

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

columnist Dan Savage's obscene definition of "Santorum," but without crediting the source SpreadingSantorum.com or its inspiration, the former Republican U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum who is on record supporting laws against gay anal sex that were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003.

Conversely, the mainstream press will only prudishly mention Santorum's "Google problem" if he decides to run for president.

Fortunately, Dan Savage's "Mark Twain" style of biting political satire is still protected as free speech under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, by multiple U.S. Supreme Court rulings that bar politicians and public figures from suing for defamation, libel or slander.

Thomas Kraemer
Corvallis

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our understanding is that spreadingsantorum.com was a project of Savage Love. Savage had a contest to rename something kinky for Santorum, and all the finalists are listed in his column at <http://wkly.ws/123>

CAN'T FOOL ME

After years of having my letters substantially edited by liberal R-G editors, I'm changing my venue to *EW* where free speech is honored.

An old proverb declares that "A fool and his money are soon parted." Soon enough, Eugene residents will be asked to part with some more of their money by voting on a so-called "temporary" city income tax for the Eugene School District. How ironic that on the very same ballot is a separate measure to renew an existing "temporary" tax. Somebody needs to call Ripley's *Believe it or Not*.

Looking at my Lane County property tax statement, nearly 40 percent of my tax bill is already going to the Eugene School District, including two "temporary" taxes known as Bond I and Bond II. One is set to retire soon, but only a fool believes that any tax is "temporary." In fact, Measure 20-183 seeks to renew that "temporary" tax, while Measure 20-182 seeks to set in place yet another "temporary" tax for the district.

The Eugene School District is playing us for fools. Well, my momma didn't raise no fool, so I'll be voting "no" on both tax measures come May 17.

Don Richey
Eugene

MISDIRECTED ANGER

I went to the kick-off press conference March 8 for the Strong Schools Eugene campaign. As I walked up I saw 10 or so people donning Americans for Prosperity T-shirts and holding "No New Taxes" and "Reform PERS" signs. AFP is funded and backed by the Koch brothers, also the financiers of the Wisconsin debacle. It seems to be their goal to blame our economic woes on public workers, including teachers. I wanted to remind them that our current problems were created by Wall Street bankers and the overall paradigm of neo-liberal economics of the last three decades. I don't think they would have listened, so I'm writing this letter.

We have experienced 30 years of failed voodoo economics. The assumptions of Reagonomics, that lowered tax rates on the wealthy would lead to higher tax revenues,

were flawed. Now, instead of growing tax revenues, we have dwindling funds to pay for our needed public services.

Many of us were swept away by Barack Obama's promises of change. But we were deceived. Obama surrounded himself with the very architects of our financial demise. We can't look to the federal level for help. If we are to combat the stranglehold that corporations have on our government, we will have to struggle at the local level to build the institutions, safety nets, and protections that give our children real hope for a decent future.

I have two daughters, ages 7 and 5. When I look at them, I fear for the future they face. Will they have access to high quality education through high school? Will Social Security exist for them in their old age? Will the environment be so trashed by corporate malfeasance that a healthy existence won't be possible? I don't know. What I do know is that it is up to my generation to pass on a fighting chance to live decent lives. I will do my part by voting for the Strong Schools initiative.

Geoff Barrett
Eugene

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Sometimes people have the cozy thought that the small population of Oregon is like a family. It has functioned like that in the past. But it has been falling apart. First we disowned crazy Cousin Jake. Then we turned out crippled Aunt Betty. Eventually huge numbers of the disabled Oregon family were homeless and abandoned.

What causes families to fall apart? Addictions. Bad habits that are costly and have nasty results. Oregon's addiction is two-fold. The oldest addiction is giving tax breaks to the rich. The later addiction is no government debt, no deficit. Most real Americans have debts. Oregon goes into debt by giving away tax revenue and believing that new taxes on the rich will cost everyone.

Well, this family, Oregon, has hit the very bottom on this addiction. Now it wants to "save" by throwing out whole families and children. The governor's sick budget includes huge tax breaks to the rich and destruction of most of the safety net for children and families.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is the downscaled miserly welfare offered to families with children. It is paid for by a "block grant" from the federal government. Budget squeezers are planning to reduce the amount of time a family can get assistance from five years to 18 months. This huge cutback doesn't stop there. No provision is made for families who become homeless.

Oregon has shown no interest in helping the thousands of disabled people who are homeless and is cutting back the few swamped services that now exist. Adding thousands of Oregon families to the huge derelict community of discarded people is more than our community services and faith organizations will be able to care for.

We need a citizen intervention. We have to end the giveaways to the rich and the cuts to the poor among us. End the tax breaks. Fund our human services. Take care of our family.

Jerry Smith
Eugene

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