

CIVIC WILL RISE AGAIN

This is hard. We know all things must pass — but the way they pass matters. My young children ran the bases at Civic Stadium on Sunday nights. We watched fireworks on the lawn over many a Fourth of July. My son took the field as a Kidsports player and then played four years at Civic at his high school's home field. I coached a game once on that field. My heart beats stronger recalling those hallowed grounds.

The community and Friends of Civic Stadium never abandoned the dream of Civic even when the Eugene Emeralds did. I watched the field go to seed and marveled at how quickly even the most beautiful diamonds lose their shine when they're not cared for. But in true Eugene, Oregon, fashion our civic wheels are their own civics lesson, and the fight to save Civic was classic Eugene, rivaling our effort to build a new library.

Now what? We know that the only desecration worse than the fire would be apartments or shopping centers. That's not going to happen. A great opportunity exists to bring "civic mindedness" to the ashes, which could include philanthropic contributions from those who abandoned our field. What good will could be created from such a collaborative effort for the youth of Eugene!

Baseball is dying in many urban municipalities, but it lives strong in Eugene. Youth baseball and softball at all levels could be played at Civic alongside the soccer fields that were planned. The baseball gods walked on that field, and the footprints of gods don't fade. Civic will rise out of the ashes.

Andy Traisman
Eugene

DOING MORE DAMAGE

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan admits that the federal government is going to "phase out the authority of the states" in education. Legislators hid this provision in a bill that, like all good schemes, looks good on its surface, but upon closer examination does more damage to public education. It doubles down on the schemes and the bribes by again promising more federal money for compliance with federal control.

And so Duncan threatens to withhold funds from our schools for failure to comply with Common Core standardized testing. It is the parents of children in the public school system who should have the final say about the Common Core Standards. This is democracy.

Our students have taken part in these international assessments since the 1960s, and we have typically been in the bottom quarter, seldom surpassing the

international average. Our scores have been poor to mediocre for 50 years, yet we have one of the greatest economies in the world. Yong Zhao, the China-born, China-educated scholar at the University of Oregon, has pointed out that there is no logical connection between international test scores and the success of our economy.

In the rush to privatize the country's schools, corporations and politicians have gutted school budgets, replaced teaching with standardized testing and placed the blame on teachers and students.

As a preschool educator, I am appalled that we are asked to waste our time and precious resources on worthless testing that doesn't work in real classrooms with real students.

Christopher Michaels
Eugene

LIFT YOUR EYES

So many gifts nature gives us — as I was reminded tonight when I watched a silver moon float in the twilight above our house in the Oregon hills.

It matters not where you are, if only you lift your eyes to savor the gifts nature freely gives to all of us. The moon was a jewel that made me grateful that even in my ninth decade I could still see it clearly.

For Silvia and me, it is part of an

evening pattern. We drive a few blocks above our home to watch the sunset from a spot between the trees. When clouds are near it, their colors reflect the sun with a beauty that changes every evening — never the same.

As the sun dips below the horizon, we drive home, then sit on our deck on moonlit nights, watching it drift slowly across a sky that turns from deep blue to darkness.

Nature gives us so much beauty. It's always there. It never can escape, unless we forget to lift our eyes to see it.

George Beres
Eugene

VACANT RHETORIC

Laudato Si, the recent encyclical released by Pope Francis, perfectly describes our Orwellian world. The CEO of the trillion-dollar, multinational Roman Catholic church says: "The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty" (27). No comment is needed.

"Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see because they have been lost for ever" (33).

Yes, just as the myriad variety of cultural beliefs, both religious and

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Orca Plot Fails

IT'S CRYIN' TIME AGAIN IN SALEM

The tension in Salem at the end of any legislative session is attractive if you're an unrelenting sociopath who loves pain and heartbreak. With the preceding five months of plodding public process behind them, partisan legislators will finally cast their votes in stone in early July. The game will only finish when the budgets are decided. It's one of the things I miss most about being out of the Legislature for the past 12 years. I loved counting votes.

When I was in the Legislature, our only time limit to get out of Salem was when we got a balanced biennial budget delivered to the governor's desk and signed. *Sine die* is Latin for "without another day." When you were done, you were done. There was no absolute date to leave. A deal had to be reached or you didn't go home.

The rules changed a few years back. Now, with annual sessions (a good idea), there's a hard deadline to finish each session. For these folks, it's July 11. To change that date and extend the end of the session even by three days would require a 75 percent vote of the House and Senate.

Ain't gonna happen. If asked today, the Oregon House couldn't get 45 R's and D's to agree on the planet upon which they were voting!

A few weeks ago my successor, Floyd Prozanski, invited me to sit with him as his guest on the Oregon Senate floor, now that I'm retired. I hadn't been there for 12 years. It's always been against the rules of both the House and the Senate for state employees to appear

for no apparent reason on the floor of either chamber during session. Good rule. And I was previously a state employee. But that was then!

I took Floyd up on his offer last Wednesday, June 24. What a hoot! Unfortunately, due to my appearance on the floor, Republican Senate leader Tim Knopp spotted me in my orca drag costume. My secret plot was blown. I considered the alternative AT&T plan to disguise myself as a faux tree-cell tower, but by then it wasn't worth the effort.

I couldn't have picked a better day to witness the collapse of the legislative process. Senate President Courtney was decidedly *not* on his game that day. He had Senate pro-tem President Ginny Burdick run the opening ceremony that morning. He sat behind her with his head down, both hands on his forehead, agonizing.

The night before, on Tuesday, June 23, Courtney confronted his bipartisan rump group working on a transportation package. He told them he'd had it: They had not moved anything forward. Courtney could not get a Republican buy-in without sacrificing a bill which had already passed. The clean-fuels program was a top priority for Democrats. He walked out on the meeting, done.

That night he announced a "Special Senate Committee on Sustainable Transportation" and appointed three D's and three R's, including our local guy Chris Edwards as co-chair. This was an end run around everyone else in the building. Courtney wanted them to push out a bipartisan last attempt at a transportation package. But it was flawed: It required

replacing the clean-fuels program bill *and* imposing a gas tax for roads.

Without support, the deal was declared dead Wednesday afternoon. Not enough votes.

My hard-hearted, irascible lobbyist friend Marla Rae maintains that three things must happen to bring any legislature to *sine die*. Number one: A breakdown has to occur. Number two: Some leader has to have walked out during a meeting. And number three: There has to be actual *tears* shed on the floor of one chamber or the other.

I think we're about there. The transportation plan has blown up several times, so a breakdown has occurred. And Courtney fulfilled number two by walking out on his rump group.

However, number three was harder to verify. Actually, Rep. Paul Holvey, House Business and Labor chair, volunteered to cry on the House floor just to end the debacle. However, it was quickly pointed out that, being a union carpenter, Holvey would require at least six weeks apprenticeship training — too little, too late. Marla immediately lined up 10 business lobbyists, who had appeared before Paul's House Business and Labor Committee all session, to teach Paul how to cry. They had experience.

I think the session is about done. Holvey need not cry. ■

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

