

Carbon Conversations

New ways of looking at interrelated problem

I appreciate your recent article (4/2) on global warming and its recognition of the eminent danger posed by coal and fossil fuels contributing to excess CO₂ in the atmosphere. Presently, the majority of the scientific community, as reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), agrees that the excessive CO₂ in our atmosphere is driven by human development activities, primarily by developed Western countries although Asia and the developing nations are also contributing to the global carbon impact at an alarming rate. Perhaps the recent public policy discussions regarding the global economic recession and the renewed interest in solar technologies have created a 21st century renaissance for sustainability.

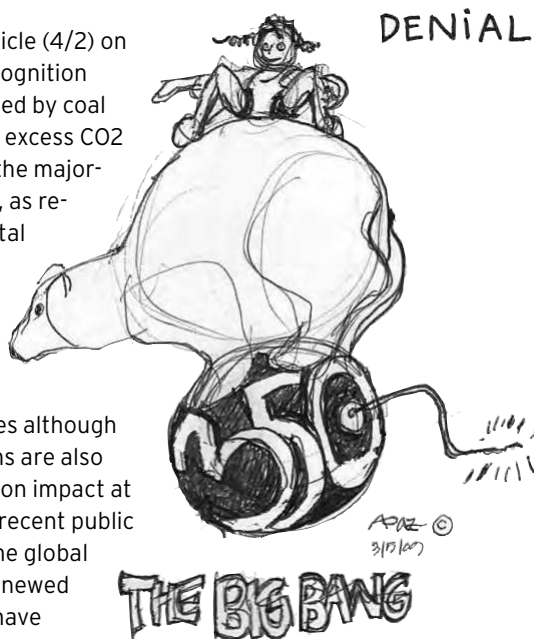
The U.S. and the initial roll-out of President Obama's agenda are starting to reframe a paradigm for a new carbon future. Locally and nationally, people and policy makers through out the world seem to be engaging in a new look at conservation, renewable energy systems, energy efficiency in buildings and electrical generation – including carbon conversations that are articulating new ways of looking at our health, organic farming, sustainable forestry practices, transportation options and general environmental sustainability that recognizes species diversity within complex local and global communities. Yet too often, all this carbon conversation appears to be abstract, not related to me. But it is.

Presently, the current CO₂ count in the atmosphere is approximately 374 ppm. Dr. James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, believes that if we are to avoid catastrophic global warming effects, we need to be at 350 ppm or lower. To prevent loss of marine and terrestrial species diversity, and protect the well-being of cultural and social communities throughout the world and our children and their grandchildren in the future, we need to immediately reduce personal and community carbon footprints.

What the scientific community is telling us is that business as usual and the way that we teach school are no longer valid. We are reaching a fragile interface. The acceptable old metaphors do not properly account for the finite nature of the environment and its accelerated over-heating. New analogs in the public schools must teach a carbon awareness that informs how we structure scholastic and practical applications of critical thinking and essential skills. We need concepts of sustainability embedded in the contextual frame work of public school course content and mastery in math, science and reading.

Public education reform needs a contextualization of PK-12 public schools, where pedagogy and curriculum instruction has local and global meaning and relevance that carry into post-secondary education and into sustainable workplace careers. Let us not falsify our carbon future but enhance our communities and global relationships in sustainable ways for all species of the world.

Artemio Paz is a Springfield architect with a focus on sustainable design. His website is www.apazarchitect.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OTA appreciates the reciprocal efforts of Dan Hilburn from the DoA and we thank Mayor Piercy, the city's Risk Service Division and Lane County Public Health for playing a positive role in this process. Eugene residents can now make informed choices for their own safety.

The jointly issued Gypsy Moth Information Sheet can be found at www.oregontoxics.org

Lisa Arkin
Executive director
Oregon Toxics Alliance

MOVE COPS AWAY

I was surprised by the editorial comments about the police station being considered by the city (Slant, 4/23). I opposed all previous plans for new quarters for the police but immediately had a positive response to the new proposal.

Unlike some, and like many others, I saw no value in having the police and the City Hall in one building. Some felt it was a nice image to have those uniformed police visible around the City Hall — like a welcoming committee. Some thought city staff, or others, needed to be looking over the shoulders of the police to keep them in proper behavior. And some think that the presence of all those police cars, etc., congested in the current downtown area is really needed, or at least needed to combat downtown crime.

I'm not impressed by any of this. I would prefer not to have the gun and taser police welcoming people to our City Hall. Eight years of close observation did not spot the Magaña abuses or change the police culture in any discernible way. A downtown substation or walking police would sufficiently handle any downtown local crime.

The original \$29 million that had been set aside for a new City Hall/police building, now reduced to about \$20 million, could be used to house the police in the \$16 million building, after improvements are made. In many ways the building appears to be a natural for police use — particularly the

parking space, which needs to be secure for both the fleet and the personal cars.

I say it's worth considering.
Bob Cassidy
Eugene

AFFORDABLE LAWYERS

In response to your News Briefs article "New Legal Service Available" in the April 23 edition: Your article brings much-needed attention to the thousands of Lane County residents who need alternatives to the "traditional" (i.e., expensive) family law attorney, people who make too much to qualify for legal aid but cannot afford to pay \$200-plus per hour for legal services. The issues this population struggles with are life-changing and often heartbreaking, including custody and the abuse of young children, divorce, domestic violence and denied parenting time.

Since 2001, I have devoted my law practice to representing and counseling more than 1,000 Lane County residents in these family law matters at a much-reduced hourly rate. My fee is based on a sliding scale, and ranges from \$60 per hour (for those who qualify for the Oregon State Bar Modest Means Program) to \$100 per hour. Most of my clients pay between \$75 and \$85 per hour, which is still a considerable hurdle for many Oregonians.

Referrals to my practice have always been by word-of-mouth, mostly from prior clients, community counselors, other attorneys, and the Oregon State Bar. I have never advertised, not even in the Yellow Pages. However, I am writing you because it seems now would be a good time for your readers to know that they have more than one resource for affordable legal services.

I wholeheartedly welcome Billie Tarascio to this rewarding and worthwhile area of practice.

Kathleen Mercer, JD
Eugene

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