

DON'T PUNISH LIBRARY

Voting “no” on the library levy is no way to correct the problem of misguided tax policies and benefits to special interests. It would not convince our politicians to mend their ways nor would it improve the current funding mechanism. Instead, it would punish library users, including students, computer users and residents who need expanded access to a local branch. Clean up the bathwater, but don't throw the baby out.

Sara van Dyck
Eugene

A KIND GESTURE

I realize there's probably a plethora of letters about this by now, but I thought the president's visit to Roseburg to meet with the families was amazingly thoughtful. I don't agree with him on everything; I personally oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership. I also think there is no morally

justifiable reason to use weaponized drones. But I still can recognize this as a kind gesture, it was probably comforting to those families in their time of mourning.

I won't comment on anyone's particular political agenda (I'm actually somewhat moderate on the whole gun issue), but I found it very insensitive to have a pro-gun protest when families are grieving over their loved ones being killed by a gunman.

We don't have to agree to be respectful, and while I understand some people want to use their First Amendment rights to protect their Second Amendment rights, it was neither the time nor place. (Well, except the signs that were ignorant and/or racist, it's never the time or place.)

Lil Frey
Eugene

MISLEADING LABEL

Betty Taylor — a strong voice on the Eugene City Council for the homeless and

others who need help, for education, for economic justice, for the environment, for the public good generally — has for decades consistently supplemented her humane values with appropriate humor, articulate common sense, wise perspective and enlightened skepticism.

A recent otherwise admirable *Register-Guard* front-page tribute to her, however, on the occasion of her 90th birthday and her fifth, nearly completed, four-year term of public service, can't resist labeling her as representing “the far left.”

Many national and local practitioners and beneficiaries of what has become a short-sighted, cold-hearted, predatory, quite insane economic system routinely destroy the health of the planet and its people. It's collateral damage to them. But in the nearly 50 years I've been reading the *R-G*, I've yet to see one — not one — of these oily, oil-dependent extraction/development/industrial corporations,

their cronies or their bought-and-paid-for political toadies described as “far right” (or more accurately “neo-fascist”).

But it's “far left” to help the poor and homeless? To protect the health of our beautiful planet? To question corporate practices? To oppose giving massive tax breaks and numerous other perks to out-of-state mega-corporations pursuing maximum profit at any cost to people or to the environment?

Enough already with such predictable but inaccurate, misleading, self-serving labeling. And a belated happy birthday and many thanks to Betty Taylor for her admirable years of service as a teacher and as a council member.

Jerome Garger
Yachats

EDITOR'S NOTE: Betty Taylor last week took out filing papers to run for another four-year term on the Eugene City Council.

VIEWPOINT BY RAINA BOWE

Cheering in Drag

THE WORLD'S SMALLEST SPORTS DEMOGRAPHIC

Dick Vitale owes me a working eyeball. Vitale, if you are not familiar, is the loudest basketball announcer in the world, according to a poll of ESPN viewers, audio specialists and the recently deceased. When he gets going, according to *SB Nation*, the guy can hit 180 decibels, louder than a gunshot, and equal to the explosion of Krakatoa.

This is not the type of person you should be listening to when you're putting on your drag makeup.

But that's what I was doing last spring: listening to ESPN hoops while getting ready for a party. I was in mid-eyeliner application when Vitale saw something — a slam dunk? A buzzer beater? Air? — and I stabbed myself. It hurt like hell and I spent the rest of night winking at everything. Somewhere in Salem there's a very confused barista at Dutch Bros.

Not for the first time, it occurred to me that I shouldn't listen to sports when I'm painting my face, and not because I'll go blind. (Mainly a football fan — that sport moves so slow I can plan ahead.)

No, it's because that just doesn't seem like something a drag queen does. Indeed, every queen I've ever been around has music playing when they're getting prepped — anything from Lady Gaga to Screamo, Madonna to Nirvana — but never Maradona, as in, Diego Maradona.

It's no secret that LGBTQ people don't like sports; the internet is full of explanations why this is so. And, on the rare occasions when LGBTQ people are viewing, they're merely watching to check out all the sweaty bodies. Makes perfect sense, if you're into stereotypes. If you're not, well, it's crap.

“Gay and lesbian adults are 51 percent more likely than the average adult to watch sports-related videos online and 28 percent more likely to boot up their computer to get their sports news,” a 2013 Nielsen survey states. Why anyone would find this surprising I don't know.

For one thing, look how often major league football,

basketball, baseball and soccer have penalized their players during the last few years for anti-LGBTQ remarks. Even the WWE chastised one of its wrestlers when he called a fan a “fag” and a “queer.” Duh. It's bad business to insult those who support you (Donald Trump apparently notwithstanding).

More importantly, however, I consider this: I know lots of LGBTQ people, and most of them like sports. Even the ones that don't live in Eugene, where being a Ducks fan seems almost a legal obligation.

Perhaps it's because when LGBTQ people celebrate their team, they don't “look” LGBTQ. We high-five each other with just as firm a wrist as anyone else. We drink cheap domestic beer by the vat just like everyone else.

Yes, when the Ducks football team does some weird freaky Nike thing with their uniforms, we do kind of flip out. Just like everyone else. (Seriously, gay or straight, who's in charge of those things?)

I say all this with authority as a result of watching a Ducks game at The Wayward Lamb downtown. The bar's backroom is equipped with a 100-inch projection TV — it's a great place to watch Ducks football, even if you're not wearing a bright green-and-yellow dress as I was.

Gay, lesbian, trans: Every letter on the LGBTQ spectrum was there. All the while cheering when the Ducks completed a pass, cursing when they didn't and complaining about both during the commercials. (Note to Vernon Adams: No matter what you do, you're not Marcus Mariota, and you're screwed.)

For those few hours at least, The Wayward Lamb became part of the world's smallest demographic: LGBTQ sports bar, second only in miniature stature to El Salvadorans named Sven Steenstein. A fact that would be depressing — if it wasn't irrelevant.

There are sports bars all over Eugene that are LGBTQ-friendly, even if it doesn't say so on their door. Two of my friends particularly like the Side Bar on Coburg Road. They like the beer, the food and the fact that the crowd calls out “Lesbians!” when they walk in the door, sort of a rainbow “Norm!” in a post-*Cheers* world.

Even brightly attired drag queens are welcome, she says. I might be able to get away with my orange-and-black dress, assuming the Beavs aren't playing Oregon. “We never have to hide who we are or who we love,” my friend says.

Sounds perfect. Now if they could just do something about Dick Vitale. ■

Raina Bowe of Eugene is a self-described flamboyant alter ego of a professional teacher and humorist who considers himself an “edutainer” of all things LGBT.

