

Lastly, ensuring that the *Lane County Strategic Plan: Building a Prosperous Community's* "pay no less than 150 percent of the median wage" promise is kept is important.

Jose Ortal
Blue River

SYSTEMIC MALFEASANCE

The emperor actually has no clothes. The Pentagon press secretary said so on Feb. 5 when he revealed that Defense Secretary Hagel fears the military has a systematic problem with malfeasance, which is long standing and getting worse.

Recent examples include: Navy nuclear trainers and Air Force nuclear launch members accused of cheating on competence tests and extensive fraud in the Army National Guard when recruiters and civilians got bonuses for recommending recruits who had already signed up. The military itself estimates that an average of 71 rapes and sexual assaults occur each day.

How is the military planning to fix this? By training. Vows by leadership to stop sexual assault by training for years have not worked.

The military promotes an image to the public — especially to prospective youth

recruits — of service to country, glory, grit and integrity. That image is in stark contrast to recent revelations. Because the military spends so much money on managing their public image and their recruiting messages, too many high school students who dream of giving back to the country see the military as the only such avenue.

We all know military veterans who served with integrity, though many were so changed by life in the military that they returned to civilian life a changed person. The rot lies in leadership failures, Congress throwing money at the military, congressional failure to require effective oversight and too much public reverence for the military. Time to see that the emperor has no clothes.

Carol Van Houten
Coordinator, Truth In Recruiting
Community Alliance of Lane County

RUBBERS ALL AROUND

It's high time people who don't believe in contraception get out of the way of men and women's reproductive rights.

The miracle of birth can become a problem for society, for the parents and, not least, for the children born. It's a little hard talking young people into abstinence. Having been a teenager myself, I believe

that for healthy and well-adjusted youth, this idea is all but impossible.

I think the solution is to subsidize condoms and contraceptive pills and thorough education on how to use them safely. This includes pregnancy and STDs.

I would rather pay for the whole world (not just the U.S.) to have free, unobstructed access to these preventative gifts than to have babies born into immature families, maybe addicted to hard drugs or living a life of misery when people aren't ready.

If the girl or her boyfriend are too young mentally or are physically not ready — perhaps they are still in school — or if their financial situation is not secure, I believe the ultimate measure, abortion, should be considered and remain the couple's best choice.

David Ivan Piccioni
Eugene

EXIT STRATEGY

In Craig Childs' *Apocalyptic Planet* he lays out two specific likely scenarios for the future of the biosphere: A major ice age or a desert-ruled planet. In conclusion, Childs makes it clear that there is hope — though not necessarily for the continuation of the human species — in the not-too-distant future. He states that the best we can do as individuals and as a species is to attempt

to save what we can of current Holocene-epoch ecosystems before we exit.

With that ideal, ecosystem defenders across this bioregion are attempting to stop an all-out attack being launched upon Oregon's last ancient forests on public lands by the Democratic Party. It seems foregone that concerned Oregonians must battle with Sens. Wyden and Merkley, Reps. DeFazio and Schrader, Gov. Kitzhaber and any other Democrats or Republicans who are supporting this attack on ancient ecosystems.

Wyden has two logging bills in the U.S. Senate, one targeting about 10 million acres of Eastern Oregon's National Forests and the other targeting BLM O&C lands. Kitzhaber has launched two executive initiatives, one to privatize the Elliott State Forest and another to "modernize" environmental laws applied on National Forest lands. Both seek to prop up "too big to fail" mega-tree-fiber operations and an untaxed raw-log fiber-export industry. A few of the wealthiest families in Oregon will benefit greatly, while all Oregonians will inherit silt-laden rivers and sterile, dying tree farms if the Democratic Party succeeds in their reckless endeavors.

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

VIEWPOINT BY MARK ROBINOWITZ

Grading on a Curve

ENVIRO 'CHAMPS' IGNORING THE BIGGEST ISSUES

On Nov. 27, *EW's* Slant profiled the "Environmental Scorecard" of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. *EW* drew attention to "the relatively high scores racked up by state reps and senators in our part of the valley." Unfortunately, OLCV was grading on a curve to make Democrats in Salem look better than they are.

