

there, I saw, and was directly involved with, the very worst and the very best of our society, all in the same moment of time. The “guards” are actually deputy sheriffs, the most honest, dedicated, trustworthy and upright folks I have ever served with. The staff, including maintenance, cooks, laundry, supply, control operator and office folks, underwent the most thorough of background checks, references, testing, etc., of any place I have been in my 50-year work career. And, I once went through an FBI check for a secret clearance that was easier.

I was there before the medical services were contracted out to this Corizon company, I have to say, and cannot comment on any of that. I do know that during my time there, the mental health staff (one or two, depending on budget) was kept busy trying to help the inmates who really needed the help. There were problem inmates who needed extra attention, whether counseling, medical help, time alone in a cell to think, a home or whatever our society in general needs. The staff had to do a lot of babysitting, too. The staff was trained to be neutral in their emotions, understanding of the inmates' plight, but always in charge of the situation. It is a dangerous place, let me tell you.

When I was there, there was a part of the jail that had been dedicated to provide a mental health center to get those folks off the street. They were locked up, all right, but where they could get the help they needed, out of the general population areas. Isn't this what the article is mainly about? This section of the jail, called then The Sherman Center, had been closed when I started, due to budget cuts, of course. It was used for inmate schooling when I was there. We had volunteer teachers come in to help.

Thanks for this article. As for me, I believe this problem is one of the worst and most enduring problems we have. Some people need to be in jail, some for a long time, due to what they have done. But, the ones sick and falling through the holes in the system need more help. The public needs to know exactly what is going on, as they are the ones who have control over the funding, up to a point. The politicians control the rest, some good ones, some not-so-good ones. Seems like things are only getting worse, to me, as the street people keep growing in number.

Rutup Cam
Eugene

MINIMAL TESTING

The original development of the Common Core standards in language and in math were done with almost no input from either teachers or the professional organizations in the field, but with lots of input from pro-testing organizations. Parents were entirely missing, and K-12 educators were mostly brought in after the fact to tweak and endorse the standards and lend legitimacy to the results. Bringing teachers and educators on board from the start could have provided us with a program that would serve the needs of students and communities rather than companies profiting from this whole misadventure.

No Child Left Behind proved that the

THIS MODERN WORLD



test and punish approach to education reform doesn't work, and we don't need a new, tougher version of it. Instead of targeting the inequalities of race, class and educational opportunity reflected in the test scores, the Common Core project threatens to reproduce the narrative of public school failure that has led to a decade of bad policy in the name of reform. Common Core is doubling down on much of what is wrong in our approach to education.

Education should involve minimal testing. We should be emphasizing the curiosity that encourages independent learning and the creativity that leads to real progress.

As a preschool teacher and co-owner of an in-home preschool, I urge parents and teachers to support opting out of Common Core testing. Our children deserve better.

Christopher Michaels
Eugene

END RECKLESS OIL

On July 6, 2013, a train composed of tank cars filled with shale oil sat on the railroad tracks above the town of Lac Megantic, Quebec. The train's brakes were not secure, the crew was absent, the train began to move and it rolled into Lac Megantic at a high speed and derailed. Many of the tank cars exploded and burned. Forty-two persons died, and five others were presumed dead. The explosions and fire destroyed buildings in an area more than a mile in diameter.

The shale oil in the tank cars originated in the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota; the shale oil was extracted using hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.”

The persistence and ferocity of the explosions and fires that attended the derailment are striking and horrifying. One might imagine that steps would have been taken to prevent any recurrence of the explosions and fires.

But nothing has changed.

On six other occasions since the Lac Megantic disaster, Bakken oil trains derailed with explosions and fires.

But, this year, in just 21 days (Feb. 14 –

March 7) four more oil trains derailed, and 97 tank cars exploded and burned while carrying Bakken crude.

Given the number, ferocity of the fires and explosions, it is only by extraordinary good fortune that there have been no deaths and only minor injuries since the disaster of Lac Megantic.

Crude oil continues to be shipped via rail; such rail shipments of Bakken oil may be passing through your town right now.

We do not yet know why Bakken crude is so explosive. A guess: In the process of fracking, numerous agents are added to the fracking fluids, and knowing what those agents are may explain why the Bakken oil is so volatile. On the other hand, it may be factors inherent in Bakken crude. We think the drillers know but won't tell us, claiming “trade secrets.”

But 47 deaths and at least 11 accidents — derailments, explosions and fires — are obvious, urgent reasons why Bakken crude shipments must cease until action is taken to make all oil shipments safe beyond question.

Reckless shipments must end — citizens' lives are at stake. Lac Megantic is the evidence.

Tom Giesen
Eugene

VIETNAM MEMORIES

Where were you between the mid-60s and the mid-70s, if you were already on the planet by then? If you were in Lane County, and if you were actively opposing the war on Vietnam during those years, Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC) wants to hear from you at vietnampeaceCALC@gmail.com. As various Vietnam-related anniversaries approach, including the 40th anniversary of the April 30 end of the war, CALC — which began as Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam — is planning a series of activities. Stay tuned!

Marion Malcolm
Eugene

VACCINE SCHEDULE

EW, babies are not too young to be vaccinated, according to the CDC. Hepatitis B is administered at birth. In 1996, there were 1,080 reports of adverse reactions among 0-1 year olds from the vaccine, including 47 deaths. If only 10 percent of the true deaths and injuries are reported — a conservative estimate — this means there were actually over 10,800 adverse reactions and 470 deaths from the vaccine. Yet in that same year, there were only 54 cases of the disease reported in the 0-1 year group. This frightful equation reveals that for every baby who gets hepatitis B, the vaccine kills nine and injures 200. Do we trust the CDC? Why would we, when its former director, Julie Gerberding, went on to become director of Merck Pharmaceutical's international vaccine division, a \$5 billion enterprise? (This from Wikipedia, do you trust that?) Fourteen of the 20 vaccines on CDC's schedule are Merck's. We remember the horrors of polio and smallpox, too. Vaccines had nothing to do with their decline, and in fact contributed to new outbreaks. This is documented fact, and while it can be found on the internet, it comes there from reputable peer-reviewed science journals.

Stay healthy: Depart from CDC schedule.

Gregg Marchese
Ashland

INADEQUATE SHELTER

First Avenue Animal Shelter was built over 37 years ago when Eugene and Springfield were about half the size they are now. I have been a volunteer dog walker at First Avenue Shelter for over two years and have some idea of the deficiencies and problems there.

The poor condition of the building and small size of both the cattery and the kennel adds stress to the animals and makes the job of the staff and volunteers even more difficult. The only reason it is successful finding homes for so many dogs and cats is because of the heroic efforts of the staff and volunteers. Everything about the building works against them.

The size of the kennel and cattery are inadequate and there is no suitable place for potential adopters to meet a dog in a quiet and clean setting. The only place to meet a dog is one of the fenced yards that are often muddy, noisy and with outside distractions.

Please go and visit the LCAS public shelter at 1st Ave. and S. Bertelsen and help promote a new shelter to replace this overcrowded and inadequate structure.

Brodie Washburn
Eugene

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words and include your address and phone number for our files. Email to letters@eugeneweekly.com, fax to 484-4044 or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.