

LANGUAGE OF EXTINCTION

What happens when we quantify the sacred? Giving authority to corporations and chemicals without accountability, responsibility or liability? When we value the shadow but not the being? When we refuse to acknowledge consequences and cause and effects but merely count the profits divorced from liabilities?

Should we be surprised when corporations destroy the environment, when fracking pollutes the ground water, when cities and education are bankrupted, when jobs are short lived, when violence becomes commonplace and when militaries dominate the landscape, economics and social order?

Should we show concern as we retire on the backs of future generations liabilities? Or simply live the good life that we so deserve? How do we disconnect ourselves from the children and grandchildren we profess to love?

How do we not see the mass wasting that follows most everything we touch manifesting through our collective unconsciousness based in domination and the illusion of control? Technology has overrun this finite planet without understanding that Nature is the master, not us nor our management. From killing

buffalos for their tongues to destroying our forests in the name of increasing productivity, we delude ourselves into thinking this is progress.

We stand on the precipice, just like the lemmings, waiting to follow into our collective demise. Our denial prevents us from seeing, and greed drives us over the edge.

Epitaph for *Homo sapiens*: so smart yet terminally so dumb.

Craig Patterson
McKenzie Bridge

CONTROLLING OTHERS

While I am a happily confirmed non-smoker and am no fan of the smell of smoke, I'm firmly against the ban on smoking in public parks.

Why? Smokers are people too. They're even taxpayers who support parks and city services. Additionally, tobacco is a product used and obtained legally by adults. While I understand that many complain that they are concerned with being exposed to second-hand smoke, it's a little feeble to suggest that the minute amounts one would encounter in an outdoor setting could be more harmful, or even as dangerous, as the many other toxins we face in the urban outdoors. I'd even posit that the number of carcinogens found in that bag of Cheetos

that a park-goer might delve into could be more cause for concern.

My real message is that we are going too far in trying to control the lives of our neighbors. If you're really against smoking, work on banning the availability of cigarettes and tobacco products. Don't allow it to be sold legally, enjoy the benefits of the tax revenues sales provide and then punish the legal user of those products.

Jake Gariepy
Eugene

INCREASED LOGGING?

It really seems from the headlines we see every day that the problems stemming from global warming are becoming increasingly severe and dramatic. From the red tide along the West Coast that is restricting and shutting down the fishing and crabbing industries to the difficulties farmers are having with access to irrigation, we are experiencing this crisis now in all different ways with daily living, finances and the psychological ramifications of witnessing what is happening.

That is why it is both preposterous and unbelievable to me when I hear about the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) calling for increased logging in the Northwest. This was mentioned in the

same article that stated their aims to further protect endangered species. What, I ask, is the logic system being used here? Doesn't the BLM know you can't do homework and play outside at the same time? Not only am I surprised by the nerve of BLM calling for more logging during these seriously troubled times, I am angry as well, for the BLM no longer has the funding to monitor the effects of increased logging and global warming on our public lands, which seems like their real jobs. No, even though this is predicted to be the worst year with toxic blue-green algae, they do not have the funding to regulate this.

But they have the funding for speculative logging for the wood products industry, and I am not really thrilled that this is where my tax dollars are going. This is a pretty blatant example of industry-related pressures on the environment continuing to go unchecked while the restrictions and limitations are shouldered by the working public and families. The silver lining is that this outrageous logic system is beginning to expose itself. But it needs all of us to call it out. Agencies such as the BLM do not have the internal structure to moderate and check themselves; that is perfectly clear!

Kerstin Britz
Cottage Grove

VIEWPOINT BY JOE MOLL

Take Me to the River

LEARN ABOUT RIVERS, GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

In the heat of the day, we found relief standing in shallow water. Seven of us remained after a tour of the farm and the forested edge of the McKenzie River. Parent conversation roamed across trade-offs between herbicide use and the spread of invasive weeds, climate change and personal change, how to be a good father, how to be a good neighbor. Meanwhile the kids swished scoop nets in the ponded side channel, wowing over tadpoles, boatmen, mosquito fish and dragonfly larva. The air continued to warm, and with it the number of adult dragonflies zig-zagging around us increased as well.

Take me to the river. Wash me in the water. Summer has arrived early this year, and the refuge offered by the McKenzie, the Willamette, the Long Tom and our other local rivers drive Al Green's song to seasonal popularity, at least in our minds or as we hum. Rivers provide respite — from the heat, from unrequited love, from a world filled with noise and complexity.

Following our little explorers, we crossed a small



relief when they find them.

Years of damming, straightening and redirecting our rivers have made these side channels all the more rare, even as warming waters make them all the more important. Conservation science is helping us rectify this, guiding our efforts to restore natural connections

between the river and its floodplain.

The historic perspective and local knowledge of farmers is helping us better understand the changes that have occurred. Creative artists and musicians deepen our connections to nature and each other. And the unfettered imaginations of children remind us to follow our noses, to explore, play and whoop with joy when we catch a dragonfly or splash in cold water.

This Saturday, June 27, the McKenzie River Trust invites you to do all of that — learn about rivers, see restoration projects, explore, swap stories, play, celebrate — at Green Island, where the McKenzie and Willamette rivers come together west of Coburg. From 7 am to 5 pm we're hosting our seventh Living River Celebration, a free event filled with

guided natural history tours, music and fun. Come join us and share your thoughts about rivers, about climate, about being good neighbors and good parents. Cleanse your soul; put your feet on the ground and in the water. Channel Al Green. Take me to the river. ■

Joe Moll is executive director of the McKenzie River Trust. For more information about MRT and the Living River Celebration, go to mckenzie-river.org.