

WHAT THE FRACK?

“Does that burger taste funny to you?” Recently I learned that fracking chemicals might be in the meat and produce being distributed to a grocery store near me and near you.

“On a North Dakota farm, five cows died after fracking began in 32 wells within three miles from the farm,” according to *Food and Water Watch*. In New Mexico, petroleum residues were found in 54 out of 56 animals tested. Some cows lost their tails!

Fracking occurs now in almost every state and is quickly expanding into California’s Central Valley, home to farms producing much of our nation’s fruits and vegetables. We’ve all seen clips of tap water catching fire. I wonder how that water affects growing vegetables?

But the government’s protecting us right? Wrong! Currently the FDA doesn’t check our food system for fracking contaminants like methane, polymers, phthalates and glycols. The Bush-Cheney administration exempted the fracking industry from the Clean Water Act. Does that make sense to you? We can’t deny the increases in asthma, obesity, cancer and heart disease among our friends and family. Think there’s a relationship? What we know for sure is that “corporate people” are allowed to poison actual

people for their profits. Why? Who gets to decide what’s in our air and water? We the people? Or the corporations?

Let’s call on the FDA to test for fracking contaminants. And what the frack? Let’s ban fracking! And tar sands oil, pipelines and coal mining too. It’s too late to stop both poles and glaciers from melting, but perhaps we can stave off some other disasters?

Come to the first 2014 local 350 Chapter Meet-Up for some timely community organizing from 7 to 9 pm Thursday, Jan. 23, at First United Methodist Church, 13th and Olive. Bring your best thinking. We’re ready to do something!

Deb McGee
Peaceful Valley
Subsistence Farmer

LISTEN TO TEACHERS

EW should be commended for the Education issue Jan. 9. It was great to hear Peter Bauer, a Bethel teacher, share his personal experiences as a student and a teacher in underfunded Oregon schools. It was also inspiring to hear about Jeff Hess and Peter Hoffmeister’s class that integrates outdoor skills with language arts despite a top-down, unpopular decision to change high school schedules. And Amy Schneider’s piece on Common Core was excellent in that it included a parent’s voice

as well as the voice of the president of the teacher’s union. These are voices from people who are intimately involved in our schools under difficult circumstances.

It’s time for teachers to be heard. It’s also time for students and parents to be listened to. For too long, politicians, corporate big shots and “educational reformers” have shaped the debate around public education and have created policies without input of the educators, students and parents. Many of these policies have been counterproductive and have not improved the quality of education for our students.

EW has stepped up and offered to provide space on a regular basis for educator voices to be heard. Students and concerned parents should also take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to the issues that affect them. “Reclaiming Public Education” should be a regular feature of this publication. It will complement the series of public forums on education, by the same name, sponsored by the Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE).

Pete Mandrapa
Eugene

CHECK YOUR FACTS

I found interest in a Dec. 5 article by Camilla Mortensen discussing the merits of Sen. Ron Wyden’s forest bill. The article

mostly focused on one particular section of the forest bill that may authorize the sale or exchange of suitable lands between the BLM and private or state entities, but only if the (Interior) secretary determined it was in the public interest to do so. There was a clear insinuation this was just another attempt by industry to acquire access to old-growth forests.

Andy Stahl was quoted [in the article] as saying that “timber interests such as Seneca whose lands border the O&C forests would again stand to benefit from an O&C land exchange and would ‘get old growth under the guise of consolidating lands.’” For the record, Seneca does not consume old-growth timber in any of its manufacturing facilities, and to imply such is just a continuation of the “fear-based” messaging by environmental organizations as they know they can’t stand behind the truth.

In the future, please check your facts.

Todd A. Payne
General Manager
Seneca Sawmill Company

MORAL CONCERN

In regards to Robert England’s letter Jan. 9 [“Moral Obligation,” concerning Civic Stadium], I say “Hear, hear!”

