

workers can come to grips with the facts. Before now they have had to kill animals, but someone has come up with a solution to that, and now they don't have to kill animals anymore.

Molly Sargent
Pleasant Hill

NOT PARTISAN

I must respond to falsehoods in letters by Nunn (5/3) and Robertson (4/19) about the volunteers fighting the imposition of an income tax in Lane County without a vote by the people. Charges that the leaders are partisan are untrue. These people have no experience in politics and are not active within the Republican Party. I know for a fact that when their campaign started that the Republican Party offered them assistance. However, Ben Pooler refused any help as he did not want a partisan campaign.

The tiny \$2,000 that the non-partisan Taxpayers Association of Oregon has contributed to the anti-tax effort is nothing compared to the huge corporate and government funds that have been spent the past year to brainwash the public into supporting the tax. The current pro tax committee has so far raised over triple the amount of money that the We Said No group has, with most being large corporate donations.

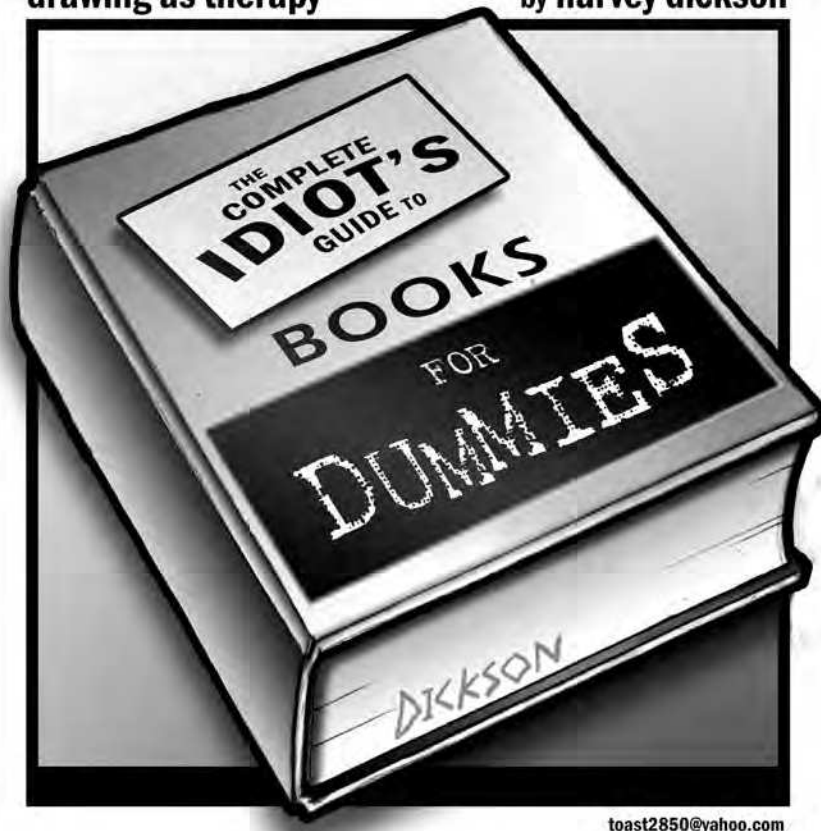
Last year, DA Doug Harclerod raised over \$100,000 to promote the \$20 million income tax that was defeated. Lane County also spent \$250,000 last year advertising county services to promote the tax, in blatant violation of the law. And they are spending another \$40,000 on this again for the current more expensive \$32 million income tax Measure 20-129.

Should corporations and career politicians rule our county, or the people themselves? We need to thank We Said No for allowing us to be able to vote this month on this tax.

Lance Jacobs
Springfield

drawing as therapy

by harvey dickson



toast2850@yahoo.com

AN OUTRAGE

I believe it is fair to say that tens of thousands of residents in the Willamette Valley are outraged and disgusted by House Agricultural Committee chair Rep. Arnie Roblan's sabotage of Rep. Paul Holvey's bill to ban field burning by not releasing it from committee.

His actions are an insult and abuse of the democratic process. In essence, the entire Willamette Valley's airshed is turned into a dumping ground for 150 grass seed farmers, and the multitude is just supposed to accept decade after decade choking in their smoke. Aside from the diminished quality of life for two months of every year, the health effects are often severe and, in the case of some individuals, life threatening.

Several major health organizations have

weighed in supporting the ban, including the Oregon Medical Association. Also of note, Idaho and Washington state's grass seed industries are thriving after initiating field burning bans in the 1990s.

