

Cronin doesn't just bring a vital student perspective; he brings experience that matters. Whether it's as chair of the LCC Budget Committee or organizing for local measures designed to hire more teachers and lower class sizes, Cronin understands the cost of the path we've put our kids on, and he has the vision, optimism and determination to make changes for the better.

We desperately need change on the 4J School Board. Let's give Cronin and his new ideas a chance.

*Kenneth Sergienko
Eugene*

MARCOLA IN TROUBLE

It is a fact that the Marcola Elementary School is in horrible shape and we cannot continue to educate our children in that building. I have had trouble getting behind supporting the \$7 million bond because of my intense distrust of the current superintendent. But like all the other 10 or more superintendents I have seen come and go in my 29 years with the Marcola School District as a parent, foster parent, cheerleader, critic, employee and volunteer, this one will also go, eventually. If it is with this feather in his cap, he can take it, but at least we will have a usable school and, as promised, a community center.

Last year I was on the selection committee for a new superintendent and I was as excited about having Bill Watkins come on board as I was disappointed just a few months later, from personal experience. While he has made the positive changes he has boasted about, it was not his magic wand that allowed him to do so. It was the sacrifices of the staff, community and the last administration that kept our district afloat during the recession, giving him a solid foundation to start from.

It will be the people of this community and school staff that will keep working for the students, and maybe the superintendent will surprise me. But Marcola cannot survive without a new school; we won't have a community if our kids are shipped to Springfield every day — which will also tax us.

*Ellen Furstner
Marcola*

FIX THE BIGGER PROBLEM

Oregon PERS isn't responsible for the loss of funding for school districts. Oregonians approved Measures 5 and 50 that reduced the property taxes allocated for schools. Before, school districts and other taxing districts increased property taxes to fund operations. Now, the tax burden for schools has shifted to Oregon's General Fund revenues. Unfortunately, no provision was made to provide funding to cover the loss. The state government, relying on income tax receipts, is consumed by funding education.

The Supreme Court declared the PERS COLA allocation scheme a "contractual impairment." PERS is effectively off the table as a revenue source. The solution is obvious. Fix the fatal flaws in Measures 5 and 50 by providing an additional revenue source dedicated to education. A sales tax, a net profits tax or some other revenue can refund the education budget.

Vilifying and ridiculing public employees or wishing they'd just die already

is not going to solve the problem. What we need is for our political and commentary class to find legal, ethical and courageous solutions to the financial problems of our schools. What other ideas do we have? Let's find some that are acceptable and don't set one group against another.

*Gerry Merritt
Eugene*

CHANGE-MAKER

I'm supporting a new face on the 4J School Board! Education in Oregon needs dollars to return our state to a higher level of learning for our children. I know Kevin Cronin and I believe he has the energy and ability to reverse our funding for schools and that is why I give him my vote! Every level of education needs a different approach, and businesses as well as families will see that Kevin can make the changes needed without flat taxation!

*Ruth Duemler
Eugene*

PAYING TRUE VALUE

This is in response to Sam Porter's letter ["Structural Injustice," 4/30], regarding the low wages paid to farm workers. Immigrant workers send around \$7 billion a year back to their families in Mexico. The \$7.25 hourly wage they earn is approximately 10 times the amount they would make in Mexico for the same work.

I, too, think it's unfortunate that this situation exists, but for a different reason than does Porter. These workers are supposedly doing work that U.S. citizens would not undertake. If agribusiness corporations paid citizens for the true value of their labor, we would see plenty of willing workers. Food prices, however, would increase quite a bit. I would gladly pay more for food that is grown and harvested by U.S. citizens.

*Philip Ratcliff
Salem*

CELL TOWER PROBLEMS

Crossfire Church is trying to put a 75-foot cell tower in a residential neighborhood near daycare centers, schools and homes.

The Crossfire pastor took over the payments on the property at the end of 2012. At the cell tower pre-application meeting on January 2014, he told neighbors that the cell tower was the only way he could pay the mortgage. I found this disturbing. To me it seemed that the property was bought for its potential as a possible cell tower site and not a community church.

You can't have a community church when your neighbors are concerned about health risks, losses of property value, view and tranquility. Cell tower cooling equipment is noisy; sometimes even with this equipment there are fires.

In May 2014, the Eugene planners' initial report found 10-plus pages of problems with a cell tower at the Crossfire site, i.e. "the simulated mono-pine looks comical in the setting." The Amazon Trail across from the site was developed with tax dollars and belongs to all of us.

There will be a public hearing at 5:30 pm Wednesday, May 27, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. See FriendsOfAmazonCreek.org.

*Cindy Allen
Eugene*

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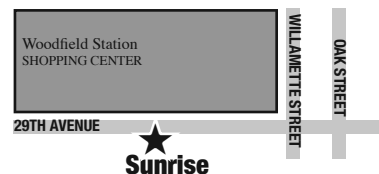
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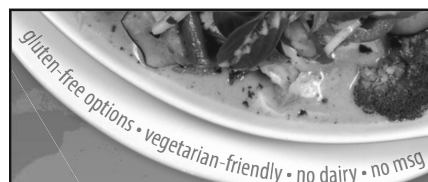
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