

harvested off the forest floor, then all the small trees will be removed, then the big trees will be limbed. Nothing ... no ferns, no salamanders, no little rodents will inhabit the forest floor. No birds will feed or nest there. Soon, the trees will stop growing and will die because there are no longer any nutrients being added to the soil.

From a region that may take more carbon dioxide out of the air than it puts in, Oregon will become a region that puts a huge burden on the atmosphere, belching out carbon dioxide and taking up very little of it, because the land will have been sterilized.

Those who want a "clean environment" should consider what they wish for.

*Ann Tattersall
Eugene*

UNDER ATTACK

Please explain to me and our entire country why we are being attacked from within while the media stand silent?

I have seen the sun with rainbow circles around it right here in Oregon. I have seen the crisscross of jet chem trails often in our skies. Why do you all turn a blind eye to what's going on?

*Christine Gherardi
Springfield*

EDITOR'S NOTE: For an extensive discussion of this topic, do a web search for "chemical trails."

BILLION-DOLLAR MESS

Traffic issues aside, I just can't seem to get excited about building two new hospitals here.

Let's see if I understand correctly. One entity wants to mostly give up its perfectly good hospital in Eugene (I know PeaceHealth still plans to use the Hilyard site for some programs) and build a new one in Springfield at a cost of about \$600 million; the other, McKenzie-Willamette Hospital in Springfield, wants to give up its perfectly good facility and build a new hospital in Eugene at a cost of about \$400 million. I was

never very good at math, but I think that's a billion dollars.

I can see how new state-of-the-art hospitals would be nice for employees, people with insurance, vendors, for teaching medical students and for bragging rights when you're chatting up colleagues at conferences, but I just can't seem to get excited about the prospect of spending a billion dollars for new building when there are so many other needs that are greater.

Setting aside momentarily that it's not my billion — so it doesn't really matter what I think — how about all those who have no health coverage at all to spend at any hospital or doctor's office? They make too much to qualify for Medicaid, they aren't disabled or old, so they don't get Medicare, and even though they work full time, their employers don't offer coverage. Most of their senators and representatives don't care about their health needs. I know a billion bucks doesn't go as far as it used to, but it would buy a lot of

coverage for a lot of people for a long time. And just where does a "nonprofit" get \$600 million anyway?

*Gary Cornelius
Eugene*

DO THEM BOTH

Recently readers have focused on what should be printed in the *Weekly*. On the one hand, the First Amendment speaks for itself and should be protected. At the other end of the spectrum, the morality folks want protection from the rampant sex-based information that keeps *EW* free and available. The pull out section makes a lot of sense and would make the family readers happy, and the progressives would still keep the edge on the pages continuing to evolve as does the readership.

We need both our morality and our freedom to show both have a place in our psyche. Let's get this done, today.

*George G. Brooks
Eugene*

viewpoint BY JACK DRESSER

Loyalty Day

Newport vs. the First Amendment

After a cold night and a grey morning, a bright spring sunshine had emerged by noon on May 5. It looked perfect for the Newport Loyalty Day parade.

Our Veterans for Peace bus and crew were invited and sponsored by a Lutheran Church and the Democratic Party of Lincoln County to join them in this event, featuring support for the U.S. Armed Forces with the local Army National Guard unit poised for deployment to Iraq the following week.

We arrived at the Safeway parking lot staging area where we met the Lincoln County Democrats who intended to ride along. They had registered for the parade and had announced they would have a bus.

However, upon seeing our bus with STOP THE WAR emblazoned on both sides, the organizers decided that we, not the war, must be stopped.

Our hosts were furious. They argued heatedly, demanding a satisfactory explanation. None, of course, was forthcoming. With a four-hour round trip from Eugene that we did not intend to waste, we joined the fray. The parade organizer was summoned. She arrived, and we demanded to know what was wrong with our bus. She stated that "the spirit of the parade is loyalty to the community."

"How is peace disloyal?" we asked.

Slipping quickly from that noose, she immediately tied another. The bus "wasn't declared on the application." This statement was refuted by an incensed Dan Beck, chair of the Lincoln County Democratic party. But the proof had apparently vanished. Although parade participants had to be checked in against their permits, the Democrats' registration document had somehow become unavailable.

Then, displaying an impressive gift for Orwellian redefinition, the organizer had expected the "bus" to be "a van with supportive signage" — not only shrinking her mental bus but implying that a peace message doesn't support the community. And obviously vice versa.

How is a peace message unsupportive, we asked, when most Americans and virtually all Democrats want the Iraq War to end and our troops returned home, and this was an explicit plank in the Oregon Democratic Party platform in last year's election?

Beck put it plainly, "I'm part of this community and I support peace, and you're stopping that message!"

Two Lincoln County sheriff's deputies provided back-up for the embattled organizer. One re-affirmed that we would be unable to join the parade. We challenged his power to deny our First Amendment rights under color of authority.

He said he was "tired of hearing about amendments" and had other things to do.

We asked why groups of active duty soldiers visibly expressing their support for American militarism were welcome in the parade while ex-soldiers were prohibited from visibly expressing opposition. No honest answer. It was just about registration.

Ms. Organizer was locked irreversibly in position. The deputies left for their more important, non-constitutional duties. The parade proceeded without us.

But soldiers don't just take orders. They must quickly and flexibly adapt to conditions in the field. We devised an alternative strategy. We had a secret weapon: a PA

system. We remembered Tokyo Rose.

Parked at the outer edge of the Safeway lot, we Excluded Ones began a steady stream of broadcasts to the steady stream of Included Ones passing by.

To the non-marching band on the flatbed, to the costumed pony riders, to the line of old-car drivers, to the Shriners in purplish fezzes circling on scooters in the street, we broadcast that we were not permitted in the parade despite being sponsored by the Lincoln County Democrats, that veterans opposing war were not to be seen, much less honored at this military-honoring event.

Most importantly, as the National Guard troops in fatigues marched past, we

broadcast facts they have every right to know: that aggressive war has been prohibited under international law since 1928; that Nazis were tried and executed at Nuremberg for waging aggressive war; that this principle was re-confirmed in the 1945 United Nations and Nuremberg charters; that occupation and torture are prohibited by the 1949 Geneva Conventions; that the U.S. is a signatory to all these treaties; and that Article VI of the Constitution defines our treaty obligations as the "Supreme Law of the Land."



We reminded the parade that the Virginia Tech tragedy is replicated many times on a daily basis in Iraq from the violence and chaos we have inflicted upon a people innocent of any aggression against us.

We cited the Nuremberg Tribunal that "to initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

We explained this principle as the basis of Lt. Ehren Watada's refusal to deploy to Iraq, which the Army has evaded by prohibiting his defense witnesses and declaring a mistrial at his court-martial rather than litigate in open court before the eyes and ears of the world press.

We suggested that Newport and Lincoln County citizens make known their feelings about our exclusion to city officials, that they decide what information and viewpoints they want at public events, what they stand for and what our country should stand for.

The final parade entry passed, the parking lot opened and we pulled our bus behind the procession, continuing our broadcasts to the still-assembled spectators for the full length of the parade route and back again after loading the bus with Democrats for transport back to their cars at the staging area.

Sending Newport's young men and women to risk death, disabling injury, inhalation of radioactive DNA-altering depleted uranium particulates from explosions of American ordnance or lifelong psychological damage from participation in horror while committing war crimes hardly seems supportive of them or an occasion for celebration.

It was a small victory in the struggle to redirect our nation onto a path of peace and justice, and we hope it communicated care and truthfulness to the citizens of Newport.

Jack Dresser is a longtime political observer and former columnist for The Springfield News.