

WASHING BRAINS

It's extremely refreshing to read that, after 25 years of lying about college athletics, George Beres (letters, 3/3) is now admitting how foolish he was in, "brainwashing gullible fans into thinking football was part of higher education." We're all hoping that it doesn't take him 25 years to realize how foolish he's been in trying to brainwash foolish EW and Register-Guard readers into thinking that the conflict in the Middle East is all Israel's fault.

Dave Taube
Eugene

EVICTED FROM DIRT

For several years, I've maintained a plot at the Lincoln School community garden. As a disabled person suffering from the effects of the removal of a brain tumor and my pituitary gland, tending this plot has given me hours of pleasure and a feeling of purpose, and I have a

doctor's letter attesting to the therapeutic benefits gardening provides. My life isn't easy to manage due to the effects of my disabilities, and my garden is one of the few places I feel content.

Now I'm being evicted from the garden. Despite difficulties, I make every effort to get out to my plot as often as possible, sometimes with the help of friends. I've received many compliments on my garden. Some folks at the community garden have several plots, many of which are much more overgrown than mine. I've been unfairly singled out, despite having sent letters describing my situation. This seems like discrimination. They know that plot is important to me, but refuse to work with me on remedying the situation.

I was born in Eugene, attended Lincoln School and lived the most of my life in the neighborhood near the garden. Now a group of people who fail to recognize my disabilities is ostracizing me. They're telling me to be out of the garden by March

12. An important part of my life is being taken away from me, and I don't know what to do.

Joseph Lesiak
Eugene

WASTED EFFORT

As a small business owner and citizen of this fine little city, I have some observations regarding the ballot measure for an income tax as a temporary aid to our schools.

Personally, I would love to see a ballot measure win. But it is a waste of time and money to throw something out there that has no chance; or, if it does win, will win by such a tight margin that a costly challenge will ensue.

I see three problems with the measure being discussed. People under a certain income level are exempt from this new tax, as are people outside Eugene who have students in our schools. Also, PERS recipients are exempt. It will not take outside agitators to defeat this.

Suggestions: remember we are all in this together, from the richest to the poorest. If there is a progressive tax, there should still be a minimum tax. A \$10 annual tax is affordable to the poorest. If you don't have it, your child can do some chores for someone who does. Likewise, if your children attend our schools from outside the city, stand up and chip in. To you PERS recipients, many of you made your money within the school system. I feel certain you'd accept paying a fair share of this tax.

If these issues are fairly solved, I will put a big sign up on my business property in favor of a tax measure. And we will win the day.

Scott Landfield
Eugene

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viewpoint BY ROSCOE CARON

Ratios Matter

We can't ignore growing class sizes

EDITOR'S NOTE: These comments were spoken at the kickoff of the Strong Schools Eugene campaign at Kelly Middle School March 8.

I have spent the last quarter century teaching middle school. I taught in this school for the past five years. I loved being a teacher of middle school students. I have had the privilege of working with hundreds of hard-working, loving and courageous parents and kids.

We are here today because we have been going through the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression. These are extraordinary times. These are times that demand that responsible adults respond to the needs of their children and their communities. That's why we are here.

The responsible adults in the community have responded in past years to save Eugene kids from the worst damage to the schools. The federal government helped all of the states, including Oregon, make ends meet as revenues plummeted.

Those federal dollars are not available to our

state this year, but our state's income is still way down. The crisis for schools and kids is still on. These are still extraordinary times.

There's nothing left to give up if we want a decent educational opportunity for our children.

We've already lost so very much during the years I have been a teacher. I was a teacher before Measure 5 passed and since it became law in 1990. Since then:

- We have experienced years of loss of programs and people: school nurses, counselors, shop programs, numerous other elective programs, loss of foreign language programs, art programs, and music programs.
- We have experienced a number of years of teachers having their wages frozen, taking wage cuts, and increasing their monthly insurance payments and out-of-pocket payments.
- We have experienced regular increases in class size. This is the toughest. For those who think it makes little difference, I'm here to tell you that ratios



matter: think of what happens if you go into a big home improvement store and they only have one or two staff members available to help you. Do you get the best level of service? Do you wind up wandering around trying to figure it out on your own?

Ratios matter. Do you think many private schools that wealthy families send their kids to have 38 students in a class? No. There are half that many kids in the classroom because student-to-teacher-ratios matter. In those classrooms the parents know their kids will have the assistance they need when they need it. They don't have to wander around the store trying to figure it out on their own.

There's an economic crisis going on that was not caused by 8-year-old kids. Their parents did not cause it. School bus drivers did not cause it. Kindergarten teachers did not cause it.

These are extraordinary times. These are the times when history compels responsible adults to help the next generation of students in their community to have a decent education. It is up to all of us to rise to the occasion. We must vote yes in May.

Roscoe Caron recently retired after teaching in local middle schools for almost 25 years. He and Jim Garcia were co-founders in 1996 of the Ganas project, linking Latino middle school students with UO MEChA students.



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