

young model (back page, 2/10)? To objectify a person using cover shots of a woman's breasts? We are proud of our *Weekly*. It does not need such immature visuals to promote circulation.

Ideas are sold through their presentation. Let us not sell the idea that a person is an object to be used, rather than an individual of great integral worth.

George and Cynthia Kokis
Eugene

FOOTBALL DOESN'T BELONG

As some of the news media remind us, football is becoming a year-round sport, with Oregon and Oregon State already — just in late winter — revving up for another season on the gridiron. For 25 years, I worked at lying about college athletics, brainwashing gullible fans into thinking football was part of higher education. It is not. I'm reminded of that dishonest part of my past when I see public statements debating value of football in academia. We're lucky there are people like Richard Sundt and Guy Prouty who clarify for us how football is little more than a money-making scheme that costs universities their souls.

Football cheats those who come to school not to learn, but to prepare for a pro career that is beyond the reach of all but a rare few. This violent game also subjects them to serious injury, whose full impact catches up to them later in life. That has to be discussed more openly to help prevent young men from suffering the aftereffects of going to college to play football.

George Beres
Eugene

PUSHING BUTTONS

Megan Hinkel declares that "breasts are not obscene" (letters, 2/24). Well, I don't want to drive the subject into the ground but there's a larger issue here. "Obscenity," like "liberal," "right-winger," "socialist," "oligarch," "ugly," and "sacred" are words. Words have no content until people fill them with it. We should teach our children this simple truth. The world would be seen with much more clarity, and we would have far fewer irrational — but deadly — emotional buttons to be pushed.

Don MacQueen
Eugene

TEACHING TO THE TEST

As a preschool teacher I have concerns about our public school system. Teachers need our emotional and financial support. They are eager to uplift and inspire our children. But they are burdened in their efforts by continually having to "teach to the test."

They are also hamstrung by a system which is using outdated approaches to education more suited to the industrial age rather than the current high speed information age. Our goal to graduate students with enough verbal, mathematical, and technological literacy and knowledge of certain subjects so that they can find jobs and "compete in the global economy" is only foundational and should not be a goal of schooling.

Too often we view education as filling each child's head with information rather than the better cultivation of great critical and creative thinkers. We need to be teaching students about the interconnected global challenges we face and engaging their creativity and intelligence in the discovery of new ideas and solutions. We need a curriculum that draws connections between "the basics" and

what these foundational skills could actually achieve in the world. We need to engage our students loving hearts and brilliant minds so that they aspire to play important roles in the great challenges ahead.

Core competencies in core subjects are simply tools. We must make sure that we're providing our children with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to participate in the creation of a peaceful, sustainable, and humane world for all. This is how we will meet the challenges of the future.

Christopher Michaels
Eugene

UNNECESSARY CUTS

All budget cuts are unnecessary. Ample funds exist at all levels: federal, state, and local, when corporations and wealthy individuals pay their fair share of taxes.

We have been duped for over 30 years by the myth that tax cuts create jobs. This has never worked, and it never will. Tinkle down economics was never intended to work; it was just a pitch to get your vote.

Additional funding for any line item in any budget will become available when

viewpoint BY DAN GALPERN

Let EPA Do Its Job

The political campaign against science

To waste, to destroy, our natural resources ... will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them. — President Theodore Roosevelt, seventh message to Congress, Dec. 3, 1907

Propelled by funds doled out by billionaire owners of fossil fuel companies, Republicans in Congress — joined by some coal-state Democrats — have launched a political crusade against science in order to roll back environmental protections. In the process they have abandoned the American ideals that led Eisenhower to protect the Arctic, Nixon to establish the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and George Schultz to preserve California's climate protection law. Public health professionals and virtually every environmental organization are arrayed against them. In the balance resides our posterity.

The EPA is among their prime targets. For example, Rep. Fred Upton of Michigan — the new Republican chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee — advocates blocking EPA's ability to restrict greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution, thus functionally overturning the Supreme Court's key climate decision of 2007.

Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS) seeks to strip EPA's funding to administer its GHG inventory program, and so keep the public in the dark as to major emitters of such pollution. Rep. John Carter (R-TX) would bar use of federal funds to enforce emissions limits on toxic air emissions from cement plants. Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) urges a ban on funding for any EPA enforcement efforts relating to stationary source GHG pollution.

West Virginia's Sen. Jay Rockefeller, a Democrat, suggests giving power plants a two-year pass before EPA could restrict their climate pollution. Rep. David McKinley, a Republican also from West Virginia, would bar EPA from listing coal ash as hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Rep. Morgan

Griffith (R-VA) seeks to stop EPA from reviewing water pollution threats at proposed coal-mining projects. Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID) is pressing a measure to stop EPA from issuing final standards for air pollution from industrial boilers.

EPA scientists have recommended a series of limitations on emissions and discharges of pollutants that induce cancer, cause birth defects and disrupt the planet's climate system. These recommendations are characterized by measured care in both their examination of the potential harm that unabated pollution may impose on human health and in their analysis of how such pollution might be reasonably controlled. Under the Bush Administration such recommendations were frequently buried by political managers, but current Administrator Lisa Jackson is committed to restoring integrity and reason to the EPA — even as she grants industry every opportunity to participate in rule-making processes. This renewed commitment to science, reason and public health, in conjunction with judicial declarations that the law of environmental protection may not be ignored, has put EPA back to work on rules that implement the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and other key protections.

That work is especially urgent with respect to coal-fired power facilities. These account for half the energy generated in the U.S. and at least 80 percent of the electricity sector's carbon dioxide pollution. (On an equivalent energy basis, burning coal yields twice the CO2 pollution as natural gas.) CO2 emissions, in turn, are the principal driver of global warming, so that continued use of coal constitutes our nation's principal physical contribution to disruption of the global climate system and its associated risks — including hyper storms, wide crop failure and ecosystem collapse.

In addition, coal burning accounts for most of the power sector's emissions of fine particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury pollution. This stew of pollutants is implicated in reduced worker productivity, respiratory and cardiovascular illness, lung cancer, birth defects and sudden infant death. Indeed, virtually every step in the life cycle of coal — including its mining, processing, transport, combustion, and disposal of associated wastes — implicates public health. Coal sludge and slurry impoundments, and coal ash landfills and ponds, for example, routinely leach

contaminants to groundwater — including ammonia, arsenic, antimony, beryllium, cadmium, chlorides, cyanide, lead, selenium and other salts and metals.



Last month, in a study published by the New York Academy of Sciences, analysts at the Harvard Medical School attempted to account for the full costs of the various waste streams derived from the extraction, processing, combustion and disposal of coal. Those monetized costs totaled, on an annual basis, up to a half trillion dollars a year in the U.S. alone. If reflected in its selling price, coal readily would be recognized as uneconomic as compared with efficiency initiatives and renewable energy sources. Instead, about two-thirds of coal's actual costs are external to its price, so that the major share is borne by the public in the guise of damaged health, and disrupted human and natural systems.

On the other hand, studies have demonstrated that prior EPA rules that aimed to protect public health and the environment yielded significantly greater benefits than costs. EPA's newly promulgated, pending, and proposed rules likely will have the same net beneficial monetized impact.

These include, for example, rules to require major sources of GHG pollution to adopt the "best available control technology" when they are newly constructed or else when they undertake major modifications of their facility that significantly increase their emissions. They include, as well, a commitment to propose requirements on coal and oil-fired power plants to employ the "maximum achievable control technology" so as to limit emissions of mercury, arsenic, acid gases, dioxins and other hazardous air pollutants.

Recent polls demonstrate that strong majorities of the public want the EPA to do its job and strictly limit pollution so as to protect public health. This is true even in districts whose elected representatives are leading the charge against the EPA. Participants in the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (pielc.org) that starts March 3 at the UO will consider whether these assaults on the EPA will turn back decades of progress, or whether they will instead boomerang and actually galvanize the public's determination to ensure a clean and green future.

Dan Galpern is a Eugene-based attorney with the Western Environmental Law Center. He will moderate a panel Friday at PIELC titled "EPA's Pending Rules: New Tools to Phase-Out Coal and Slash Mobile Source Climate Pollution."