

ALL BLACK LIVES

I read with great interest the recent cover story ["Black Lives Matter," 7/14], particularly the article by Camilla Mortensen in which she described an unspoken but implied fourth word: "Black lives matter, *too*." That is certainly the way I have always heard the slogan.

It seems to me that right-wing critics hear a much different fourth word, an unspoken but inferred "Only black lives matter." That they hear this word is probably not related to cochlear function, but instead is related to the cognitive processing that occurs in their brains. I believe that type of cerebral pathology is termed "racism."

As for me, the original three-word slogan is perfectly obvious, concise and entirely reasonable. But if someone insists upon a four-word slogan, might I suggest:

"All Black Lives Matter."

Ronald Blanton
Eugene

THIRD PARTY

Third party person, me (Green Party), says to my third party pals and all others who might hope that "voting against Hillary will be sending a good message." Think again; that is so last century.

In the first place, no one really cares how anyone feels about Hillary. No one. The question is not about emotional bias,

it is: Can she do the job and can she help?

Yes, she can. Even Sanders now says that she is qualified, will do a good job and that we all have a chance with her. It is understood that with a Trump-led administration, we have no chance to solve problems, as he is a problem-maker and self-obsessed immature guy. Obviously this is the time to support Hillary and at the same time make sure that she hears us when she is in office. Be smart. Don't waste your vote.

Deb Huntley
Eugene

CARBON FEE

Tom Giesen [Letters, 7/14] is so right! All those upbeat articles reducing a climate disaster are not giving us the action we need! A carbon fee has proven successful in British Columbia and now they are hoping for a national policy in Canada. Where are we? I'm afraid nowhere!

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

HAPPENING MARTIAL ARTS

I enjoyed reading about the Moore (taekwondo black belt) family in your 7/21 Happening People article.

However, the article erroneously states that taekwondo will be the only martial art to be contested in next month's Rio

Olympics. If you mean Asian martial arts — Judo athletes will also be representing the U.S.

Judo has been contested by men in the Olympics since 1964, and by women since 1992. Compare this to taekwondo, which only joined the Olympic fold as a demonstration sport in 1988, and as an "official" sport in 2000.

Fencing, a Western martial art, will also be at Rio, and the sport has been contested in every modern Olympics (since 1896 for men and 1924 for women). For those looking to cheer on an Oregonian, Mariel Zagunis, a Beaverton native, is a three-time Olympic medalist and two-time champion (gold in Athens and Beijing) in women's saber, and the most decorated fencer in U.S. Olympic history.

Natalie Whitson
Eugene

SUICIDE & DEPRESSION

In the last couple of weeks, two people in my wider circle attempted suicide. One succeeded. The other is getting out of the ICU, saved, just barely, by community and by grace.

I feel compelled to write this, not only to honor these women, but also because I have direct experience with suicidal depression. I've also watched others walk this path — even warm-hearted, spiritually

centered people: Their sadness slopes into depression, and depression eventually leads them into believing their negative thoughts.

Wisdom and logic can't easily reach this dark place, and as joy disappears, so does normal attachment to life. Suicide seems like an accessible way out.

I am not a professional in psychotherapy, but I have a sense of what people can do to be of help. Even if the depressed person doesn't reach out (s/he probably can't), I suggest:

Get close. Stay close. Visit or send someone. Don't just watch the depressed person from afar.

Let the loved one know you want them here.

Let her or him know that they matter, and that their life has value.

Tell the person that you are available for an emergency call — it might prevent an attempt to end her/his life.

Help them get to a counselor; like friends or family, a counselor can be a lifeline.

We are all in this together.

K. Bragg
Eugene

OIL TRAIN DISASTER PREVENTION

So, what legislation pending or who/what persons are accountable for future oil train disasters?

VIEWPOINT BY GARY CRUM

County Power Grab

LANE COUNTY COMMISSION USURPS DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS

The Lane County Board of Commissioners, at the behest of Dennis Morgan, a local businessman and conservative political activist, is considering a proposal to grant themselves authority to review Lane County citizen initiatives, which have met all legal standards for placement on the ballot. The proposal would allow the board to declare that an initiative does not meet the board standard for "county concern" and, thereby, to bar it from the ballot.

Succinctly put, the commission would grant itself preemptive veto power over all initiatives proposing Lane County ordinances. Initiatives would be submitted to voters only if the Board of County Commissioners pre-approved them. The proposal is the most egregious power grab I've seen in the 45 years I've lived in Lane County.

Recent *Register-Guard* stories have revealed that the measure mirrors a lawsuit, which was recently dismissed in Lane County Circuit Court. While the proposed measure uses the same key term, "county concern," as the metric for veto consideration and seeks the exact goal, the board's vetoing of an initiative measure by disallowing it to be considered by voters, Mr. Morgan claims he was unaware of the just-dismissed lawsuit or its content and goals when he submitted his measure.

The lawsuit was "fronted" by Harrisburg grass seed farmer and conservative activist, Marie Bowers,

who was the sole listed plaintiff in the case. Bowers acknowledged the case was financed by "a coalition of farm and forestry interests," but refused to name them.

Circuit Court Judge Charles Carlson dismissed the lawsuit, declaring the county clerk's sole responsibility in determining an initiative's approval for placement on the ballot was judging that it addressed a "single subject as required by the state Constitution." He determined that the ordinance sought in the lawsuit was a violation of the State Constitution — that the preemptive veto based on "county concern" (or lack thereof) was an unconstitutional infringement on Oregon citizens' right to the initiative process.

Despite Judge Carlson's dismissal of the Bowers' (and unlisted et al) lawsuit and despite the clear protection the state Constitution provides for the initiative process, three of the Commissioners (Bozievich, Stewart and Leiken) seem committed to advancing the veto measure proposed by Morgan. The measure is now with county counsel, being prepared for a "first reading" toward adoption.

The initiative, referendum and recall are three very specific powers provided to citizens in the U.S. Constitution and the Oregon Constitution. They are opportunities for citizens' direct involvement in seeking "redress of grievance" and, of considerable importance, they're citizen checks on the abuse of power by an over-controlling government. They are key blocks in the very foundation of American

democracy. For citizens to surrender their right to the initiative to a County Commission or other governing body is unthinkable.

The initiative and the recall have their own "checks" to shortstop frivolous and unwarranted efforts. They require a significant number of signatures on petitions before they will qualify for the ballot. We've recently seen recall efforts in Lane County fail because of an inability to get such signatures.

Most initiative petitions, likewise, fail to achieve enough signatures to reach the ballot. If an initiative or recall petition does qualify for the ballot, it is then subject to the vote of the citizens. We just saw a recall effort fail badly in Harney County. If an initiative reaches the ballot, county commissioners will have every opportunity to campaign either for or against it. We voters are "big boys and girls" and will study such proposals and make-up our own minds. Lastly, any initiative passed, like any law passed by a legislative body, is subject to judicial review and can be invalidated by a court.

This preemptive veto measure is a terrible, undemocratic idea designed to usurp the public's political freedom by granting a governing body, in this case the Lane County Board of Commissioners, the authority to, quite literally, stifle the will of the people. It must be stopped.

Gary Crum is a retired teacher/counselor who has lived in rural Lane County since 1971. He's a former Junction City School Board member, was the Democratic candidate for State House District 43 in 1996 and is actively involved in local political issues.