

DRAW OF THE CASCADES

There's a trickle on the back side of Belknap, up there in the wild Cascades. Up where it wanders west towards Clear Lake. Up where it joins the slick parade of the marching McKenzie River. Up where time and trout are one. Where you can hook and land eternity in one prismatic flash of sun. Up where a school of fish becomes a mess of fish. Up where living takes up all your time. Up where the Doug firs set their skirts a-swish.

Up where I surely hope to die. Oh yeah. That's where I'm going, when they call the final roll. To the evergreen of Oregon, and those rivers that haunt my soul.

From the eternal snows of the Sisters flows a steady, spring-fed seep. One that feeds voracious Waldo Lake, up where Willamette tumbles from her seat. One that thunders down the mountainsides, moving boulders, trees and men. One distant seduction that's moving me. One that's calling me home again.

To where the wily trout lurk and swirl about, at ease in the Cascade's gush. A liquid symphony, consuming me, with its stunning, tumultuous hush.

Oh yeah. That's where I'm going, when they call the final roll, to the evergreen of Oregon. And those rivers that haunt my soul.

Dave Perham
Eugene

THE POWER PLAYER

The common tale of the Common Core curriculum is that the nation's

governors felt we needed a new national K-12 curriculum that would be the same everywhere. Then we could have common high-stakes tests that would be the same everywhere. So the governors had the curriculum written in 2009. Not so.

The Common Core was actually developed two years before the governors adopted it, largely by a group named Achieve. Since 1996, Achieve has been a powerful player in the high-stakes standardized testing movement. Achieve is funded by dozens of giant corporations including AT&T, Chevron, GE and Microsoft. Achieve started writing the Common Core behind closed doors in 2007.

So, who wrote the Common Core Math Standards? According to former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, only three of the 15 individuals in the Common Core Math Work Group had taught math. None had taught elementary or middle school math, special education or ESL. Fourteen of the 15 were affiliated with testing and curriculum companies.

So, who wrote the Common Core English Language Arts Standards? Only five of the 15 had taught English. None had taught elementary grades, special education or ESL. Again, most were affiliated with testing and curriculum companies.

Before the Common Core was even adopted by the governors, the testing corporations were developing the standardized tests that would be connected

at the hip to the Common Core, and the giant textbook and software curriculum corporations were developing their products to go with Common Core.

Follow the money.

Roscoe Caron
Eugene

INSULTING READERS

N. Christian Anderson III, chairman of The Oregonian Media Group, just left his high-profile, high-status, high-paying, highly powerful job to be merely the publisher of *The Register-Guard* in Eugene. (*Willamette Week's* Nigel Jaquiss has yet to expose the real reason Anderson left. To spend more time with his family?)

Anderson sanctioned if not ordered his reporters and editors and editorialists use of the term *affordable housing* as a euphemism for the correct, informative and useful term for public discussion and debate, *public housing*.

Anderson's support for the discredited and abhorrent policy of targeted, unlimited neighborhood concentration of public housing and his refusal to demand meaningful, accurate, complete and timely public housing and market-rate affordable housing statistical data has severely diminished all credibility of news reports and editorials involving housing policy in Portland and Multnomah County.

It remains to be seen if his replacement will continue Anderson's misguided, linguistically indefensible decision which

demonstrates a disregard, indeed, insult to *Oregonian* readers' intelligence.

Richard Ellmyer
Portland

GLENWOOD RISING

I shook my head in amazement while reading Biz Beat May 14. People are really complaining about remodeling Glenwood? I guess there has to be someone who is pro-blight. Let me go on the record as saying there looks to be a vast improvement in the offing, and no amount of carping will hold back the future. So lead, follow, or get out of the way.

Neal Friedt
Eugene

CONNECTING DOTS

The 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center towers and the 2008 economic collapse are the pivotal events of the 21st century. The NYC horror led to the creation of a U.S. police state and legitimized an open-ended succession of aggressive wars against sovereign nations.

The 2008 financial meltdown brought a historic transfer of wealth to a tiny elite linked to the finance and weapons/intelligence industries. Most gains went to the top 1 percent of the wealthiest 1 percent: 10,000 families, a new American oligarchy.

Trillions gifted to the same bankers whose reckless and corrupt practices crashed our economy evoked an eruption of public outrage in the Occupy Wall Street uprising, speaking truth to power.

