

## CARBON-FREE BIRDING?

I would like to respond to the mean-spirited and completely unfair bashing of Noah Strycker by Phil Henderson in Letters March 10. We are birders ourselves and were fortunate to meet this extremely nice young man on his return from his birding adventures.

Strycker makes a living writing books about birds. This obviously requires that

he has experiences to write about; and, like most everyone that makes a living, it requires travel by car, plane, train, bus, etc., all not “carbon-free.”

As for “carbon-free” birding, I assume you have one or more of the following things: bicycle, backpack, water bottle, binoculars, shoes, clothes, jacket, etc. All of them not “carbon-free.” The road you

ride your bike on? Not carbon-free. Your existence on this planet? Not carbon-free.

Get off your high horse, Mr. Henderson. If you want to minimize your use of CO2 producing fuel, fine; but that isn’t going to save this planet. If you really want to make a difference, you should be out there lobbying for nuclear power plants, the *only* current, cost-effective technology that could

both fuel our cities (almost carbon-free) and remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

Dena Fowler  
Cottage Grove

*LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words and include your address and phone number for our files. Email to letters@eugeneweekly.com, fax to 484-4044 or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.*

## VIEWPOINT BY SETH CLARK

# Thanks a Lot, Oregon!

### THE WAGE HIKE WILL HURT A LOCAL BUSINESS

I’m not one to usually complain. I typically see both sides of the equation. But this nonsense of raising the minimum wage to \$13.50 an hour! How come I didn’t get a vote on this?

Let me explain my personal economics. I own a small restaurant and have seven part-time employees. Because of the retirement community in Creswell, we strive to keep our costs low so our fixed-income friends can enjoy visits to our business, which serves as one of Creswell’s social centers. All seven of my employees make between \$9.25 and \$10.25 an hour, plus \$2 to \$3 in tips per hour each shift. My wife and I on the other hand bust our butts 56 hours apiece each week at the shop for \$8.91 per hour. You can do that math if you wish to figure our earnings.

Now let’s match that scenario with one of the common arguments for increasing the minimum wage. “People deserve to make a living — shouldn’t a single mom who has two kids and works 60 hours a week be able to afford a home and food on the table?” Yes! An astounding yes! I agree completely with this. I believe in the American Dream. I believe every man, woman and child should live a life of peace and be able to afford the things that make them happy. Yes, people should be able to buy a house; yes, people should have a reliable form of transportation; yes, people should be able to spend quality time with their loved ones. These are inherent necessities of our times and culture.

To accomplish this American Dream, my wife and I bought a coffeehouse. Some people assume owning your own business assures a few things like, making enough money to live comfortably and taking time off whenever you want. Anyone who owns a small business can tell you how wrong that is. Six years in business and we still don’t make minimum wage, and free time is at a premium. In addition



to the 56 hours per week we each spend in the shop, we run errands — like picking up fresh produce and pastries — about 288 days a year. We don’t get paid for this time but it’s what is required for the shop to work.

Some Oregonians have determined that \$13.50 an hour is a livable wage. Um, over the past five years, \$8.91 (or less) has bought us a small house, an economical car and food on our table. But for the sake of it, let’s pretend that \$8.91 is *not* a livable wage, that in this lovely state we call home it is now \$13.50 an hour. I spend roughly \$80,000 a year paying my seven employees to run our shop six days a week. I can’t afford to spend more on payroll. If I bumped all seven of my employees up to \$11 an hour and include the taxes I’m forced to pay on their behalf that total would rise closer to \$92,000 a year, an additional \$12,000. If I am able to do the same level of business as last year, and all my other expenses stayed the same, we would pay ourselves \$12,000 less a year. Our new hourly wage is \$6.85 per hour. Now, how am I supposed to afford a home, food on the table and medical bills for my wife’s pregnancy and our first child?

Do people need to make a livable wage? Absolutely, I just wish I could make that wage while also paying it to my employees. The bottom line is, we can’t unless we operate with just three employees so we can make at least the same dollar figure we made last year. That will get interesting around September when my wife’s water breaks. Oh, and there will be four additional unemployed people in our community who lose their jobs to the wage increase.

It doesn’t sound like a winning combination to me. So again, I ask, how come I didn’t get to vote on this?

*Seth Clark and his wife own and operate Creswell Coffee Co. in Creswell.*

**WE ARE EXCITED TO  
ANNOUNCE NEW  
EXTENDED HOURS!**

**Starting April 4th, 2016**

**Monday – Saturday 10:30am-9pm**

**& Sunday 12pm-5pm**

**390 Coburg Rd, Eugene OR  
541.505.8740**

# NoDak



*Locally owned  
and operated!*

**NEW FLOWER SPECIALS  
EACH WEEK!!**

**Available to Service Medical and  
Recreational Patients**

**Large Flower Selection Ask About  
The Budtender’s Special**