

SHOELESS AMONG BOOKS

Since City Manager Richard Meyer of Cottage Grove ignored my first letter, I now write regarding the Cottage Grove library. I appreciate the library a great deal, but recently witnessed an elderly man threatened with police action and banishment from the library by Director Pete Barrell in a short-tempered and inappropriate manner. The victim, Graham Lawrence, was mistreated for walking barefoot, which he does typically. When Barrell actually threatened him after being asked why the policy exists, there was no warning, no offer to discuss in another setting.

I'd been told before that shoes are required and the librarian had said she "did not need to explain the policy." As public servants, actually they *are* supposed to have reason for their policies and ought to have no problem explaining them politely.

The argument that bare feet are somehow dirty does not hold; they are typically cleaner than shoes. Bacterial growth results from wearing shoes. Other religions view the foot as sacred, and the ground as sacred to be felt beneath one. If they need to post a sign saying that it is a person's own risk to enter barefoot, let them. There is no liability implicit. I am still waiting for an explanation and believe the silence shows there is no good reason. Moreover, the police force is clearly not needed to deal with a peaceful guy with no shoes!

At the very least I want the library director to write Lawrence an apology and respect citizenry in the future.

*Benjamin Raymond Selker
Cottage Grove*

BUTTS ARE SICKENING

I am writing to extend a belated thank you to the author of an *EW* viewpoint article published a couple months ago (10/13/11) on the problem of a proliferation of cigarette butts littering our local outdoor public spaces.

Yesterday I was riding my bicycle along the beautiful and extensive Eugene park pathways along the river. Unfortunately, I couldn't simply enjoy the sunny afternoon and fresh air when I was assailed by cigarette smoke from some walkers and another bike rider.

Why are smokers allowed to continue to contaminate our air and litter our sidewalks and public pathways with their stinky cigarette butts?

I sometimes suffer severe migraine headaches because of cigarette smoke. I doubt I am the only one unnecessarily sickened by inconsiderate smokers.

*Diane Van Orden
Springfield*

TAXING FALLS SHORT

Wow, it is pretty simple. In the 1950s through the 1970s, when people's incomes surpassed a certain point, that extra income was taxed upward from 90 percent. Contrast this to current times when the tax on really, really high income is 35 percent. It is pretty ironic that the '50s, '60s, and early '70s — referred to as an economic Golden Age — is when taxes on high earners was much higher than now. Do the political pundits know their history?

People from well-to-do families with their physical needs, emotional wellness, and education provided for have a better chance to do well in this world. Our tax system says otherwise. The assumption that we all have a fair shot regardless of circumstances is profoundly untrue.

I have been working in human services and it is getting to the point where we cannot do our jobs because the funding is not there. People are dying and people who are in dire need cannot get access to services because the money has been slowly receding over the past 30 years.

Thirty years? That sounds familiar. Oh wait, that is the time the Congressional Budget Office found that the income of the top 1 percent has gone up 275 percent. Coincidence? I think not. Any politician, lobbying firm or think tank that tries to pretend the troubles in our economy and society are outside of this imbalance are blowing smoke onto the issue. Please keep that in mind in terms of any activism and during the next two election cycles.

*Kerstin Britz
Cottage Grove*

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Horseshide Sallies Sun 12:30pm
Charley Snellings Sun 2pm
Sat 11am Two Doors Down
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