must admit that I am all three of those right now. Please reassure me.

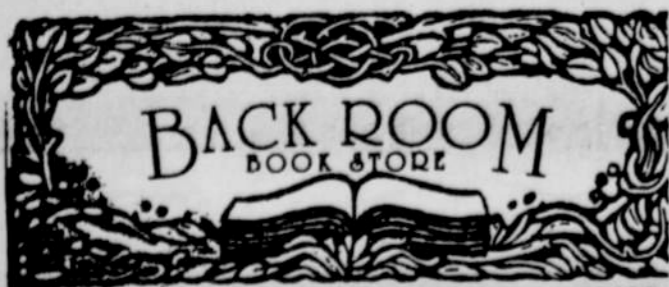
P.S. I want you to know that I am wondering what in the heck was in your mind when you agreed to make fear in my and my friends lives by agreeing to have all that wasted on BOMBS AND GUNS!

~NATALIE GENIEVEVE ORR

Natalie Orr sent this letter to President Bill Clinton upon learning that 'Star Wars' threatens to provoke a new nuclear arms race. She plans to be a future President of the USA. She disputed a boy's sexism recently by saying that the 21st Century will do away with unjust and undeserved male supremacy, and she was going to be the woman to do it. She is a new 6th grader at Broadway Middle School in Seaside and a member of the cast of the summer 2000 season of *Shanghai'd in Astoria*.

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