

HUMOR AS THE ENEMY

The *Charlie Hebdo* shooting is another example of lunatics with guns and bombs who think that killing or maiming people will solve the world's problems. The perpetrators in this case are Islamic fundamentalists in Europe, but we see this same kind of violence all over the world from both state and non-state actors. In the U.S., we've had people like Timothy McVeigh and the Tsarnaev brothers or, arguably, George W. Bush when he launched the war in Iraq.

The *Charlie Hebdo* shooting is also an example of attempts by both governments and insurgents to silence journalism and cartoonists. In Pakistan, India, Russia, Mexico, Egypt and many other countries, being a journalist or a cartoonist is a dangerous job. Each year, the Cartoonist Rights Network gives out courage awards highlighting some of the harassment and violence faced by cartoonists around the world. There's Akram Rasian, a Syrian cartoonist who hasn't been heard of since he was arrested in 2012 by the Assad regime, or his colleague Ali Ferzat, who was severely beaten and had both his hands broken for drawing cartoons critical of Assad. There's Mexican cartoonist Mario Robles Patiño, who was beaten up for drawing cartoons critical of the governor of Oaxaca. There are also

cartoonists from Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Turkey, Malaysia, Iran and India who've faced arrest, intimidation and violence. See wkly.ws/1w8.

People don't want to be criticized and laughed at, but accepting criticism and laughter are important for our growth as individuals and our growth and development as a society. It's important that we don't let violent bullies stop the presses or stop the laughter.

Andy Singer
"No Exit" cartoonist
Saint Paul, Minnesota

PRIORITIES FOR EPUD

As a longstanding member of the Emerald People's Utility District Board, it is with deep concern and caring that I want to apologize for anything that I may have said or done that might have contributed to the recent upheaval at EPUD in numerous articles printed by the local newspapers. I sincerely believe that much of the information was overstated, taken out of context and greatly misinterpreted.

I have devoted a great portion of my life, more than 20 years, to serve and promote the betterment of the utility. It is second nature to me to promote good policy for you, our customers. That is why I serve in official capacities at the national and regional levels: to help guard and protect all of us against those who would diminish

our rights to all of the benefits afforded us through public power.

Our staff is the best. They have always had my support. I will continue to make sure they have the appropriate resources to provide the best service possible. With the recent election and a new board member, I see possibilities to once again show prominent leadership among public utilities by continuing to provide innovative services and reasonable power costs.

Customers are indeed my first priority and concern. I cherish your support now as I always have through the years. Please be assured that I will keep your best interest at heart and do what's best for you, the customer, as we go into the future.

Katherine Schacht
Eugene

TAKING THE LEAD

Jan. 19 brings us Martin Luther King Jr. day, followed by the five-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision Jan. 21. MLK died for speaking the truth about justice and American power — a truth buried by the Roberts Court, which seems determined to sell out what's left of American ideals to a new corporate oligarchy.

As the stock market hits one record high after another and the U.S. labor force participation rate falls to a 38-year low,

wealth is continually funneled to a smaller and smaller elite class. Over 90 percent of all economic gains since the bankster-fueled economic collapse of 2008 have gone to the richest 1 percent of Americans, with 60 percent of those gains going to the top .01 percent super rich, a rate which in Lane County would largely benefit 10 families at the expense of 99,000 — the 99 percent. MLK's vision is sorely missed, and no answers are forthcoming from Washington, D.C.

But state legislatures are rising to the occasion. Three states — Vermont, California and Illinois — have passed legislation demanding Congress convene a constitutional convention to get big corporate money out of our political process. Two bills presently in Oregon's 2015 Legislature would do the same.

To learn how you can help Oregon become the fourth state to call for an Article V constitutional convention, join We the People-Eugene at 3:30 pm Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 13th and Chambers for a forum called "Reclaiming the Dream of Democracy: Five Years of Citizens United Is Enough," starting off with a talk by Pastor Dan Bryant called "Has the Bend Toward Justice Been Broken?"

