

the least sustainable city on the continent.

Piercy's greenwash rhetoric distracted from ugly sprawl (Capstone, et al.), widening I-5 and Beltline, and the growing number of warehouses on farmland (Envision Eugene).

Mark Robinowitz  
Eugene

## UNITED WE RESIST

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Martinique-born Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon argues that the major weapon of colonizers is the imposition of the image of the colonized on the subjugated people.

Recognition forges identity, and dominant groups — whether the usual suspects of rich, white, Anglo Saxon, Protestant, male or American — tend to entrench their hegemony by inculcating an image of inferiority in the subjugated.

People or society mirroring back to us a confining, demeaning or contemptible picture of ourselves inflicts suffering, damage and distortion. Non- or mis-recognition can inflict real harm, oppress and imprison someone in a false, distorted and reduced

way of being.

Fanon recommended violence as a response. In response to the reactionary populism of Trump, I'd recommend non-violent resistance. Most important is a serious political strategy.

The Women's March on Washington (*Eugene Weekly*, Jan. 5) strives to be "diverse" and "better allies and listeners." The Left's crucial task is to forge a coalition of women, LGBTQIA, labor, Latinos, Native Americans, African-Americans, Jews and environmentalists. For it is just that scatter of left politics that allows neo-capitalism to dominate our society. To the extent each left group focuses on its own single issue, the left will remain impotent in the face of soft fascism.

As Deanna Eisinger said, we have to make sacrifices "to advance society as a whole."

Sam Porter  
Eugene

## DON'T BE A FLAKE

If you were a kid in the town where I grew up, a snow day wasn't just an opportunity for sled riding and snowball fights, it was also an economic opportunity.

Kids could work all day shoveling

walks for dough, since property owners in upstate New York where I lived were obligated by law to clear their sidewalks. If you didn't, you could be ticketed and fined. You could also be held liable if someone slipped and fell on your sidewalk due to un-cleared ice or snow. To my knowledge no laws like this exist here, but they should.

When there is snow and ice, people should be able to get around with some reasonable level of safety. Whether you are elderly, disabled, poor, young or old, you should be able to walk to the store, the library, the doctor or a friend's house without hiking boots and ski poles. One of the reasons school was canceled on Jan. 9 was because of the terribly dangerous conditions of the sidewalks.

I respectfully ask my fellow Oregonians to consider expanding their idea of personal responsibility and civic duty. Begin clearing your sidewalks when needed, keeping them open and safe no matter how much snow or ice we get.

Joshua Welch  
Eugene

## UNSAFE SPRAYING

There have been a number of op-eds

lately about how safe and well regulated the spraying of pesticides and herbicides is in Oregon. I see "industry" flacks using both pesticide and herbicide interchangeably, which continues to confuse the public about what is really going on in our forests. I believe that is deliberate.

The real issue that should be debated is how "safe and well-regulated" these poisons are. Whatever you call them, they are designed to kill. Both federal and state forests here have not used aerial spray for years! All work is done by hand directly where it's needed, providing forest jobs. How can governments grow trees this way, but not private companies?

And if it's all so well regulated and safe, why can't we find out what exactly was in that "proprietary" spray? People and animals are sickened by drift, but without knowing the chemicals involved, doctors are helpless. Some people say to leave the area when you know there will be spraying. There is no advance notification except vague notices that there might be a spray event in future ... maybe.

More corporate harms inflicted on citizens, with absolutely no redress! State regulators do nothing, and state legislators

## VIEWPOINT BY DEANNA CHAPPELL BELCHER AND GEOFF BARRETT

# Dear CAPE

## LETTERS ABOUT SMARTER BALANCED STANDARDIZED TESTING

### Dear Community Alliance for Public Education:

Every year we hear about this "opting out" business. We aren't big fans of standardized tests, but we don't want our child to lose out. It says on the opt-out form that we will be missing "valuable information" about our child's progress if she doesn't take the test.

Would I be preventing her teachers from knowing how she's doing academically?

Sincerely, A Curious & Cautious Parent

### Dear C&C:

The Smarter Balanced assessment used in Oregon now is only one possible measure of students' work in school, and it is by no means the best. It measures a very limited slice of the whole delicious pie of your child's total learning experience.

We suggest that if you want to know how your child is doing in school, talk to her teachers.

Teachers work closely with kids day after day (snow permitting!) and rely much more on class work, performance tasks and chapter tests, which are more authentic and accurate indicators of how a child is progressing academically. You want a complete picture of your child as a student, not just a score.

### Dear CAPE:

I do not understand why so many people are refusing Smarter Balanced assessments. My kids do just fine on the tests! They're not stressed out, plus it's good practice for them when they have to take the SAT to get into a good college. Why can't other kids just study harder and then do well on the tests too?

From, Parent of an Achiever

### Dear Achiever:

It's great that your kids are successful and work hard. But this struggle is about all kiddos. Large numbers of children, who are as valuable and important as your special snowflakes, are suffering under this test-driven model of schooling — kids who are not natural test takers, have special educational or emotional needs, are learning English as their second language, have cultural and financial backgrounds different from yours or don't own a computer for practice, and who therefore may not be as successful on the tests. They can't just "study harder" because the test is not about learning, it's about test taking. Ultimately, all students — our whole society — will suffer if our children grow up to be effective test-takers but not critical and creative thinkers.

### Dear CAPE:

I don't like standardized tests and would prefer to opt my child out, but other parents tell me that opting could harm my school's rating and its stature in the community. This in turn could impact my property value. Is that true?

Signed, Gimme an A!

### Dear A:

Imagine you live in a neighborhood where the elementary school has an "A" on its state's report card. Much of that grade is made up of students' scores on standardized tests. It doesn't reflect the wonderful teachers, the dynamic principal, the garden program, its language immersion program, the wonderful talent show every year, or its annual school wide immersive study of the ocean ecosystem.

Imagine what would happen if folks started refusing to participate in the system by which these grades are assigned? What if your school's grade went from "A" to "C" and the only thing that had changed was the refusal to take the tests? Would you move? Would you transfer your child to a different school, one with an "A" from the state? Why would property values go down when everything that means anything is still in place?

### Dear CAPE:

I took standardized tests in school, and I turned out fine. We need to know whether our teachers and schools are doing their job and testing is the *only* way to objectively measure school quality!

Sincerely, Data Junkie

### Dear D J:

Standardized tests are only one type of measurement, and if they are used as the be-all and end-all, they can be misleading at best, and devastating to schools and students at worst. Our kids average 112 standardized tests in their school careers — 25 times as many tests as you did! Clearly, they are dominating all other types of measurement by monopolizing time, attention and money. We recommend a more balanced assessment for Oregon students. By opting out, parents can join a real conversation about the kind of education we want.

*Deanna Chappell Belcher is a teacher, learner and a parent. Geoff Barrett is a high school teacher and parent. Both are members of CAPE, The Community Alliance for Public Education, a coalition of parents, teachers, professors, students and community members who challenge the many assaults on public education and who believe in a strong public education as the foundation for American democracy. We meet most Wednesdays at 4:30 pm at Perugino in Eugene. Visit CAPE's Web site at [oregoncape.org](http://oregoncape.org).*