

GANDHI'S GRANDSON TO SPEAK AT LCC

Mahatma Gandhi may seem like a legendary figure of the past, but his grandson, Arun Gandhi, carries his legacy into the 21st century by promoting his message of nonviolence. On Feb. 21, Gandhi will speak at LCC and share his memories of his grandfather.

Arun Gandhi lived with his grandfather for a few years of his childhood, learning directly from him, according to his website, arungandhi.org. Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 when Arun Gandhi was only 13. However, the time spent with his grandfather was enough to inspire him to take a similar path as a peace activist.

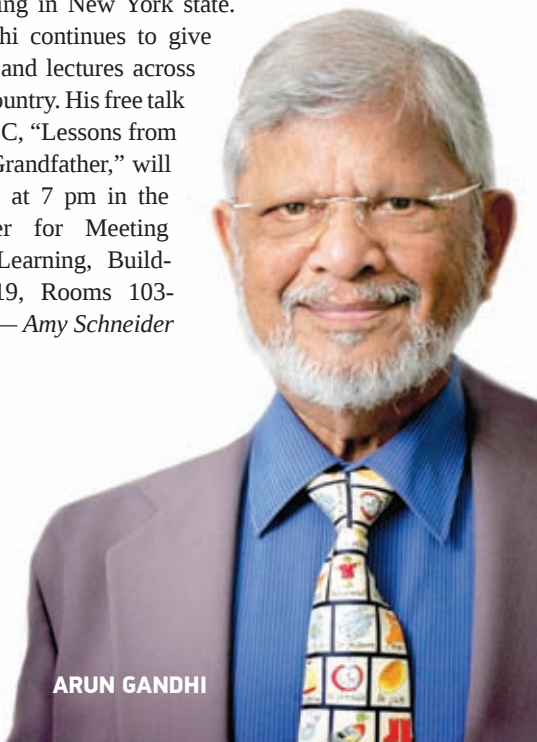
He worked as a journalist for *The Times of India*, a career that lasted 30 years. During that time, he and his late wife, Sunanda Gandhi, started programs in impoverished India, helping out over 300 economically deprived villages. In 1987, Gandhi moved to the U.S., and four years later, he founded the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, which seeks to “realize the vision of its historic namesake by helping individuals and communities create public awareness of nonviolence.”

In 2008, Gandhi also founded the Gandhi Worldwide Education Institute, an organization that allows children from the poorest areas of India to access basic education in a safe environment. The organization promotes the principle of Sarvodaya, an Indian term meaning “welfare of all.” The institute has already raised more than \$400,000 for its cause.

From 2007 to 2011, Gandhi wrote an online column on religion for *The Washington Post*, but he resigned after writing a controversial piece on violence in Israel.

According to Gandhi’s Facebook page, he is currently involved in anti-fracking campaigns and is pictured signing a petition to ban fracking in New York state.

Gandhi continues to give talks and lectures across the country. His free talk at LCC, “Lessons from My Grandfather,” will begin at 7 pm in the Center for Meeting and Learning, Building 19, Rooms 103-104. — *Amy Schneider*



ARUN GANDHI

NEWS

TUSSLE OVER TIMBER PANEL

A panel made up of cash-strapped county leaders, timber executives and environmentalists couldn’t reach consensus on dealing with logging on 2.6 million acres of western Oregon’s federal forestland, but it drew up some options to send to Congress anyway.

“The governor tried to spin the report that he sent to Congress as the findings of the panel,” says Steve Pedery of Oregon Wild, calling the proposal “a summary of the bad ideas that have been put out over the last several years.”

Oregon Wild was not invited to participate on the panel, Pedery says, because it is anti-clearcutting and also opposed a bill put forth by Congressman Peter DeFazio that proposed splitting the lands between logging and conservation, which Pedery says was the starting place for the timber panel.

‘Can you imagine what the Republicans would do with that precedent?’

- STEVE PEDERY

Gov. John Kitzhaber’s panel was tasked with crafting a proposal for Oregon’s congressional delegation that would “help Oregon counties improve financial stability, ensure adequate sources of timber that support local mills and jobs, and meet Oregon’s water and land conservation goals.”

