

Miserables at Cottage Theatre.

Her statement, “Kory Weimer, as young, heartfelt revolutionary Marius, was insecure in several vocal passages. Mandy Rose Nichols, playing Marius’ ardent and unrequited admirer Eponine, did a similarly passable job; of the leads, these two were the shakiest ... unable to keep their faces from betraying their level of effort.”

Did Zacharias talk to the actors after the performance? No, she did not. If she had, she would have discovered that both Weimer and Rose were suffering from laryngitis. Yes, there definitely was a “level of effort.” Barely able to speak, they put everything they had into their vocal performances and did an outstanding job.

I would just ask that, in the future, Zacharias know the whole story before she states her opinions as fact.

*Rhonda Turnquist
Cottage Grove*

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

I volunteered for the Democratic Party of Lane County during last fall’s 2014 election when Kevin Cronin was the regional field director for the Coordinated Campaign for Lane County. Kevin was responsible for turning out the vote for Sen. Jeff Merkley and Democrats up and down that ticket. I was impressed with his ability to inspire people of various ages to work together,

with his strong work ethic and with his knowledge of issues, local and national.

As a result of his leadership, Lane County had one of the highest voter turnouts in the nation for a major metropolitan area, 78.7 percent. Cronin is now running for Eugene 4J School Board against incumbent Jim Torrey. And it is time for a change. Torrey has been in this position for eight years now. We have seen no new ideas and are actually seeing a worsening of the situation. While Torrey’s priorities are lofty and well-intentioned, he offers no solutions. Cronin has offered solid proposals for funding Eugene 4J: a review of Measure 5 and the tax kicker and the support of an upcoming movement/measure to increase the corporate income tax in Oregon. Kevin states that he would form a coalition of other school boards to move this forward. From what I’ve seen of Kevin’s organizing skills, he would accomplish this.

Kevin is a more recent graduate of Oregon’s school system and experienced its downside. This fresh perspective may be very helpful to the Eugene 4J School Board.

*Zenia Liebman
Junction City*

TORREY’S RECORD

Dear 4J School District voters: Please consider my advice before filling out your

ballot for the May 19 election: Type the following into your web browser: wkly.ws/20l. Allow it to jog your memory about the political temperament of Jim Torrey, our former Republican mayor. Join me in supporting for the only Democratic candidate who is running for 4J School Board, Position 5: Kevin Cronin.

*Robert Farewell
Eugene*

PAYING FOR POTHOLE

Commissioner Peter Sorenson used poor taste when he tied the new revenue from [nearly] doubling vehicle registration fees to a family being mowed down on Main Street in Springfield. A pothole did not cause that. What causes potholes are vehicles that weigh over 26,000 pounds running 24/7 over Lane County roads that somehow are exempt from this fee proposal. Why should we bail out heavy equipment industries and/or local politicians who can’t keep timber fees in place as before? Alaska gets its oil kickbacks, so we should keep receiving our tree fees.

Already, our property taxes are up to cover jail funding that timber sales supported. Now, this proposal. Tell Congress that austerity is for Europe, not Eugene!

*Dan Woodmark
Eugene*

EASY MONEY PLAN

In Lane County I am told that the smooth-talking Commissioner Blagovitch [sic] has sponsored a Lane County measure to raise money to fix Lane County roads. Unfortunately he has decided he can get more money by assessing Lane County residents only (not the road users) based not on the amount of use but rather on how a person has decided to invest their money.

For example, a senior citizen such as myself who drives relatively few miles per year but has collected several vehicles over the years (motorcycles, one that rarely goes on a county road and a motorcycle trailer used perhaps once per year if that). I don’t use them much and will pay dearly while a person with one vehicle with high usage will pay little. Not to mention all the out-of-county drivers who will pay nothing.

There are other inequities in Blagovitch’s easy money plan as well. The only reasonable way to fund road maintenance is through user fees such as gasoline tax, short of monitoring every vehicle’s usage that comes to Lane County.

*Joel Lusby
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EDITOR’S NOTE: Commissioner Jay Bozievich supports the Vehicle Registration Fee but is not its author. The proposal came from the citizen Road Advisory Committee that evaluated 20 different funding options, including a gas tax, sales tax and property tax levy.

