

nobody can use a turn signal.

I know a lot of people would rather have something like “More Ugly Buildings Than You Can Shake a Stick At,” but I think this really captures our town. Whaddya think, Eugene?

Chico Schwall
Eugene

FACING THE CHANGES

I am alarmed that Linn County is asking other counties to join a class action lawsuit against Oregon state to increase logging on state lands. As technology and ecology changes, we must face the personal changes we must make and also adapt. I returned to school, took accounting classes and achieved my bachelor’s degree in business management while working full time. I am a poor student, but I needed to push past my fear of failure in order to continue to support myself. This took one and a half years.

Trees grow to marketable size in about 75 years. Trees hold soil and hillsides in place, create an environment for fungi, plants and animals to survive, hold huge amounts of

water in their leaves, trunks and root areas, purify water and air and exhale oxygen. If we continue to follow the quick fix of destroying our forests rather than helping our populations to re-educate and work in different fields, we will be turning our rich, temperate rain forest climate into an arid, semi-desert waste land that is not supportive of all the life we celebrate here, now.

Furthermore, limiting our forests to Douglas fir tree farms also limits the ability of these forests to perform their above functions fully. Forests require a variety of plants and trees. Spraying poisonous broadleaf herbicides also damages a forest’s ability to function well, as well as threatening human health.

Rev. Alice Orsini
Walton

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

Camilla Mortensen gave us a detailed understanding of Oregon’s climate politics Jan. 28, and Megan Kemple’s call for a science-based bill in your Feb. 11 issue is important. The 350 campaign has been marching, meeting with legislators and

giving support. The sad revelation is that the proposed legislation is too slow and too complicated. Climate change is here!

I urge everyone to read the draft of Senate Bill 1574. Polluters can continue to pollute and emissions above cap would be auctioned off with only small emission reductions demanded each year. I have to question why this legislation calls for only a 2 percent reduction a year; is this really a cap and trade bill and are the high carbon emissions of biomass really counted? I appreciate everyone’s effort for a climate bill but I question any real value in this very complicated legislation.

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

STOP TRUANT RANCHERS

Absentee ranchers ruin the range and encourage predation. My ancestors knew to keep a herd bunched to prevent predation and preserve the mountain summer range. People stayed with the animals all summer to protect and move them. Proper herding maintains graze diversity and improves yield. Waterways can be better protected

and predation reduced when there are people involved to move and protect the herd. This old method has a new name: “low-stress herding.”

The state should not reimburse ranchers for wolf or other predation who do not practice low-stress herding.

Put cowboys and shepherds back to work. End the slaughter of the public’s wildlife (wolf, cougar, coyote) deemed harmful by special interests unwilling to manage and protect their herds.

Ask Congress to abolish the USDA Wildlife Services slaughter.

Ed Gunderson
Creswell

PHONE BOOK MONOPOLY

The new Eugene/Springfield/Lane County phone book has 49 pages of listing for attorneys. Physicians (13) and dentists (17) — combined — have 30 pages of listings.

All three are statutory granted monopolies.

This should really tell us something.

Frank Skipton
Springfield

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Raft of Loons Assemble in Salem

RULES? ... IN A KNIFE FIGHT? WHERE’S BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID?

Just when you thought that the only strange birdwatching this time of year occurred at the Malheur Refuge — two strange red and blue flocks were spotted last week at the state Capitol.

By the end of February, observers will decide whether it’s a murder of crows, a conspiracy of ravens or simply a cover of coots. After just one week in session, Salem’s *Statesman-Journal* blasted both parties for their utter lack of statesmanship and political courage. However, blaming Democrats for a “deplorable” high school graduation rate because they have “run the Legislature for several years now” fails to acknowledge the historic lack of support Republicans have shown for adequate education funding. R’s continuously blocked every imaginable revenue-raising measure in the House “for several years now.”

The Republican message for the session is a monotone: Oregon is a one party state, so we won’t cooperate. The Oregon Republican Party’s latest email from last week says it all with catatonic alliteration: “Kate-Kotek-Courtney continue Kitzhaber Culture Of Corruption.” Can you say “Kumbaya”?

The R’s would have you believe Oregon’s failure in high school graduation rates has *nothing* to do with adequate school funding. They fail to mention that Democrats never had the 60 percent supermajority needed to pass revenue measures without House Republican support. Republicans who do have the guts to support fair taxes face almost certain removal in their next primary. Without a 60 percent majority in the House, Democrats don’t control squat. But the *Journal* is right: Political courage is indeed the *rara avis* in Salem.

Yes, the Democrats will roll the Republican minority in this short session. The D’s have already produced a reasonable three-tiered response to the union’s threat of a \$15 minimum wage ballot measure. Businesses and R’s can scream their bloody heads off, but polling shows these measures have strong public support, including the \$15 proposal. This is definitely a game of chicken. But pulling stunts like forcing bills to be read word for word, grinding the process to a halt, is correctly perceived as chickenshit (except when our side does it).

In fairness to the Republicans, there is a legitimate argument that these short February sessions in even-numbered years were intended to focus on the budget and state “emergencies.” Democrats would be singing the same tune if they were in the minority. According to Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli, if obstructionism benefits the people of Oregon it’s the right thing to do. Well, at least *he’s* not *armed*. Oh, wait: He is. Oh, dear.

On the other hand, proponents of the \$15 minimum wage believe low wage jobs are a state emergency. If you work in downtown Portland and have to commute two

hours each way because you don’t earn enough to buy or rent any closer, you *might* view affordable housing as a state emergency too.

Global warming, coal emissions, climate change might not constitute an emergency in the eyes of the Art Robinson deniers, but most of the scientific community in the *world* disagrees. And if you’re the family of an innocent victim of firearm violence committed by someone who could have been screened out through a background check, then access issues might also fit *your* definition of a state emergency.

These short legislative sessions are new to Oregon — this is only the third one — so there are no protocols, no historic precedence to determine which bills move in a quick 35-day session. Ferrioli and House Minority Leader Mike McLane can obstruct and obfuscate all they want.

We Democrats were no different when we were in the minority and the Republicans were stuffing bad environmental bills, bad workers’ rights bills and insufficient budgets down our throats. Remember Dr. No? We would sneak out of the Capitol right before a floor session started and deny the other side a quorum or the ability to move a bill. We were once accused of hiding in the Capitol’s dome when we were really having a caucus dinner in the back room of La Margarita Mexican Restaurant downtown.

And we didn’t feel like we were being obstructionists because, like the Republicans today, we were fighting with the only tools we thought we had. In our case, we chose absence. Ah, those were the days of *true* statesmanship. Sorta.

One final note to Cliven Bundy and his boys: Welcome to Oregon, fellers! Enjoy your stay! Anyway, Cliven, I don’t want to seem unfriendly, but please keep in mind former Governor Tom McCall’s kindly advice: “Come visit, but don’t stay!”

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