Beverley Ann Mowery
Eugene

VIEWPOINT BY JIM WATSON

Intense Opposition Coming

FRED MEYER UNDERESTIMATES EUGENE

The fate of Civic Stadium is unlikely to be decided in 2014. Yes, the members of the 4J School Board are committed to “disposing” of the structure as soon as they possibly can — they consider it a distraction from their mission. But, whether they choose to accept the offer of Kroger (Fred Meyer), the Y or the city of Eugene, it will almost certainly be a year or more before we know how the site will be used. The reasons differ for each of the bidders.

Kroger — It’s hard to imagine why the 4J Board would even consider the Fred Meyer offer. It doesn’t take a crystal ball to see that 4J will continue to own the stadium for years while developer Peter Powell tries to wear down city planners to change zoning and get permits approved. Certainly the board cannot consider accepting what Kroger considers a “plan.” Ask, for example, what will be on the site with the big box and Powell just says they are listening to the community — a dubious assertion given the overwhelming percentage of the community that says, “No Fred Meyer!”

Powell’s strategy on other projects has been to wait out opposition. But he proved how he underestimates Eugene’s opposition to demolishing the stadium for a Fred Meyer when he recently told *The Register-Guard* “We are not expecting appeals” from project opponents. He ought to be aware that the opposition will be intense and the appeals many, leaving the Eugene School District with ownership of the structure for all the years Powell is prepared to wait. Does 4J really want to continue being blamed for letting Civic Stadium deteriorate and eventually succumb to “demolition by 4J’s neglect”?

The Y — While the YMCA does an excellent job of teaching us how to swim and stay in shape, I wouldn’t want to count on it to teach us logic. The Y uses two premises that we can all agree on to reach a head-scratching conclusion:

A) The Y is a valuable community asset and B) the Y needs a new building, therefore Civic Stadium must be demolished.

Huh? Not only are there multiple locations for a new Y, there is even room for it on the site *with* a renovated stadium. The Y’s excuse for resisting co-location — parking — is a problem with solutions, not an end-of-story roadblock. It is, in fact, a problem it will face anyway with the “dance partner” of the moment, yet another housing development. The Y’s plan for “honoring” the history of Civic Stadium is, frankly, insulting, and, with a shaky financing plan dependent on housing, the site would, again, likely remain the responsibility of 4J well into the future.

The city — If Eugene’s bid is accepted, 4J will get its revenue right away and no longer have the burden of caring for Civic. What happens to the historic structure then will be up to the city and any partners it brings on board. These partners could include Friends of Civic Stadium (FoCS) and other supporters of refurbishing and repurposing Civic for soccer, other field sports and events. Ultimately Civic must become a self-sustaining operation, spruced up, back in use and treasured by the community. We are confident that will happen if Civic is given the chance. It is a low-risk, high-reward proposition. This is a one-of-a-kind building that once gone is gone forever.

There is nothing easy about getting the city’s bid considered since the Eugene City Council has only given supporters 60 days to raise a \$5.5 million maintenance and rehabilitation guarantee. It is a heavy lift that will require the generosity and community spirit of some deep-pocketed individuals, but we are hopeful. And, if it takes longer than 60 days, we think the council will see the promise of Civic to the community and be flexible in the timeline, and include in the definition of “guarantee” long-term commitments and offers of in-kind materials and labor.

I recently saw a documentary about how Seattle benefited from the business leaders who made the vision of the 1962 World’s Fair a reality. Three points in the film are worth considering: 1) “Public money made it possible; private money made it spectacular,” 2) lasting positive effects of the fair resulted when Seattle “consciously and intentionally created a space for all people; a place that creates community,” and 3) “Seattle rose above petty parochial concerns to create a lasting legacy.”

Civic supporters are eager to accept the challenge of helping the city prove that the stadium will be the kind of legacy the 1962 fair gave Seattle and to make Civic even more of a community asset than it used to be: an affordable, family-friendly, diverse gathering place open to all. We ask 4J and the city: Do we really want to throw away such an opportunity? Giving Civic Stadium a chance is the right — and smart — thing to do.

Jim Watson is secretary of the Friends of Civic Stadium Board of Directors.