

A TALL TALE

In his June 20 letter to the editor, "Join the Fight," Jason Gonzales grossly exaggerated the impact of HB 2596. Rather than giving the timber industry "unfair" rules, the bill simply allows the prevailing plaintiff in a forest practices case to collect reasonable attorney fees and costs.

The allowance is neither unprecedented nor special. Under ORS 20.080, a prevailing plaintiff is already able to collect attorney fees in certain small tort claims cases.

What Gonzales further failed to include in his letter was mentioning the fate of HB 2595, the companion bill to HB 2596. That bill would have created the *felony* crime of interference with state forestland management. After passing the House with little opposition, it was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. As the chair of that committee, I determined HB 2595 to be more likely than not unconstitutional since it would have treated one type of political protester (forest protection advocates) different from another, e.g. abortion clinic protesters.

In nearly as many words as Gonzales used to rant about HB 2596 and "lunatics" behind it, he should have just provided it for your review (available on the Legislature's website at www.leg.state.or.us) instead of weaving a tall tale.

Floyd Prozanski
State senator, District 4

PROSECUTE BEE KILLERS

A few days ago, 50,000 bumblebees were poisoned by pesticides applied to blooming linden trees outside a Target store in Wilsonville, effectively wiping out hundreds of bumblebee colonies. The Oregon Department of Agriculture determined that Safari, a neonicotinoid insecticide containing dinotefuran, was responsible for the poisoning. Application of pesticides to blooming plants visited by bees is contrary to product labeling, and hence an illegal activity.

This incident exemplifies the problems that honeybees and native pollinators face in the age of neonicotinoid insecticides. In this case, the trees were sprayed on a Saturday and bees were still dying almost a week later. Neonicotinoids are designed to translocate into plant tissue and cause the plant itself to become toxic. Frequently these pesticides are applied as tree injections or applied in the soil so that the tree will take up the toxin from its roots. These methods also kill bees just as dead, but without the drama of them dropping out of the branches into a parking lot. Instead they fly back home and spread the toxin to others in the colony before succumbing to its effects, dying without notice.

When professional pesticide applicators don't obey label instructions, they should be prosecuted. The rest of us should not be able to buy these extraordinarily toxic compounds at retail outlets. Increasing popularity of neonicotinoid insecticides for home and ornamental use is making our urban areas

unfit habitat for honeybees and native pollinators, where once they had a refuge from the chemicals in agricultural areas.

Gary Rondeau
Oregon Sustainable Beekeepers
Eugene

TEACHING TO THE TEST

It seems like most politicians, administrators, school boards and the media agree that more testing equals more learning. Since competition is a big part of high-stakes testing, perhaps a local testing sweepstakes is in order.

Ready for the categories? First: Test Them Until They Drop. In one of Eugene's schools, some 8th graders had to take 15 standardized tests this year: the easyCBM reading and math (fall, winter and spring); ACT Explore; and Oregon OAKS (math, reading, science). Did your school beat 15 standardized tests?

Next category: Back to Basics. How many kids in your school were kept out of music, art, PE and electives in order to spend their "extra" time in test-preparation classes? Next bracket: Library Access. How many days was your school library closed to student readers because it was turned into the school's testing center? Next category: Big Bucks. Which school generated the most profit for the big testing corporations?

Then, the big time category: Pressure Cooker. Which school's administrators put the most pressure on their teachers for test scores? And, even better, which school's teachers put the most pressure

on their students for test scores? Next, a related category: Body Chemistry. Which school had the most kids showing physical symptoms of test-taking stress and anxiety?

The last category is, of course: Well-rounded Education. Which school lost the most days of creative, interesting, quality teaching in order to teach to the next test — and for the students to have to sit there and take it?

