

them instead. All parents want is to treat their children to the best, but when they take in so many only so much can be done.

With the rise in unemployment, do you really think people will want to vote on higher taxes? I wholeheartedly agree with this article and wish to say I hope the recession will be lifted before the budget is decided again in 2011.

*Ashlie Harper
Eugene*

BALANCE BEAMS

People who speak of the urgency of balancing the budget are insane. Don't they know that the entire economy is largely bankrolled by foreign states and corporate powers? There is no balance anymore. Likewise, this economy has now divided the wealthy from the poor as never before and is quickly dissolving that bastion of stability, the "middle class." We may survive this recession, but it is time to quit being fooled by the opportunist argument that communism failed because of its flaws and capitalism flourishes because of its virtue.

Capitalism is likewise deeply flawed, and the increasing human population level is putting stress right at that fracture. How insane is it that we as a society can't fund the very programs that are most important: programs that care for our children, that teach them; programs that protect our environment; programs that help us care for each other and care for our health? Yet we croak on and on about the importance of "balancing the budget."

We need to realize that the economy runs on psychology, and the basis of this particular frame of mind is fear and scarcity. It doesn't have to be this way. The economy is artificial. There is no natural reason to subjugate ourselves to the free market. It is time to abandon this economy and revive compassion as our highest value.

*Gavain U'Prichard
Eugene*

CLASS SIZE MATTERS

To all of the people who claim that class size doesn't matter: Try teaching a subject to a friend or peer who is interested in learning said material. You've got one hour to do it. Add 10 engaged students. Still got one hour. Add 10 people with no intrinsic motivation in the topic at hand and pique their interest. Add five more with learning disabilities, mental illnesses, behavioral issues, low self-esteem or a combination thereof. Add another five who receive little or no academic support from anyone else in their lives. Your pupils have one of several different learning styles. Tailor your lesson to each one of these styles and make time to work with each student individually. Compare your results.

Keep your head up when people tell you that you're incompetent. Don't worry about the very real possibility that next year you'll have 50 minutes to accomplish the same task with five more students.

*Ben Doidge
Eugene*

TASER GOOFING

Surprise, surprise, a new Taser incident is to be investigated. Unfortunately, those

who predicted Taser troubles for EPD and the city of Eugene were ignored. Now the City Council has rushed to dilute the effectiveness of the Civilian Review Board by working to exclude the only effective members and stacking the committee with political zombies. Will there need to be a pile of smoking Tasered corpses before the council adds cameras to the Tasers or abandons the Taser "pilot project" altogether? How many deaths should the council ignore? Many cities have recently dumped the Tasers because they realized the Taser was oversold and overused by many officers. The Taser situation is a complicated one, and the media are informing you about Tasers and police oversight issues with all of the skill of a bunch of second graders. That is why the debate surrounding less lethal weapons is so murky and unproductive.

Expect more deaths and multiplying unanswered questions. When I was shot with less-lethal weapons by the EPD SWAT team in 2003, the media could never get the story straight. Even with the incident captured on video, the media ignored it and parroted the lies from the police claiming they had acted in self-defense. Now the shooting can be viewed on YouTube. New weapons now, but the same old story of media incompetence keeps us moving quickly in all the wrong directions. I do not blame the police ... I blame the elected officials and the slacker reporters who protect them by goofing off instead of investigating these complex issues.

*Zachary Vishanoff
Eugene*

STRANGER DANGER

You may have seen me walking downtown, but I couldn't tell; you didn't look up. You may have seen me walking with my dogs, but I couldn't tell, since you said "hi" to them but not to me. We may have crossed paths on a local trail; I tried to make eye contact, but you didn't. Another chance to connect missed. I saw you see me as I walked out my front door, and you passed my house at the same time, but I was ignored. We could be neighbors, but we may never know.

I am wondering how we are going to get anywhere as a community, a town, a country. In a place that is so forward-thinking, we can't get past the simplest of barriers. "Stranger danger" is forever locked in our brains, and this isolates us from potential friends, neighbors and allies or pleasant interactions among members of a community. I am not your enemy. I don't want your purse/wallet. I will not hurt you physically or otherwise.

I am making a promise to myself to try to connect with people when circumstances align and present me with an opportunity to reach out to someone. Try to figure out who I am. To be successful, you may have to look up from the sidewalk, ask me what kind of dogs I have or just wish me a good day. You never know: I may be the person you have been waiting to meet but were afraid to see.

*Ray Cole
Eugene*