

dustrialized encroachment. The worst examples have been the Amazon Parkway, maze of chain-link and baseball fields north of 24th, bus transfer station, five parking lots, the illegal use of park-land as a parking lot, and the concretization of the Amazon Creek with chain-link fencing.

On the brighter side, the city has been working to create natural areas to protect the Amazon Creek at the headwaters and west of town. I'd like to see the same kind of commitment in Amazon Park. To find a good balance between differing uses, those who use the park on a daily basis must weigh-in and have their voice heard as the majority that it is.

Many parks are not yet built and other parks are in need of scarce funds. Be sure to let the city know that Amazon has far more than its developed share of ball fields than any other city park. For more info write: AmazonNeighbors@lycos.com

*Marcy Jane
Citizens for a Natural Amazon*

PETTY POLICING

I would like to applaud Jenny Hoeksema (11/6) for speaking out against racist and intrusive police practices. I, too, am fed up with Eugene area police tactics and am not surprised at all to learn that they've been profiling based on race. I believe that the statistics would also show that they disproportionately pull over older, beat-up, and be-stickered vehicles (usually those who can least afford to pay the tickets). The biggest problem I have is that they never seem to be looking for harmful criminal activity, but instead spend their time harassing motorists (and cyclists) for petty violations while satiating their apparent obsession with searching for marijuana.

Law enforcement is an extremely powerful and difficult occupation dealing with many complex and sensitive societal issues. This is why I believe that the police academy should be part of a mandatory four-year degree program that should include diversity training and community awareness. Many professions with far simpler societal implications require a college education and I think it has become far too obvious that we need to raise our standards when it comes to our police force. As the guardians of our community, we need to be able to expect impeccable professional conduct from them at all times. Instead they are rarely even held accountable.

I would like to see a much closer review of the data to identify which individual officers have the greatest racial disparities in their stops and searches. While we're at it let's check the stats for late model vs. old beater vehicles. When we identify which officers are profiling, they should be required to undergo sensitivity training and then monitored to make sure they're playing fair.

None of this will ever happen without an independent citizen police review with real power to enforce these standards. The unfortunate fact is that police can't be trusted to police themselves. If you think they can, I've got a war for democracy I'd like to sell you.

*David Pullman
Eugene*

TIME TO UNDERMINE

I was glad to see your paper address the problems with the current conservative attempt to repeal HB 2152, the "tax increase"

that is intended to save our school systems ("Decline to Sign" news story, 11/6). I recently received the letter and petition being mailed out to (I presume) all registered voters in the state urging me to sign the petition and get my friends to do the same.

My envelope contained a pre-paid envelope intended for me to return my signed petition and the donation they were soliciting as well. How interesting that the "Taxpayer Defense Fund" would have the gall to ask for money from taxpayers in amounts which are higher than their estimated loss from the tax hike!

As your article stated, the tax increase will cost taxpayers on average \$3 a month, thus approximately \$36 per year. Yet the PAC trying to repeal this increase asks for donations of \$50! I saw my opportunity in that little pre-paid envelope, and I encourage all of you to follow suit. Send them back their unsolicited paperwork with your personal opinions written on it, and do it on their own dime. Certainly they will appreciate your input and critiques.

Don't just "decline to sign," go ahead and undermine.

*Gail M. Karuna
Eugene*

CASTING BANANAS

When I was in downtown Eugene, I witnessed two people harassing a man for driving a Hummer. Sure, they're gas guzzlers, but what is this relative too? If the man drives his SUV but for a few trips a week, he is actually conserving more than the "right-minded" conservationist who drives their more efficient car everywhere they go. Likewise, if the SUV is kept in good condition, it is probably spewing out less noxious chemicals than that old beat up VW bus. So, in conclusion, let them who ride their bike, take the bus, and walk cast the first banana in the tail-pipe.

*Mandy DeVille
Eugene*

OBEY THE GOVERNMENT

Is it any wonder Deputy Secretary of Defense Boykin touts (while in uniform) the U.S. as a Christian nation at war with Islam, when the president himself labels enemies of America evil? Pat Robertson spends millions of dollars a day propagating the same message, as if the U.S. government were the defender of all that is good and holy, reminiscent of the Falwell/Reagan collaboration in the war on drugs to enlist support from credulous Christians, who are advised by St Paul in Romans 13.1 to "obey the government, for God is the one who put it there," yet seem to forget Paul himself was martyred for disobedience to government.

Mottos, slogans, songs, and pledges of allegiance to the contrary, the First Amendment makes this nation secular, not Christian, and no government made by men can ever be more than a necessary evil. One has only to watch TV for an hour or so to realize this is in all probability the most decadent and immoral nation on Earth since Sodom and Gommorah, so what are religious leaders doing promoting secular causes, especially war? If there is an express line for Americans at the Pearly Gates, you won't find me in it, because it probably leads straight to hell. Get religion out of government and keep it out.

*Pete Raiteri
Eugene*

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