

## BEST-KEPT SECRET

Fourteen years ago, my wife and I struggled to find the best 4J high school for our oldest daughter. We lived just inside the east boundary of the Churchill district, but South Eugene was only a 15-minute walk away. We attended the International High School (IHS) information meeting, but concluded that our very intelligent daughter would not be happy in that program. She wanted to be on a high school newspaper staff, but South's newspaper was the product of a journalism class that required junior status. We were at a loss until we met Pat Latimer, then principal at North Eugene.

Latimer told us North had the best-kept secret in Eugene — North was producing more AP credits per student than any other high school in 4J. At the time, North was the only 4J high school that did not offer IHS, and the local hype claimed that all of the smart kids enrolled in IHS.

We were sold by Latimer's enthusiasm and enrolled our daughter. It was the best decision we ever made. Blessings followed until Latimer left and the new principal discarded North's secret when he opened the doors to IHS, then accepted the Gates Foundation offer to fund a Small Schools program. Fortunately, our youngest daughter graduated before the magic faded.

North's secret was a four-period schedule. The five-period schedule now being contested in 4J is not the same

as the schedule that brought magic and accomplishment to North during Latimer's time. The difference between the two is like black and white.

4J would be wise to model its high schools after the UO. A UO student has full-time status at 12 credit hours a term. Usually, one class earns four credits. Students taking 16 credits are working very hard. Taking 20 credits destroys their ability to learn anything.

Latimer no doubt pondered these things; the result was a beautiful simplicity. North had a four-period schedule in a quarter system. Students had the same three or four classes every day for nine weeks. Class time was available to do homework while the teacher was in the room. Classmates could easily help each other with homework and group projects could be worked on conveniently during class.

The magic was a normal full-year course was completed in half a year. Two years of math in one year was doable. At most, students had homework from just three or four classes. At most, a teacher taught just three different groups of students each term and had one class period per day for other purposes. Who loses in that arrangement? Nobody!

Both of our daughters thrived at North, and both of them earned full-ride academic merit scholarships to the UO as a result. My advice: Do what Pat Latimer did.

Steven A. Sylwester  
Eugene

## A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE

Forestry pesticides have long been a human health issue for rural Oregonians. What brought attention to this issue first was *Citizens Against Toxic Sprays v. Clarke* in 1983 in southern Oregon. This lawsuit was won by CATS and banned the use of pesticides on federal forests. Currently there is the ongoing Hwy. 36 exposure investigation. It is widely known that the use of pesticides on clearcuts is the cheapest way to kill invasive species (maple trees, blackberries, etc.), and the quickest way to poison neighbors. One helicopter can spray hundreds of acres of clearcut in a matter of hours, exposing many unsuspecting neighbors to cancerous concoctions of pesticides.

By adopting federal management regulations on private timber lands, the giant timber corporations would be forced to hire crews to manually remove the invasive species. More jobs means more taxable revenue and a stimulated local economy. These same logging companies (owning more than 5,000 acres) are exempt from paying most of the timber and harvest taxes that a small mom and pop family would pay if they were to cut their trees.

But the greatest thing that will come out of ending forestry pesticides is ending the 40-year human health emergency in western Oregon.

Peter DeFazio, in 1985, called upon

Congress to enact a moratorium on the use of pesticides in all of western Oregon, fearing a human health emergency. Now Congressman DeFazio wants to treat the O&C lands in Oregon like private lands, opening them up to clearcuts followed by repeated pesticide applications.

We will create many more jobs and taxes for local communities by ending forestry pesticides and forcing timber barons to pay the same timber harvest tax as small family woodlots.

Justin Workman  
Board member of STOP,  
Standing Together to Outlaw  
Pesticides

## THE CLOCK IS TICKING

The March 14 *Weekly* had an interesting and important article about the Farmers Market. I, along with many other downtowners, really want the farmers to stay downtown on a permanent basis. They bring a lot to our neighborhood and to the entire city. They are very positive contributors to the community.

There is, unfortunately, an important thing to note. The article states: "the how-to-expand debate has continued for more than a decade, with no timeline for a solution in sight." The first part is true. The second part really isn't.