There is no excuse for Roblan. Does he think he is serving his rural constituents' needs when for every grass seed farmer, there are 1,000 rural neighbors hacking away in smoke plumes? At a time when other Democrats are straightening their backs after taking the majority in the house, Roblan has taken the coward's path of appeasing a powerful elite because he fears their retribution in the next election cycle. If he doesn't have the guts to stand up for profound health concerns of thousands of Oregonians, he should get the hell out of the way and let someone take his place who will.

Hopefully a field-burning state initiative will soon be presented to Oregon voters. In the meantime we need to remind Roblan, phone (503) 986-1409, whose interests he is supposed to serve.

Gerry Rempel
Eugene

ABSURD COMPARISON

The comparison between radical environmental/animal rights activists and the KKK and white supremacist extremists made by prosecutors in the "Operation Backfire" case is appalling and stupid (Slant, 5/17). The fact that ELF/ALF are considered the nation's top domestic terrorist threats when they have never injured a single person is just one more example of how the government has its priorities wrong. Resources have been diverted away from investigating right-wing terrorists, al-Qaeda and corporate criminals — all who have the blood of innocents on their hands — and instead used to go after misguided idealists who destroy the property of companies that are poisoning and destroying the natural environment we all depend on for our survival.

When Jeff "Free" Luers was sentenced to 22+ years in prison for burning three SUVs, the message I got was that local authorities are more concerned with activists destroying property than criminals harming people. Why else would they give somebody a prison sentence longer than most rapists, child molesters and other violent offenders? Similarly, by pursuing ELF/ALF instead of real terrorists, the government demonstrates it's more concerned about protecting corporate property than human lives. This is hypocrisy and insanity. How long will we allow this nonsense to continue?

Ronnie Lee
Eugene

AFTER BLACKSBURG

In the wake of another American tragedy (Virginia Tech) born of the confluent national crises in mental health care, violence

viewpoint BY MIKO BAUER

One More Hoop

In the circus act called education

Recently the Oregon Legislature passed a bill dramatically increasing the requirements in math and science for a high school diploma. Many people around the state applauded this decision. I did not. Before I begin my discussion of the topic at hand, I must issue a warning: Requirements and I have had an uneasy alliance throughout my life. Homework is a good case in point.

I first became acquainted with the idea of homework in grade one at Edison School. I had been in preschool for a total of four years before I reached Edison, so I fully understood the concept of *school* ("Boring stuff now; cool stuff later.") But the idea of *home* combined with *work* did not compute in my tiny first-grade brain. Work was what you did during the six hours that they held you captive at school. Home was the place that you went to escape from work. Home was snacks, playing with toys on the floor, swinging on the swing and watching *The Brave Little Toaster*. Over the course of the next 12 years I was to learn that school work frequently did follow me home, and I came, reluctantly, to accept that fact.

But the idea that what used to be the maximum for many college-bound students is now the minimum for receiving a high school diploma says, to me, that the Legislature believes that the purpose of high school is solely preparing students for college. I see these new requirements as a source of discouragement for those students who already feel overwhelmed by courses that do not feed their passions, decreasing diversity for students and increasing the chance that many students will feel that high school is simply not a place that values them.



These newly imposed requirements do not directly affect me. I am a graduating senior this year and already accepted into the college of my choice. So why do I feel so strongly about them? I think that it is because of my experience this year with the senior project, a 25-hour, community-based requirement documenting a potential career path. The intention was that seniors get some "real world" experience before they leave high school. All of these ideas sounded good on paper. But the way they came down to me as a real-world student was very different.

I had spent my freshman, sophomore and junior years swimming along in the stream of my adolescent peers, doing everything that I was told to do so that I could reach that hallowed place, The Senior Year. I tackled every homework assignment, test and project they dished out to me. For three years I mentally counted down the days until I would be a senior and be able to enjoy a year of classes that reflected my strengths and interests.

So, when I heard that, starting this school year, all seniors were required to take part in a senior project, I felt like one more hoop had been added to the circus act that was my formal education. If one of the goals of high school is to help students build a bridge from the world of childhood to that of adulthood, then let us do just that. Tell us the rules. Explain the terms of the contract. And if we live up to our end of the bargain, then you live up to yours. Think about the fact that maybe some very important learning comes when not absolutely everything is spelled out in requirements.

Maybe the opportunity to make choices is just as important as some of the choices we might ultimately make.

Miko Bauer attends South Eugene High School.