

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

broad protections for people beyond what is provided by state or federal law. But these protections do not apply to the homeless, who are codified in police jargon as "transients" or "vagrants." In our "diverse" town, the only shelter available for the majority of the homeless is a well-intentioned but faith-based shelter funded with no public money and therefore exempt from the protections against discrimination that a publicly funded shelter would have.

I told Mayor Piercy that I would not support one penny of public money going toward a fancy new building for the cops or any other city staff until the city first built a publicly funded shelter for the homeless that provided the same human rights protections that all other citizens of Eugene enjoy. I meant it.

Melissa Mona
Eugene

HEALTH CHASM

I read the letter concerning the organization Volunteers in Medicine with bemusement. After failing to get OHP or into the Oregon Medical Insurance Pool, I inquired about the Bridges program at Sacred Heart and was informed I had too much income to qualify for it. When I called VIM about their services, I was informed that my income was too low. That's right: I was too poor to qualify for their assistance because I wasn't working and my income was more than 300 percent below the poverty level.

I didn't fall through a crack. I fell into a chasm when it comes to health care

affordability. I recognize these organizations' attempts to help those who can't afford medical insurance, but with more people losing their jobs and getting poorer they will be out of reach for many more citizens.

A. McLaughlin
Eugene

WON'T PAY FOR WAR

This year I owe \$474 in federal taxes. If federal taxes went to life affirming things, I would be happy to pay all that I owed and more. For example, our country could provide a free and appropriate education to all young people between the ages of 3 and 25, including a bachelor's degree or other post secondary education. We could provide food, a place to live and free health care to all who need it. All who need free drug, alcohol, gambling and sex addiction treatment could have it provided for them. Our land, water and air could be cleaned up and protected. Global warming could be reversed and alternative energy provided. All people living in this county could be treated with respect and granted the same freedoms.

Instead of programs that affirm life, over half our taxes are going towards killing people in wars. Our taxes are breeding ill will through this country and the world. If our country had not spent so much money on killing people through wars, the financial crisis we are in could have been averted. I can't condone war by paying for it. I have redirected the \$474 I owe into life affirming programs here in Oregon.

Susan P. Barnhart
Eugene



Ha Jin Reading

Poet and novelist Ha Jin, National Book Award-winning author of *Waiting*, *War Trash*, and *A Free Life*, will present his work in progress.

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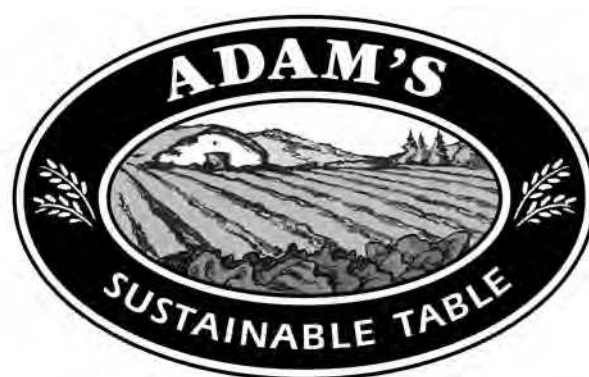
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