

NON-VOTERS

The travesty of this recent vote against the city income tax is not that approximately 27,000 people voted against it. Anybody that has been to a Duck football game recently knows there are at least 27,000 assholes in Eugene, so no surprise there. The truly shameful thing is, that 47,441 souls in our fair city were either too busy, too lazy, too stoned, or simply too uninterested to even bother to vote. People in other parts of the world are dying in the streets for the right to vote — 47,000 Eugeneans, not so much. I'm filing this one under "W" for "we get what we deserve."

*Kevin O'Brien
Eugene*

CLOSING, TESTING SCHOOLS

I had always hoped that one day if I had children, I'd want them to attend a public school just like Springfield Middle School (SMS). That, unfortunately, will be a dream unfulfilled, as SMS is closing along with a few other schools in Springfield — and even more in Eugene are on the chopping block because of budget woes.

Presently, our schools are funded through property taxes. Since wealthy corporations pay little in taxes due to the loopholes that are hidden in the tax structure, we the taxpayers must demand that our elected local, state and federal officials close these loopholes. Wealthy individuals and corporations need to pay their fair share of taxes, too. If they did, our public schools and other public services would not be in the dire circumstances they find themselves in today.

I believe in public education, even though I know the system is flawed. Public school teachers have numerous constraints placed on them because of the bureaucracy in Washington. Regrettably, the government seems more interested in testing, testing, testing our students so that the United States can prove to the world that our students test well. But the staff at SMS and other public schools deserve to

be recognized for the tremendous effort they put forth to help students find and nourish their passions while offering hope in these ridiculous days of testing.

I wish to express my gratitude and admiration to each member of the staff of SMS for providing a loving, supportive and fun-filled educational environment for the children of Springfield. I am honored to have worked as a substitute teacher there for the past few years where I have been treated with warmth and kindness. The talented enthusiastic public school teachers treat the students with respect and love, supporting them both academically and emotionally. There is a palpable feeling of intimacy that exists at SMS, and I believe this is possible because of the small class sizes and the dedication of the staff.

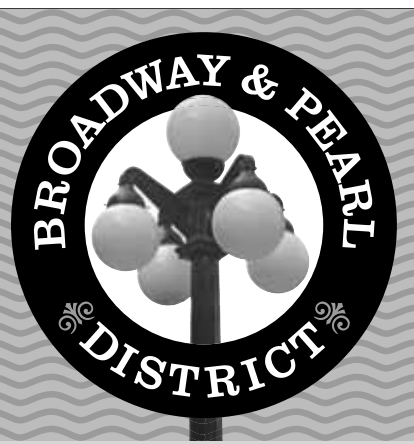
My fear is that if we don't collectively wake up and speak out about the inane way we fund our schools and assess our students, the public education that many hard-working Americans depend on, along with the personal attention and devotion that I witnessed in my time at Springfield Middle School, will soon become a thing of the past for every district everywhere.

*Laura Farrelly
Eugene*

COURTESY CAN KILL

This is a plea to all drivers out there who stop in random places to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the street. Please stop doing this. Traffic laws, while often worthy of a few curse words, are intended to create predictability and safety.

As a pedestrian (frequently pushing a stroller) and as a bicyclist, I often have cars stop in the middle of the block or at an intersection with no crosswalk to allow me to cross on streets where there are two lanes going in the same direction. These well-intentioned drivers do not realize that cars in the next lane continue to zip by, having no clue why they are stopped. Perhaps without intending to do so, the stopped car creates pressure to cross quickly exacerbating an extremely unsafe



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