I'm a member of the Expenditure Review Panel; we track the expenditures for the Downtown Urban Renewal District

## HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

## Pope Retires to Waldo Lake

BUT THE LEGISLATURE GRINDS ALONG

As Spring arrives, the 77th Hot Air Society is devolving into Salem's version of our national political gridlock. Republicans are showboating with an unacceptable PERS reform proposal and refusing to negotiate over new taxes. Meanwhile, Democrats are hiding the ball on specific PERS reforms, quite understandably, until the Ways and Means picture is clearer. Anyone who thinks Oregon can *adequately* fund education, *adequately* fund public safety, *adequately* fund programs for seniors, the disabled and the poor, without new revenue, simply by PERS reform, should go back to their little girl fantasy tea party. The negotiated settlement for this session has left PERS reform and budget bottom lines tightly intertwined. I'm not sure that is such a good idea, but maybe it's inevitable given the cards each caucus has to play. My preference would be to see a special joint committee dealing solely with PERS reform as opposed to a silly dog-and-pony show that will only lead to a lot of empty saber rattling. I can mix my metaphors if I want.

Luckily for us here in Lane County, with one notable exception, this is arguably one of the most talented delegations we've sent to Salem since I began following Oregon politics in the '70s. I've already talked about Floyd Prozanski and his work on public safety as chair of Senate Judiciary. Springfield's Lee Beyer, a seasoned veteran leader formerly in the House and now in the Senate, a close confidant of Senate President Peter Courtney, is chair of Business and Transportation. Chris Edwards, another rising star, continues his strong work on two Ways and Means subcommittees, chairing the Subcommittee on Natural Resources.

In the House we have Lane County's newest star, Majority Leader Val Hoyle. As mentioned before, in only her second election cycle, Val has assumed a higher leadership position than any Lane County Democrat since Grattan Kerans was speaker of the House and Ed Fadeley was Senate president in the late 1980s. Remember last column, when I asked you who chaired the all-important House Revenue Committee, the guy who could tax anything that moved? Phil Barnhart is the man; no revenue measure reaches the floor without his help. Everything will be up for negotiation: repeal tax loopholes, lottery retailers, sin taxes on cigarettes and beer and wine, sales tax, corporate and personal income tax.

Maybe even a small tax on those leashes the lobbyists use on legislators — couldn't hurt. Phil's been through the revenue battles each session; he is both passionate and pragmatic.

Paul Holvey, the man who brought you clean air through his field burning wars, is back again as chair of the House Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency Committee — otherwise know as the Oxymoron Committee. He'll have his hands full this cycle with genetically modified everything, from canola to fish. Nancy Nathanson continues her hard work in the Ways and Means process: She's co-vice chair and a member of three subcommittees, including being co-chair of the critical Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services. Nancy is well respected on both sides of the aisle for her diligence and fairness. And John Lively is a great addition. His longtime experience as a local government leader and economic development guru will serve us well.

The only disappointment is my own South Lane House member, Pope Hanna the 16th. He has abdicated his throne. Two sessions ago he was speaker of the house, last session he was co-speaker, with Arnie Roblan. This year he resigned altogether from Republican leadership in the House. He's taken off the white robe and the little red slippers, put on some slimy Mucks and hopped on a floatplane to his retirement home on Waldo Lake. Biology, schmiology. Got a problem with invasive species? Buy some bug spray. Bruce is just exercising the well-established civil right of he and his rich float plane buddies to lay waste to one of the cleanest lakes in the world! This from a guy who's been rumored to be looking at Peter DeFazio's seat or even the governorship? Really?

Finally, our local Hot Air Society recently left the safely circled wagon train at Eugene's Cornucopia and ventured out into the new microbrew pub land beyond Glenwood's scary frontier. We met at Springfield's newest watering hole, called Plinktown. It's the perfect existential fit for downtown Springtucky. You bring in your own firearms to plink at empty beer bottles — thus the name. And it's located right downtown conveniently next door to a few titty bars and the jail. Now that's culture!

Tony Corcoran is currently a state employee and his observations in this column are those of a private Oregon citizen.

