

BTW, in non-union tours, actors are paid below industry standard, are forced to double up in hotel rooms (no privacy for six months), and most don't get health insurance.

Carol Dennis
Eugene

GINSBERG'S ODD VIEWS

Parents and school staff in the 4J School District have significant reasons to be concerned about a current candidate for the School Board. Matt Ginsberg's own website makes some outrageous statements about equity and achievement (www.ginsberg4j.com). His position states that if we try to close the achievement gap, we will "bring the kids on the top down," and that students who are performing low do so because it is merely a reflection of their potential. Therefore, he claims, working to close the achievement gap is "a mistake," "unfair" and "inefficient."

He also states that special education teachers take money away from "the rest of our students." When asked about this, in an email to me (3/10) Ginsberg stated, "We have to cut back (special education) because the majority of our students are suffering." I'm not sure what he meant by "suffering," but there is plenty of data to support the contrary when comparing students with and without disabilities for outcomes such as graduation, drop-out rates, employment, post-secondary education, etc.

Ginsberg's position is quite a contradiction to what I believe the school district's goals are regarding equity and achievement, and have an undertone of classism, elitism and racism. He seems to lack the understanding that his wealthy white male privilege affords him and his children significant advantages. His divisive tenor will not be helpful as the school district works with a new superintendent to reshape itself for the future. I urge you to please vote in opposition to his candidacy.

Andy Bracco
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: Matt Ginsberg is running for Position 7 against Sherry Callahan and incumbent Mary Walston.

COVER THE NEWS

Lately it seems as though the definition of "news" has dwindled down to nothing more than a recap of whatever fad most recently appears on YouTube or is featured in the ever-growing blogosphere.

To go from covering a pressing topic, tax increases for school funding, to reviewing a quartet of hipster women and documenting the fun time had at a cupcake shop makes me question the

validity of the *Weekly*. How is a feature on indie rockers Warpaint cover-story news (3/31)? Of course it is interesting to learn these women recently performed in the town two are originally from, but column after column on how they love to laugh? And the recounting of their love for Hall & Oates? That is back-page blurb-worthy at best. Meanwhile, features regarding CALC'S MLK reading and the possible plastic bag banning are absent from the issue's cover — probably to make room for the noting of a *Sucker Punch* review.

With so many events to focus upon, the extensive report on Warpaint draws parallels to the rest of America's most-recent interest. Last month Rebecca Black informed millions that "Friday comes before Saturday," and her video-count skyrocketed overnight. But while her 15 minutes continued, 10 U.S. soldiers were lost in an Iraq suicide bombing, and little could be found online.

Perhaps features on all-girl bands and 13-year-olds who know the days of the week are fun, but they'd be more appreciated shortened and towards the paper's end.

Courtnee Stagner
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: We like to mix things up, and who knows — perhaps humanity's survival relies as much on the arts as on politics.

IT'S UP TO YOU

The opening of a new grain grinder in the south Willamette Valley is the best Earth Day news I've heard in a month. Now our community can consume wheat flour and other grain grown by our neighboring farmers.

However, Earth Day has been co-opted by big business, agencies and utilities to greenwash themselves and to switch the burden to saving our climate and biosphere to the average citizen.

It is now the average family's responsibility to stop emitting carbon and toxics into the environment. Corporations, utilities, agencies and the universities have done all they can to save our biosphere so now it's up to you. It doesn't matter that you don't have a job to pay for a new \$20,000 hybrid car, or a new \$3,000 heat pump, or a \$10,000 solar electric system, or \$7,000 solar water heater. It's all up to you now.

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words, keep submissions to once a month, and include your address and phone number for our files. E-mail to letters@eugeneweekly.com fax to 484-4044, or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

High-stakes Election

Don't believe the disinformation campaign

Eugene schools have cut \$50 million in the last three years as state funds have shrunk. They're set to cut a whopping \$30 million more next fall, unless our community steps up to do something. Without more funding, kids will lose one to two weeks of school and class sizes will skyrocket. Some kindergartens are slated to have more than 30 students. Some high school classes are expected to have more than 50.

Hard to believe, but true. The good news is, we can stop this in May.

Eugene voters can vote yes on Measure 20-182 and stop the worst of these cuts from hitting kids and damaging our ability to attract great folks to Eugene because of our schools.

Kids need everyone to vote yes. The stakes are high. We also need to stop the disinformation being spread about Measure 20-182. Here are the facts:

We don't need to wait for the state to fix the problem.

As Oregon has cut school funding, the state hasn't done its share for kids. Because of the current \$3.5 billion shortfall in the state budget, Salem isn't going to step up anytime soon. There's no reason the local community can't take care of our own 23,000 school kids.

The measure's revenue will go only to classrooms. Strict accountability is written into the measure.

The funding can be used for only two things: restoring cut instructional days and limiting increases in class sizes. The measure legally requires that the money be used only for that, and the city and school districts will enter into legally binding agreements to that effect. Moreover, the districts have to report to an independent citizens committee yearly to make sure they use the funds properly.

The cost to implement the tax is small.

Collection costs are estimated at 5 percent of the total, based on a similar tax in Multnomah County.

The measure is temporary.

There's no renewal in the measure. Opponents claim the City Council could suddenly change that and make it permanent. Of course it's within the council's power to pass any ordinance they want at any time — they could tax bananas next week. But it took hundreds of citizens lobbying the council to get this on the ballot. Any renewal would require a similar huge grassroots effort.

Measures 66 and 67 helped solve this problem, but they were temporary.

They helped as they were intended, and bought back many days of school, but Measures 66 and 67 were temporary. What will happen next year? The enormous state cuts for next year require action now.

This measure is fair to working families, and it protects the poor.

The funding is moderate and progressive, and it exempts the lowest incomes. A working family with an adjusted gross income of \$50,000 (after deductions) would pay only \$120 a year — that's about 33 cents a day, a worthwhile investment in our community's future.

Kids who live outside Eugene city limits need education, too.

No policy is perfect. For example, many large corporations in Oregon get huge tax breaks, paying almost nothing for schools. But are we going to let a philosophical argument about Oregon tax law stop us from helping our kids? We need *all* of Eugene's schools and children to succeed.

If this measure doesn't pass, our kids and our city will feel a big impact.

If Measure 20-182 doesn't pass, the districts will lay off more than 100 teachers, cut programs, and shorten an already-short school year. If we do nothing, our youngest kids will have an average of more than 30 children per class; middle-school kids will have an average of 35 children per class; and high-school classes will average in the upper 30s to 40s. This is not the way to educate children. Furthermore, kids will lose one to two weeks of school — and our school year is already the second shortest in the nation. This is not a maybe — this is certain. This is our chance to help our schools and our kids for the coming school years.

Anne Bridgman is a freelance writer/editor in Eugene and a peace activist. She and her husband have a daughter in the 4J school system.

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