VIEWPOINT

BY JAMES R. MORRIS, M.D.

Fearlessness and Compassion

THE PATH TO HAPPINESS HAS A SCIENTIFIC BASIS

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion,” the Dalai Lama says. “If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” But what does it mean to practice compassion? I sometimes think it’s only a warm, fuzzy feeling towards others, or a New Age trick to subvert my consciousness. Perhaps it’s a sign of weakness and I’ll be bullied. Maybe I should reserve compassion just for a deserving few.

Not according to Geshe Thupten Jinpa, Ph.D., translator of many years for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet and author of *A Fearless Heart: How the Courage to Be Compassionate Can Transform Our Lives*. Returning to Eugene two years after the Dalai Lama spoke at Matthew Knight Arena, Geshe Jinpa will be speaking at LCC on May 10 about this very topic.

We generally define compassion as the deep desire to relieve the suffering of others. Perhaps a noble sentiment, but what does that have to do with my own happiness? This isn’t simply a philosophical or spiritual question. For years, neuroscientists like Richard Davidson and Daniel Siegel have been studying the neurobiology connecting the practices of compassion and mindfulness. They’ve discovered strong evidence for changes in brain function, cognition and behavior when compassionate activities are studied, mindfully practiced and implemented in our daily lives. From experimental social studies to functional MRI images of the brain, the evidence is now overwhelming: Compassion and happiness are intimately intertwined.

This makes me ponder what I need to do to cultivate compassion and thus be happy. I often wonder why courage and fearlessness are essential ingredients in this quest. I might think of myself as a naturally compassionate individual but often I’m shocked to learn of the negative consequences my “compassion” has created. Perhaps I confused compassion with the need to change or fix a situation. Or I expressed pity instead of concern for another. And even worse, a compassionate view is sometimes

nowhere in sight. I feel discouraged, afraid to look at my shortcomings. I worry I’ll never get it right. It seems so much easier to abandon compassion and endure the consequences.

Geshe Thupten Jinpa, who has studied both the spiritual and scientific aspects of compassion, will be addressing my questions and those commonly associated with compassion: Can compassion be cultivated? Shouldn’t we be worried about the dangers of “compassion fatigue,” the fear of being taken advantage of, or compromising our ambitions?

Jinpa will help us understand what compassion is through remarkable stories of transformations resulting from the practice of compassion, including his extraordinary personal experience — from being a Tibetan refugee, living in a monastery in India, being the Dalai Lama’s translator, to fatherhood in Montreal.

Geshe Thupten Jinpa will be speaking on Mother’s Day. This seems especially appropriate given the fact that the genuine seed of our compassion is rooted in our mothers. The Dalai Lama himself spoke highly of the love and affection that he received as a child, attributing whatever sense of compassion he has to his mother. Furthermore, he encouraged women to take a more active role as leaders of the world to foster compassion in all of our affairs. Can we learn to express compassion in all of our daily affairs, at work, with family or personal arenas? Jinpa says yes we can, for the benefit of others and ourselves.

Jinpa is a former monk and holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. Jinpa, the principal English translator to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is an adjunct professor at the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, Montreal and chairman of the Mind and Life Institute, which is dedicated to promoting dialogues and collaborations between the sciences and contemplative knowledge.

The Lane Peace Center and The Palmo Center for Peace and Education are honored to be sponsoring Jinpa, a highly acclaimed thought leader on the two-year anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s visit to Eugene. He will be speaking from 3:30 to 5 pm May 10 in the Ragozzino Performing Arts Theater on the LCC main campus. Tickets are \$15, \$50 VIP, students free and can be purchased online at lanecce.edu/tickets or at Star Gate, 1372 Willamette St. Jinpa’s new book can be purchased at Tsunami Books or at the door. There will be a book signing at the event.

This is a rare and fascinating opportunity not to be missed. Come to Geshe Jinpa’s talk and learn from a 2,500-year tradition that demonstrates the connection between compassion and happiness in everyday life. ■

James R. Morris, M.D. of Eugene has been practicing medicine for the past 35 years, specializing in pain management.