

STOP TAX GIVE-AWAYS

If only the blind and the disabled were truckers, they would have their legislators' support for a fair portion of the budget. Roads and bridges come first! Oregon's safety net has already disappeared for many, and thousands more elderly, disabled, blind and ill citizens will soon be out in the streets or without needed assistance. We need the wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes and the legislators need to eliminate their tax give-aways.

Peg Morton and Michelle Darr, with the support of Fellowship of Reconciliation, churches and peace groups, are fasting and keeping vigil on the Capitol's front steps 24 hours a day to protest budget cuts for social services. They are asking for our support. Blind activist Gweneth van Frank Carlson has been leading disabled citizens to Salem every week for over six months. When she leads others to sing "America the Beautiful" and "Amazing Grace" the legislators listen but there is little support from the Republicans in power. The budget has been cut too many times for the wealthy and now we must call our legislators and ask them to do away with the multitude of tax give-aways. The latest budget figures show 58 percent go for tax write-offs. This must change!

Do give your legislator a call and if possible join Peg and Michelle on the Capitol steps for a few hours.

*Ruth Duemler
Eugene*

DA DUPED TROOPS

Some young soldiers in Iraq believe they are fighting for our country, for our democracy, for our security. Unfortunately they have been duped along with the rest of us.

Our democracy is threatened by our own attorney general. Our security is threatened

by our own bullying and arrogance. Our country's economy is crippled by excessive spending on limp "homeland security" ("like patching a rusty bucket with chewing gum"), an exaggerated military, and tax breaks for the richest.

Our young people are fighting for the oil that lies under Iraq, and perhaps soon for that under Iran. Our young people are fighting for the profits of large corporations which have intimate ties to the administration. We paid for Iraq's infrastructure in the eighties; we paid to destroy that infrastructure in two wars; now we're paying to build it again.

Our young people are fighting for an administration that exaggerates and lies to get its war of dominance.

Our young people are killed one by one by Iraqis who feel themselves invaded and colonized.

Our young people know there's a better way!

*Eldon Haines
Eugene*

SPARE THE AIR

In regards to a recent article "Air Quality Slipping" (7/24), I truly hope that people in Lane County and the Eugene-Springfield area extending up the Willamette Valley to Portland take the issue of air quality seriously. With more and more cars on the road (many with bigger engines), increased industrial pollution, construction and field burnings, it better be sooner than later.

I fear for the future of your area with beautiful skies and clean air in that it will become another mountain "pocket" of haze like where I live. Here our once beautiful valley is hazy with dirt and invisible particles that cause numerous health problems. Every year these airborne particles irritate my lungs and

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



essentially make me feel like I'm getting a cold for weeks on end. My nose is stuffed up constantly. My doctor says it's getting worse every year for many people in the valley.

Indeed it has become worse with not only increased population growth and industrial growth, but the fact that our local version of the EPA Air Quality turns its back on the many causes of increased haze and pollution. But, the other part of the problem is an individual one.

Sure I drive a car and mow my lawn, but I also get my vehicle inspected for emissions

and keep the mower tuned up. I don't burn garbage and I rarely use a fireplace, and although we're not an agricultural center, field burning in the valley is limited and restricted. Although not for everyone, it's a way for me to help.

With the current administration's assault on the environment and the EPA's lack of "teeth," it will be up to each individual, up to the local "watchdogs," and up to the state air quality organizations to clean up the air.

*Mike Miles
Salt Lake City, Utah*

INSIDER BASEBALL BY TONY CORCORAN

Dribs and Drabs

From SNAFU to FUBAR to DARPA.

It's gettin' steamy in Salem, and I ain't talkin' about the weather. We've been in session now for 200 days with no end in sight. I hope it's not too late to resuscitate Admiral "Pointyheaded" Poindexter's novel creation:



DARPA. His Pentagon office — Defense Advance Research Projects Agency — created the Policy Analysis Market: an online futures market in which speculators bet on forecasting terrorist attacks, assassinations and coups. Boy, could we use that in Salem! Maybe someone will predict when the hostage situation in the Legislature will end. Or figure out when to overthrow the theocratic minority who's destroying education and human services in Salem. And we could make money off it besides: pork bellies when pigs fly!

The only thing that could prolong this session any further would be a recall effort of Gov. Kulongoski (just kidding: witness California). The enviros are so mad at the governor right now; they'd probably consider it. The pesticide use reporting system appears to be headed for total de-funding this biennium, which means that a reporting law that has been in statute since 1999 will not be enforced. Most of the blame can be laid at the foot of Paulette "Pesticide Queen" Pyle of Oregonians for Food and Shelter. But the governor is also catching some heat for his lack of support of the program.

Senate Bill 752: two cops, no stereotypes. At the request of the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, a fund was established to provide for medical assessment of rape victims, including emergency contraception. Senate Judiciary Chair John Minnis, a Portland cop, amended out the emergency contraception in his committee, probably because of his religious convictions. The Senate voted unanimously to send the bill over to the House anyway, just to keep it alive.

Enter freshman Rep. Jeff Barker, a retired Portland cop. He amended the bill to reinsert language including emergency contraception in the definition of "medical assessment." The bill passed the House 49-4, with only the ultraconservatives (Betsy Close, Cliff Zauner and two Smiths) voting against it. Ironically, even the speaker, the spouse of Senator Minnis, voted for it.

But because it was amended in the House, the bill was returned, by custom — not rule — to Sen. Minnis, as chair of Senate Judiciary, for concurrence. As of this writing, he hasn't agreed to concur. The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence points out: A traumatized rape victim should not be made to ask for or pay for preventative measures that can help avoid tragic consequences like pregnancy, STDs or HIV. Victims of sexual assault should be empowered to make the best decisions for their lives.

The farmworker collective bargaining bill is heating up again as we approach the end of the session. But this time it's not directly about PCUN, Oregon's farmworker union. Workers at Threemile Farms in Eastern Oregon — Boardman — one of the largest dairies in the Northwest, have been seeking representation by the United Farm Workers since February. Workers have complained about having to work while sick, laboring long hours without getting paid for all their time and dangerous working conditions. Some wage claims were recently settled on the workers' behalf. But OSHA recently cited the dairies for 12 violations, 11 of which were classified as serious.

These dairies were established through generous support from the state of Oregon; \$30 million in state bonds were used to help the dairies get started on state land three years ago. The UFW is staging a very successful secondary boycott, and has succeeded in convincing McDonald's to refuse to use Threemile Farms milk in any of their Northwest franchises. And Tillamook Dairy also seems a bit nervous and sweaty (wouldn't hurt to give them a call — if you like ice cream).

You know the UFW strategy is working when the employer hires Portland TV "political analyst" and public relations guy, Len Bergstein, to do damage control — and sends him in with one of Salem's most influential lobbyists to visit with me about the need for a farmworker collective bargaining bill. Unfortunately for Threemile Farms, the other influential employer agricultural interest — the growers — won't agree to binding arbitration, which kills the deal for PCUN and the UFW.

Note: These dairies have nearly 20,000 head of cattle and produce 500,000 tons of waste each year. That puts them in second place, behind the Legislature, so to speak ... dairy air ... indeed.

Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove represents portions of Lane and Douglas counties in Senate District 4, which includes the UO area. He can be reached at sen.tonycorcoran@state.or.us