

FRIENDLY SOCCER

Thank you for making serendipitous soccer games your cover story June 11. My husband moved here from Bolivia 14 years ago and we quickly found a network of local and international friends while playing pick-up soccer. I have also played for many years and enjoyed meeting players and connecting with families from all over the world. Likewise, we always invite newcomers to Eugene to come play pick-up soccer. It's an open international community that welcomes all ages, all languages and all abilities. These pick-up games happen all year and rotate around local parks and schools. In summer, Saturday mornings at Maurie Jacobs Park and school fields on weeknights vary (Kelly or ATA).

I have long felt that these friendly soccer games deserved a spotlight in the local media, or at least a mention in the *Weekly's* "What's Happening" calendar. Thank you again for highlighting the soccer scene in Eugene on your front cover.

Karen Rengifo
Eugene

TOXIC RESTORATION

Dear drinkers of McKenzie River water (Eugene): Are you aware that in order to

"restore" riparian and side channel habitat (next to the river) the McKenzie Watershed Council and McKenzie River Trust must use toxic chemicals such as Roundup as "standard operating procedure"?

This is happening on approximately 18 acres at the publicly owned Berggren Watershed Conservation Area despite an established [McKenzie Watershed] council policy that chemicals will be used only as a "last resort."

We might wonder whether real restoration can be accomplished in this way. Do we know how Roundup, et al, affects living river ecosystems? Can we come up with alternatives that better protect water quality? Both of these organizations represent water quality as a guiding principle.

Carol Ach, member
McKenzie Watershed Council

EDITOR'S NOTE: The issue is a complex one. According to Joe Moll from the McKenzie River Trust, the watershed council and trust staff agreed to look again at the site with Carol Ach and other council members, to consider why herbicides are used in habitat restoration efforts, and to discuss at a later council meeting.

DENYING INFORMATION

The 4J School Board and the Gates Foundation-funded Stand for Children

are teaming up to petition Gov. Kate Brown to "kill" the Parental Right to Opt Out bill that our state legislators passed overwhelmingly. The bill requires districts to provide parents with information regarding their rights to opt their children out of state testing. I wonder why the Eugene School Board and Stand for Children are so adamant about denying parents information about their rights.

Parents opt out for many reasons. Some are concerned about the impact that low scores have on the self-esteem of children. Some believe the tests waste instructional time. Some know child psychologists are concerned that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are not developmentally appropriate. Some believe that Common Core/Smarter Balanced Assessment are designed to remove education from local control. All these concerns are valid.

There was no democratic consent to allow CCSS into our schools. These measures represent a shift in control from local responsiveness toward federal oversight. Parents are rightly concerned and have few options available. One of those options is to exert our rights through the democratic process. We have done that work. Our elected representatives listened.

For Gov. Brown to veto this bill denies parents their only legitimate avenue.

Geoffrey Barrett
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gov. Brown signed this bill June 20.

CAP EMISSIONS

Let's limit greenhouse gas emissions! House Bill 3470, the Climate Stability and Justice Act, which is currently under consideration by the Oregon Legislature, would set a cap on greenhouse gas emissions for Oregon. It would set that cap based on the best available science, with truth checks, every five years, mandating further reductions if needed. California has adopted a similar approach, designed to be joined by other states, so Oregon can easily join in.

Readers, please contact your state legislators, both your representative and your senator, and tell them you want the Legislature to put a cap or limit on greenhouse gas emissions this session! There is no time to lose. Ask them specifically to support HB 3470, the Climate Stability and Justice Act of Oregon. Here's how you can reach them: bit.ly/OregonLegislators.

Megan Kemple
Eugene

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Art Robinson Recalls Pope

IT APPEARS THE JESUITS ACTUALLY LIKE SCIENCE

I'm a little nervous here, a little distracted. But don't worry, I'll cover the slug-like inactivity of the Oregon Legislature in a moment.

Frankly, a bigger issue looms at the moment. We may be headed for a global theological/scientific Mongolian clusterfluck — not to be confused with climate change or global warming or the Sixth Great Extinction. This is much seriouser! I can see the donnybrook coming.

Apparently this Jesuit Pope Francis guy, who refused to live in the Vatican because it was too lavish for gosh sakes, issued one of them papal encyclicals thingeys. Without warning or consultation with any members of the Flat Earth Society, Frankie just called out Art Robinson and the climate change deniers as *unfreakinscientific!* There was some tough rhetoric, some hard-ass trash-talking! Dear reader, do you *grock* how truly ironic it is that, in 2015, a Jesuit leader of the international Catholic community would start rope-a-doping corporations with a challenge to consumerism and capitalism using science as a rationale? RUFKM? Really? Remember 1611? Galileo and the Inquisition? What's 400 years among friends? Now, apparently, the Jesuits *like* science. Who'da thunk?

Anyway, I understand that Art and his son Matt are considering a recall effort against the pope because Art happens to disagree with most rational people and he is, after all, a scientist, sorta. Worked with Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner, sorta. Art loves background radiation and has totally denied everything the pope just cited regarding human consumerism and its damaging effect

on the planet and most importantly, its disproportionate effect on the planet's poor. Apparently Art has his own backchannels to a god (not sure which one).

I have to say, I'm likin' Pope Frankie. I'm 66, a secular humanist raised Catholic, and I've been through a few (seven) popes. My favorite was John the 23rd (1958-1963). He issued the encyclical *Pacem in terris* in 1963 on peace and nuclear disarmament. But the current Frankie is impressive. I have a statue of his namesake in my garden, St. Francis of Assisi, the Christian pantheist icon, the guy who could talk to animals. I'm actually worried that our current Frankie is so progressive that he'll be taken out. After all, he's taken on his own *curia*, the church's ruling body, over alleged graft. But I'm not a conspiracy theorist.

All right, enough theosophy. Let's switch from the sublime to the ridiculous — Salem and the Legislature. Watching these folks is like rooting for the U.S. soccer team in a 0-0 overtime game. Just when you thought our Public Employee Retirement System argument was settled, the Dems have now added a second PERS — the Private Employee Retirement System. They passed HB 2960, which requires private sector employers without retirement plans to create an automatic paycheck deduction to be placed in a fund managed by the state treasurer.

Employers wouldn't be required to contribute, and workers could opt out if they desired; it simply creates a mechanism for workers to create a retirement plan if they wish. Next thing you know, those dadgum

labor-lovin' legislators will require paid sick leave by employers. Oh, excuse me, they already did that.

What the Legislature hasn't done is create a transportation/infrastructure plan. Republicans want to address the carbon emissions bill again, but Democrats so far are refusing to go there. Meanwhile, the July 11 adjournment date gets closer and closer. And even though there has been some recent discussion of a compromise minimum wage increase, ramping it up over several years to \$12 or \$13 an hour, it's pretty late in the game to move such a bill.

Democrats seem content to let the signature gathering begin on a popular minimum wage ballot measure for 2016. Republicans seem strangely unthreatened by such a move, unwilling to negotiate *anything*, even if their business allies would rather see a compromise.

For her part, Gov. Kate Brown could really use a transportation or infrastructure deal to help her 2016 gubernatorial bid. The odd timing of this out-of-cycle governor's race, complete with a February 2016 legislative session, which will put the kibosh on any campaigning for a month or so, may be influencing the Republican legislative strategy of stall tactics — after all, we don't even have a clue at this point who their candidate for governor will be. And there are legislators from both parties considering runs at other open seats, including the secretary of state. And, did I mention that it's only 16 months until that election? Stay tuned. ■

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a former state senator and recently retired state employee.

