

dizziness, blurred vision, dry or red eyes, discharge during urination, stomach pains, kidney stones, erectile dysfunction, hair loss, sore throat, swollen glands, weight loss/gain, headaches, diarrhea, bloody nose, swollen gums, dry mouth, tiredness, shortness of breath, ear aches, ulcers, constipation, anxiety, decrease in sex drive and sore joints.

Oh, and by the way, by taking this “medicine,” you will increase your chances of having a heart attack by as much as 70 percent. Some “medicine” will increase suicidal feelings and depression, especially if you are a young person. Seriously, taking the medicine you were told would make you feel better, might actually play an integral role in *killing* you. Too bad that hadn’t been mentioned in those really bright and cheery commercials. Right?

Good idea for a New Year’s resolution: Just say no to pharmaceuticals!

Ray Cole
Eugene

PETE ON PETE

On Nov. 2, voters in Oregon’s Fourth Congressional District returned Congressman Peter DeFazio to Congress by an overwhelming majority, with more than 60 percent of the vote.

Because of his years of service and experience, DeFazio is becoming a national leader. He already has important positions on the Transportation Committee, the Resources Committee, and is ranking Democrat on the Water and Power Subcommittee. DeFazio is a consistent fighter for the rights of the people, especially those who don’t have big-money lobbyists working for them in Washington, D.C.

Peter and I worked together for former Congressman Jim Weaver, before Peter left to pursue his own political career by serving four years as Lane County Commissioner. During this time, I saw for myself the hard work and dedication Peter has for public service.

Peter makes it a point to stay connected with the people he serves. He has held more Town Hall meetings with con-

stituents over the last 10 years than any other Oregon congressman. Working closely with local officials, he has also been instrumental in fighting for and securing funding for all the ports in his district. He has also fought for and secured funding for Oregon’s transportation needs, and higher education, bringing needed federal funds to the UO.

One of Peter’s most significant accomplishments was sponsoring and fighting for a law which reimbursed Lane County for the federal forest land resources in our midst. Because of his important role in this success, Peter was present along with me in the White House Oval Office when this bill was signed into law.

We are privileged to have Peter DeFazio as our congressman. A fighter for the common man and woman, who isn’t afraid to say what he thinks. By continuing to reelect him to Congress by such overwhelming numbers, the people can rest assured that they have elected one of the best.

Peter Sorenson
Lane County Commissioner

GUILTY GIVING

The “giving season” is one of the best times of year. Part of its appeal is that it draws out the philanthropist in people. That said, I’d like to suggest that charities out there throttle back on the guilt trip a little.

I have volunteered for many projects around town, and make donations when I can. I’m up at 4:30 in the morning for my caregiving job (which, due to state bureaucracy, may or may not actually pay anytime soon). Additionally, there are the demands of my own small family. In a perfect world, I would have the energy and funds for all worthwhile causes — but I, too, have very finite resources, and occasionally not even that.

So to those who see this season as an opportunity to ramp up their reproachful stares, consider this: Not everybody who slips by the Salvation Army pot or the Giving Tree is a selfish wanker. Many people are just plain give’d out!

Shari Harbarger
Springfield

A Year along the Coast Fork

By Kurt Kamin

WINTER: BPA Mitigation site

A cold, insistent rain has drenched us to the core on this January day along the Willamette’s Coast Fork. Although our fingers are numbed and muscles strained from strenuous labor, we’ve enjoyed the camaraderie and are pleased with what our 10-person stewardship crew has accomplished here.

Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah has added thousands of trees and shrubs to this 44-acre field. The tender roots of native maples, ash and ponderosa pines now lie nestled in fertile mud that for many years nourished only oats and exotic weeds. Orderly clusters of young Oregon grapes and Nootka roses are visible among meandering rows of blue plastic tubes, which we’ve carefully placed around most of the young plants. These unnatural cylinders seem terribly out of place here, but they’ll shield emergent leaves from summer’s drying winds and the mouths of hungry deer.

In dwindling light we trudge east across the swale among previous years’ plantings. The fattened trunks of some saplings have burst open their protective tubes. Slender branches of cottonwood and willow, cascara and cherry, bear robust buds that suggest our hard work will soon be rewarded.

SPRING: Buford Park’s South Meadow

Our ranks have thinned from 10 to five, though there’s enough work for 100 or more. The task is grueling, but the weather ideal; a fragrant breeze scatters cottonwood fluff about the meadow, and swelling cumulous clouds drift slowly through the soft, blue sky. A somber call from a gliding hawk pierces the shrieks and chatter of excited jays and robins.

We’ve been at this for several weeks, swinging heavy grub hoes to chop away thickly rooted sod from around the base of South Meadow saplings. These maples and ash trees will fare better for the effort, freed of the competition from invasive grasses and strangling blackberries. Exposing the rich soil in a six-foot diameter around each plant requires many swings of our sharp tools, and we must aim carefully to avoid slicing a tree trunk or an unfortunate foot.

Sodbusting is only half the chore, and we complete it by covering the bared, saturated soil with a thin layer of cardboard and a thick mound of shredded bark or straw. This, too, is exhausting, shoveling bark from trailer to wheelbarrow and pushing the heavy loads across rough terrain. When August heat-waves arrive, the moisture barrier we’ve created for these trees will aid their survival. Today, their waxy green leaves and shoots seem vigorous and eternal, but insects, deer and drought will quickly thin their ranks.

SUMMER: Restored South Meadow Side Channel

Four new crew members, with two departed, to water thirsty roots and root out eager weeds. The morning sun has us sweating already as we make our slow procession through the length of the reclaimed channel. This serpentine ditch was dug last autumn, and stretches for nearly a mile between its two Coast Fork ends. Here we planted thousands of shrubs and forbs into soil and sand and cobble, and all require



PHOTO BY JASON BALZAR

Mulching trees along a reconnected side channel of the Coast Fork.

assistance before October rain or winter floods arrive.

Equipped with hoses and asparagus forks, we navigate steep banks and gentle slopes to supply a five-gallon drink for each young transplant. Groupings of grapes, spireas and snowberries have grown obscured and entangled by dense stands of thorny thistles, blackberries and wild cucumber vines. With diligence we pry and pull out undesirables, enabling the natives to freely photosynthesize.

Spiders, grasshoppers and tiny moths flee our activity, while ladybugs crawl about in apparent indifference. Perhaps they welcome the liquid we’ve pumped from the river into our slow-draining buckets. Though we wisely don’t drink it, an occasional dousing provides sweet relief.

AUTUMN: FBP Native Plant Nursery

A cool morning fog clings to the air, diffusing the light and obscuring our view of Mt. Pisgah. Multi-hued leaves, some crisp and bronzed, cling to their host branches, while others waft like butterflies into our botanical enclosure.

Many hands have assembled this nursery of native plants, through painstaking work, planning and persistence. Where large herds of cattle only recently trampled, a welcoming garden has sprouted from the alluvial earth. Potted oaks, alders, ninebarks and dogwoods stand silently in rows within the new shadehouse. Checkered plots of camas, lupine, brome and sun-bleached cow parsnips sway gently as if offering their seeds to us. In future years we’ll disperse these seeds and plants throughout Buford Park and the Coast Fork floodplain, where they’ll feed and shelter indigenous wildlife and nurture human souls.

Kurt Kamin is a writer and conservationist living in Eugene. For more information about Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah and the organization’s stewardship activities, visit www.bufordpark.org