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

The Grim Reaper Appears

OR ... WHY I MISS HENNY WILLIS AT THE R-G!

I'm worried about the future of one of our local newspapers. Granted we all have our obsessions and addictions, some healthy, some not. My parents, tough Catholic conservatives that they were, forced me to read our local newspaper early on. As I've told my young nieces and nephews: Third grade was the hardest four years of my life! Anyway, for the last 50 years, because of my parents' unrelenting insistence on literacy, I resorted to newspapers — a total junkie. I was especially drawn to crossword puzzles and still blame them as the "gateway drug" for my preoccupation with cross words during my legislative career — as a minority whip — but that's another story.

So, later as a union goon, and even later as a politician, my habit increased. I shamelessly admit now that I have read *The Register-Guard* and *The Oregonian* almost daily for the last 35 years. During my worst periods of addiction, I should disclose that I even occasionally glanced at another Oregon experiment in yellow journalism, Salem's *Statesman-Journal*. (However, to my credit, even in the worst haze of my 10 years of elective office, I never succumbed to their editorial advice!)

I've generally been a big fan of the R-G, a local institution, one of the last two family-owned newspapers on the entire U.S. Left Coast. I've lived in Oregon since 1976. I've not always agreed with the R-G's editorials, but it's done a good job overall, with talented journalists and editors covering essential local and state issues. Its editorial/opinion page masthead said it all (past tense): "An Independent Newspaper." First published by Alton F. Baker in 1927 and handed down to Alton F. Baker II in 1961, to Edwin M. Baker in 1982, and then to Alton F. Baker III, editor and publisher since 1987.

Last week the world changed: The R-G made monumental news. It announced that N. Christian "The Grim Reaper" Anderson III, former chairman of the Oregonian Media Group and former publisher of *The Oregonian*, was named as the new editor and publisher

of the R-G. According to another independent newspaper, *The Portland Tribune*, Anderson replaced Tony Baker at the R-G after Tony's 28 years as editor and publisher. Baker, 65, remains on the Guard Publishing Co. board and will continue to oversee the Baker family's real estate holdings, according to a report by the R-G.

This marks the first time in 88 years that a member of the Baker family isn't running the newspaper. Baker said Anderson would lead the paper's continued news coverage in print and its expansion into digital media. (Ironically, 40 years ago Anderson was editor of *The Daily Barometer* when he attended Oregon State University.)

What does all this mean in *realspeak* or *realnewspaperspeak* for those 11 of the 17 followers of this column who might actually still read the R-G? Well, just look at what Anderson did to *The Oregonian* in his few short years! He hacked the staff, changed the format to a tiny, stapled-together amalgam delivered four days a week, editions served up differently in various parts of the state, with cumulative articles on, say, PERS legislation, having no daily datelines: no longer resembling a daily newspaper. Ultimate result: a diminished quality of reporting on local and state issues, an increased piling-on of attacks on public employees and more right-wing editorials. Bottom line: today *The Oregonian* is unrecognizable as a daily newspaper.

Gee, golly, what happens next to the R-G? According to Baker III, Chris Anderson III — apparently all publishers have to have a have an "III" behind their name — has the entrepreneurial instincts, business savvy, news background and digital know-how that make him "uniquely qualified." Really? For what?

We should've seen the handwriting on the wall in the R-G's last two Sunday editorial attacks on the Oregon Supreme Court decision on PERS. The R-G's latest editorial is already following the old Chris Anderson III *Oregonian* script: "The governor and the Legislature should seek constitutionally permissible PERS savings equal to those achieved by the 2013 changes." In other words, screw the Oregon Supreme Court's latest ruling, and screw the Oregon Constitution: We, the newspaper shills for corporate interests, must figure out a way to bypass our obligation. No mention of tax reform.

I have always had a deep respect for Paul Neville and Jackman Wilson of the R-G's editorial board. But I think we've moved on from their days of influence. This is a *new* newspaper. Change may be an economic decision for the R-G, and I'll continue to support the talented journalists of the Guild, the R-G union workers, in their struggle for fair representation. But where is the spirit of R-G politics reporter Henny Willis, rest his soul, when we need him? ■

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a freshly retired state worker and former state senator.