Fergus Mclean
Dexter

VIEWPOINT BY JUSTIN WORKMAN

Pesticides and Birthweight

A RESPONSE TO THE HWY. 36 EXPOSURE INVESTIGATION

How would you like to live in the area of Oregon that has the smallest babies born in the entire state?

According to Oregon Office of Rural Health and OHSU, if you live along scenic Hwy. 36 from Junction City all the way to Swisshome, your newborn will be the smallest in the state. In fact, this Triangle Lake area far exceeds the state average. The same study states that low birthweight children are significantly more likely to have mental retardation, cerebral palsy, visual and hearing defects, lung disease and learning disabilities.

There is no coincidence that the region with the lowest birthweight is also the same geographical area as the current ongoing Hwy. 36 exposure investigation — the same place where two pesticides were found in 100 percent of the people tested before forestry sprays stopped.

Triangle Lake is an area that is 95 percent industrial timberland and is within the most heavily logged ecosystem in the world. And with all those clearcuts come the pesticides. Three or four times in the first two years after cutting, concoctions of cancerous pesticides are applied by helicopter. These unchecked tank-mixes are usually 10 times stronger than what is applied to our agricultural food crops, making Triangle Lake the most heavily sprayed area of Oregon.

This is the place where the herbicide imazapyr was found in the school well after a neighboring clearcut was sprayed. The safest means of pesticide application was used (hack and squirt), yet the chemical still

reached the children's water supply.

My family moved to this part of Oregon in 2005. Since then, I have witnessed each of my family members, including myself, suffer major health issues. My wife had pus-filled lumps, I had bloody stools and severe achy joints, and my children had coughing and vomiting for seven months. Three times my family's urine was tested for atrazine and 2,4-D. All three times we had the chemicals in us. In fact my family and I had levels of pesticides in us equal to that of an average pesticide applicator from the Midwest.

The Hwy. 36 investigation also found fluridone, an aquatic weed killer, in my neighbor's well water. Both men that lived on that property just died this year. Ed died of Parkinson's disease and cancer, while Carl died of bladder cancer.

Lots of data link health problems such as low birthweight and cancers to pesticide exposures. Atrazine in particular is known to decrease birthweight. Combinations of pesticides like the ones found in the residents of Triangle Lake almost always have an additive or synergistic effect when mixed: The health risks of both chemicals are either added or multiplied together giving you a much more lethal mixture.

The Hwy. 36 investigation failed to calculate this into the health-risk assessment for the residents tested. It also failed to calculate in the so-called inert ingredients of the pesticide formulas. All chemicals like atrazine are wrapped with other chemicals to make the formula work. Some of those "inert" ingredients

are more lethal than the active chemical they are wrapped around.

Another limiting factor to the human health investigation is that only two pesticides were able to be tested for in urine at time of sampling. That means, out of 16 possible pesticides used on clearcuts, only two could be tested for. Yet we are still considered to be safe from adverse health effects.

My youngest child was 4 years and 11 months old when the state investigation found pesticides in him. Since there was only data on 5-year-olds, he and another child were left out of the official stats, thus keeping the number of residents that tested positive for pesticides at 94 percent. Had their statistics been calculated in, we would have fallen into the statistically significant category (95 percentile) and more funding and testing would have occurred.

A solution is simple. Use the same forestry laws that govern our federal forests on the private industrialized timberlands. That is, any company that owns over 5,000 acres cannot use pesticides on their industrialized forests. They are the ones using helicopters to spray their poisons by air. The loggers who actually live around here, the "mom and pop" tree farms, can do business as usual. In this way, jobs will be created, the small time loggers will not be impacted, and the health of the Hwy. 36 residents will improve, especially the unborn ones.

Justin Workman, a board member of Standing Together to Outlaw Pesticides (STOP), lives in Triangle Lake on an organic farm with his wife and two children where they raise chickens and milking goats.