Roscoe Caron
Eugene

CIVIC LESSON: IT'S DEAD

In response to the "People Want Stadium" letter [6/13], I would disagree that a majority of people are in favor of saving Civic Stadium. Civic Stadium sits on prime ground and is currently an embarrassing eyesore. It was a great place to watch Ems games, etc., but now needs to be razed and replaced by something better suited for the majority of people in this community.

Unless School District 4J can get fair market value for this desirable 10-acre parcel from a group with aspirations of renovating it to its old glory, I think we need something usable there and not the rotting weed pit that sits there now.

Get over it; Civic is dead.

John Carlson
Eugene

MOSTLY HEAT & SERVE

We want to respond to Kerry Delf's statement, "We do offer healthy, fresh

VIEWPOINT BY GARY CRUM

A Starting Point

LET'S DO SOMETHING ABOUT GUN CONTROL

The politics of gun control today clearly indicate that at the federal or state level in Oregon, legislation to either enact new limitations or expand current regulations regarding firearm ownership is highly unlikely.

Accepting this, rather than continue this particular debate, may I offer a proposal which could enhance gun safety while presenting absolutely no threat, real or perceived, to anyone's Second Amendment rights?

I suggest, either as a state function or created as a nonprofit organization, the formation of an "Oregon Voluntary Firearms Registry." The concept is simple: Oregon gun owners may register their firearms with the registry, identifying make, model and serial number. The owner would be identified by name and Oregon drivers license number and would furnish contact information (a phone number or email address). This information would be held in a confidential, protected database.

Additionally, all police agencies within the state may participate in the registry by listing weapons reported as stolen, along with dates and agency contact. The serial number of all weapons reported as stolen would be available to police agencies, firearms dealers and any potential purchasers.



The public could see the registry online but obtain *only* three bits of information by entering a gun's serial number: whether it's registered, the date of registration and whether it's been "red flagged" as stolen. If a weapon is flagged, the contact information for the reporting agency would be presented.

Advantages of the registry:

- A lawful owner with a registered gun would have a third-party statement attesting to ownership. This would facilitate the lawful sale of a weapon by an owner.

- A potential buyer would have, provided by the seller, that certification of registry attesting to the seller's lawful ownership. Additionally, if offered a weapon flagged as stolen, a buyer would know to avoid the purchase.

- A police agency confiscating or checking a gun would have immediate access to the "red-flag" information. If checking a weapon during a stop or investigation, the flag would help the officer determine appropriate action. When a weapon is confiscated at a crime scene, the agency could quickly determine the weapon's status. This would facilitate the investigation of both the crime leading to the confiscation and the investigation of the initial theft of the gun. Additionally,

the registry would facilitate the return of stolen weapons to lawful owners. Thousands of stolen guns are never returned to their lawful owners.

Public safety impact of the registry:

- There are thousands of burglaries each year in Oregon and one of the main targets of burglars is firearms. A significant black market exists for stolen guns. Without a registry, buyers may inadvertently purchase stolen weapons. The registry would discourage the sale of such weapons and, thereby, discourage burglaries targeting guns.

- The registry would help remove such weapons from our streets by discouraging their possession by individuals who might otherwise be willing to possess such weapons. Additionally, it would discourage efforts by thieves or "fences" to reintroduce stolen weapons into the legitimate marketplace.

The registry is a simple idea. It would be rather easy to develop and implement with today's technology. It benefits legitimate gun owners. It facilitates the legitimate trade of guns by lawful sellers and buyers. It facilitates the investigation of gun thefts and prosecution of gun thieves. It facilitates the recovery by lawful owners of stolen guns. It discourages the black market trade in stolen weapons and those thefts supporting that black market. It benefits the general public by discouraging burglaries and thefts and by removing guns from the hands of criminals.

It doesn't address many of the large issues regarding gun safety; however, by benefiting all of us (including gun owners and dealers) and presenting no threat to those concerned with Second Amendment issues, it should be achievable. It's no panacea, but I think it would certainly help. ■

Gary Crum of Junction City is a retired teacher and counselor.