Defenders of Wildlife, one of the groups with representation on the panel, put out a statement Feb. 7 explaining its dissent with Kitzhaber’s approach, saying the proposal does not protect endangered species or provide adequate environmental safeguards, and the proposal “sets a dangerous precedent in calling for the transfer or sale of public lands solely in response to local economic needs.”

“Can you imagine what the Republicans would do with that precedent?” Pedery asks of the plan to transfer public lands out of public hands.

The forestlands in question are what are known as the O&C lands. Conservationists have long sought to protect the lands for their wildlife, water, fish and forests, while the timber industry has gone after logging revenues. A portion of the funds from logging go to Oregon timber counties, and the money has been in decline.

Rather than telling counties to once again hope for a logging solution, especially at a time when many, like Lane,

are considering bond measures and tax levies, Pedery says the governor should be pushing legislation to clarify county taxing authority. “The governor does have some power to advance real solutions here,” he says.

Pedery points to HB 2555, recently introduced by Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) in the Oregon Legislature, which he says “appears aimed at discouraging exports of raw logs and generating revenue to fund county services.” He adds, “As I read the bill, it would reinstate Oregon’s timber severance tax, which the logging industry successfully lobbied to eliminate back in the 1990s.”

Holvey’s office did not respond to a request for comment on the bill before press time. — *Camilla Mortensen*

COMMISSION MAJORITY VOTES FOR JAIL TAX

The Lane County Board of Commissioners voted on Feb. 12 to send a proposed jail tax to the voters in May. The vote was 4-1, with progressive Commissioner Pete Sorenson as the lone “no” vote and conservative Commissioners Sid Leiken, Jay Bozievich, Pat Farr and Faye Stewart voting in favor.

Sorenson says he voted against the tax “because \$79 million is a lot of money, virtually all of it going to incarceration,” none to provide treatment of mental problems, treatment of alcoholism or other social services aimed at reducing crime, jail populations and the recidivism rate — the number of previously incarcerated people going back to jail.

Bozievich expressed his displeasure with his fellow commissioner’s “no” vote by posting a video of Groucho Marx singing “I’m Against It” on Facebook.

The proposed five-year property tax levy would ask voters to pay an additional tax of 55 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on a home. According to the proposed ballot language, a home in Lane County valued at \$154,809 will see the annual tax payment increase by \$85.

The tax would raise about \$79 million and increase property taxes by 3 percent. Counties across Oregon, including Lane, which have large swathes of federal forestland, have been sustained by federal timber payments. But despite warnings that those payments are drying up, counties have been slow to find other ways to pay for needed services.

Sorenson says he was also concerned because the amount of the tax — 55 cents per \$1,000 — was higher than the amount that was acceptable to voters in a county-funded survey by Strategic Research Institute. That poll said voters would support a 50-cent tax levy by a slim margin of 50.5 percent. The tax would bring in about \$13.9 million a year and allow the county to re-open 125 jail beds and double the number of beds for juvenile offenders to 32. — *Camilla Mortensen*

IT'S ABOUT TIME BY DAVID WAGNER

Why do mosses and lichens fall out of the trees in winter? Close to the end of every year, clumps of moss and lichen appear around almost every oak and maple tree in town. These are the branch species, different from terrestrial mosses and lichens. It is most prominent in parks where the lawn hasn’t been mowed since late fall. For years I attributed the lichen rain to wind storms, but that never struck me as the whole story. A comment in the Mount Pisgah Arboretum newsletter by its caretaker made a light go on in my head. Tom had noticed Steller’s jays tearing moss clumps out of oaks, foraging for critters that hide in the moss. In our neighborhood I figure it is mostly crows and scrub jays. I have also seen crows tearing up clumps of moss on a roadside, obviously insect hunting. I asked Tom about the lichens. Not birds but the fox squirrels pulled them off. We have plenty of squirrels in town, so I’ll blame the lichen fall on them.

Waiting for the days to get longer, and warmer, gave me the thought that ancient people from northern latitudes paid more attention to the sun and the solstices. Druids and Celts built monuments like Stonehenge to mark the sun’s movements. They celebrated the equinoxes and cross quarter moments. Only where the nights are clear and temperate did stargazers focus more on the moon’s position in the zodiac. No wonder astrology had its roots in Babylon.

David Wagner is a botanist who has lived in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches moss classes and leads nature walks. He may be reached at fernzenmosses@me.com



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