

**POISONING THE WELL**

Weyerhaeuser is planning to aerially spray a witches' brew of toxic herbicides in an area that is uncomfortably close to the main intake for drinking water for Eugene and its associated canal.

The details speak for themselves: Aerial spray of 24.3 acres near Deerhorn Road and the drinking water intake and canal for Eugene with atrazine, hexazinone, sulfometuron methyl, oxyfluorfen and penoxsulam, glyphosate, 2,4-D with ester, 2,4-D with acid, 2,4-D with amine, 2,4-D with choline, clopyralid, fluroxypyr, No Foam, Crosshair, Grounded, Epoleon N-100 and/or Epoleon N-7C.

The last two chemicals are odor maskers, which raises some other serious questions. See ODF notification 2017-771-01491.

But fear not, good people of Eugene: The industry assures us that these chemicals are safe and that their distribution into

the air from flying machines poses us no risk of harm to health or property.

In fact, I've seen a top industry spokesman show a slide that ranks caffeine as more toxic than atrazine. Or was it glyphosate? Either way, we have a coffee shop on every corner and we're still OK.

So why not have atrazine in our water? With a splash of clopyralid for good measure.

Drink up, Eugeneans!

Rob Dickinson  
Cottage Grove

**FARM HARM**

I've always believed that maintaining the farmland around Eugene was a high priority. Lately, though, the hazy skies, unhealthy smoke and sickening odor from field burning make me think concrete, asphalt and houses aren't quite so bad after all.

I can think of some things I'd like to do to those inconsiderate and lazy yahoos fouling all our air, and hugging them is not on the list.

Karl Stout  
Eugene

**NARCISSIST IN CHIEF**

Though the (Republican) U.S. Senate and Congress were, and still are, unable or unwilling to fully grasp the meaning of "clinical diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder" (with a likelihood of sociopathic tendencies), they "knew he was a snake when they let him in."

I did finally just hear Bernie say that out loud. Of course.

Marilyn Marcus  
Eugene

**DIRECT VS. INDIRECT ACTION**

In regard to your article titled "Activism 101" from the Feb. 9 issue, I believe you have misled your readers as to the distinction between "direct" and "indirect." Direct, in this context, means without intervening factors or intermediaries, whereas indirect means conducted through intermediaries.

Perhaps some examples would help illustrate the difference. A direct action that addresses homelessness would be to provide free medical services to the unhoused every Sunday in a park downtown. An indirect action that addresses homelessness would be to vote for a mayor who supports establishing more rest stops.

A direct action that addresses climate change would be to attempt to stop the construction of a new pipeline by using your own body as a blockade for the excavators, but an indirect action that addresses climate change would be to donate funds

**DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION** BY C.A. YOUNG AND CARLOTTA MEGINE

# A Message from Teachers in the Era of Trumpism

THIS YEAR AT SCHOOL, KIDS ARE SCARED

*A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?*

— George Washington

**W**hat do kids typically experience the first day of school? Nerves. Will I make friends? Will my teacher like me? Where is the bathroom? These are the typical concerns that you'd imagine.

But this year at school? Fears. Will my parents get pulled over after they drop me off? Is it really fair to ask them to risk their safety? Will my family be there when I get home? Will other students shame me for

my political choices? Will I get beat up because of where my family comes from? Will I get to see my stepdad now that my parents are getting divorced, and he might have to leave the country? Will Donald Trump really kill all the women? Are we going to have a nuclear war?

The last three questions were actually posed by local fifth graders. These are the very real, all-consuming fears that are plaguing many of our students this year.

**THE IMPACT IN OUR SCHOOLS**

As teachers, we can see it in our students, in how hallway behaviors have changed. There is a charge that wasn't there before, an undercurrent of anxiety. Students are feeling unsafe. They are warier of each other; they are scared of what will happen to their families; they are scared of what is happening to their country.

Why aren't we talking about this with each other and with our children? They are absorbing the fear and division we face as a nation and as adults, yet we are expecting them to compartmentalize it. Students are doing the best they can to manage their anxiety, but the energy required is preventing many of them from being able to fully focus on learning.

**WHAT WE CAN DO**

What is a healthy and appropriate response from local schoolteachers, staffs, teacher unions, school boards and district administrators?

- School staffs need to have regular discussions about these issues and examine the best responses.
- Teachers need time to share teaching ideas and curriculum with one another.
- School districts need to organize high-quality professional development that utilizes the cultural wisdom and perspectives of impacted communities.
- Teacher unions need to step up and play a serious role in such professional development.
- Community panels and forums need to be organized by individual schools, by school districts and by teacher unions that feature the voices of those most impacted.
- District leaders need to encourage staff to take a pro-active stance in supporting families and students without fear of reprisal from administrators.

If the goal of education is to teach democracy in all of its meanings, educators must have the courage to establish and facilitate safe places for conversation. Public schools must be the place where students come to understand the many perspectives of others, as well as how to respond to each other civilly, with the understanding that everyone has something to teach us. We must learn to find the common ground upon which compromise can occur.

C.A. Young is a local language arts and social studies teacher middle school teacher for 12 years. Carlotta Megine is the pseudonym for a local teacher out of concern over whether a teacher's views meet or don't meet official district policy and what expressing those views could mean to the teacher, principal and school. 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 Mondays at 4:30 pm at Perugia in downtown Eugene. For more information, visit CAPE's website at [oregoncape.org](http://oregoncape.org).