One of the most important votes of the 2013 session, not included in OLCV's scorecard, was to appropriate \$450 million toward the Columbia River Crossing (CRC), a \$3 billion to \$4 billion dollar boondoggle that would widen I-5 to 16 lanes north of the bridge. The Oregon House voted 45-11 in favor and the Senate voted 18-11 in favor. Only two Democrats in the House and one in the Senate voted "no."

EW highlighted Rep. John Lively's 94 percent OLCV rating, but did not mention his vote for the CRC nor his previous promotion of bigger roads while working for ODOT.

OLCV's website cites 10 state reps as environmental champions, but only one of those 10 voted against the CRC. Designating highway expansion supporters as "environmental leaders" suggests political partisanship has become more important than environmental protection.

The only legislator representing Lane County who was against CRC was Rep. Bruce Hanna of Roseburg, a Republican. Some Republicans expressed dislike of the token transit component. Republicans were freer than Democrats to oppose Gov. Kitzhaber's campaign for CRC.

CRC is now bogged down in financial chaos since Washington state legislators did not appropriate anything for it. However, the project is legally approved and an Obama administration priority.

In November 2008, Gov. Kulongoski's Transportation Vision Committee released a report that called for \$18 billion in new and expanded state highways, including over \$1 billion in Eugene and Springfield. 1000 Friends of Oregon, Oregon Environmental Council and Environment Oregon were part of this committee, but they were window dressing to show that all points of view were supposedly considered. If these groups had a minority report to dissent from the highway promotion, they kept it very quiet.

In 2013, ODOT started building two new highways: the Newberg Dundee Bypass (through farmland) and the Sunrise Freeway in Clackamas County. Both projects only have part of their funding, so ODOT is building segments and hoping for the rest of the money in the future. I attended public hearings for both of these bypasses and did not see any environmental groups at either event.

Also in 2013, ODOT approved a new freeway in Medford, the Route 62 bypass. I didn't attend the hearing. The only environmental group that sent comments was Rogue Valley Audubon Society, which complained construction would harm birds.

Federal aid highways such as CRC have to plan for traffic two decades in the future, not current congestion. Our transportation plans ignore the fact that traffic levels peaked in Oregon in 2003 and Oregon's main fuel source, the Alaska Pipeline, peaked in 1988 and has dropped three quarters since then. It's anyone's guess how much energy will be available for traffic in the 2030s, but it will be much less than the current flow, especially if the Alaska Pipeline closes due to "low flow." Current levels are just above the minimum threshold needed for the pipeline to operate in the Arctic winter.

Here in Eugene from 1999 through 2007, I was the "road scholar" for a proposed lawsuit that prevented the West Eugene Parkway, a bypass of West 11th through the West Eugene Wetlands. WETLANDS vs. Federal Highway Administration was not filed because the feds withdrew the project and selected "no build." Details are at SustainEugene.org.

The lawsuit focused on legal precedents, including Section 4(f), which prohibits federal aid highways through parks. But it also would have tried to have set a new precedent combining the facts of peak oil and peak traffic as reasons the 20-year planning rule no longer justifies highway expansions.

Since then, I have looked for other freeway fights around the country that could use this legal strategy to create a precedent. A state-by-state list of plans for \$1 trillion of highway expansions across the country is at PeakTraffic.org.

The most energetic environmental efforts against new roads are often in places where liberal Democrats are surrounded by conservative Republicans (Bloomington, Ind., and Louisville, Ky., are examples). The professional environmentalists in these places know the state government is not their ally (nor their funder).

While trains and transit could play important roles for post-peak transportation, recognizing we're passing the limits to growth and relocalizing food production are probably the most important responses to peaked traffic and peaked energy.

Mark Robinowitz of Eugene is author of "Peak Traffic and Transportation Triage: a Legal Strategy to Cancel Trillion Dollar Highway Plans and Prepare for Post Peak Travel," at PeakTraffic.org.