

TOO MANY PEOPLE

The root cause of current climate change must be addressed: human overpopulation in a world with finite resources.

Too many people equals a large appetite for energy, fresh water and arable land. In 1900, the world population was 1.5 billion. By 1965, it was 3.3 billion. Only 52 years later, 7 billion!

In 1983, we passed the tipping point of using more resources than the earth could regenerate, known as “ecological overshoot.” The solution? All methods of contraception should be available to every person on earth of childbearing age for free or at an affordable price, including surgical methods of voluntary tubal ligation, vasectomy and abortion. Abstinence is ineffective.

If we don’t curb our reproduction, human beings will face continued loss of habitat and extinction of our species. Wars over resources, political upheaval, income inequality, pandemics of new diseases, crop failures resulting in famines and animal extinction are only symptoms.

Instead of treating symptoms, treat the root cause. Developed nations have the

technical wherewithal to address this issue and also to assist emerging nations. Education goes up. Empowerment goes up. Population goes down.

All we lack is the ethical political will unhindered by corruption and religious fanaticism. I’m not optimistic.

*Charlotte Brandt
Eugene*

NEWMAN FOR SCHOOL BOARD

As a retired superintendent, I know the importance of having highly qualified school-board members. Eugene School Board will find no one better than Judy Newman. She is a voice for social justice, fighting for equity and educational funding. She has a proven track record of leveraging resources through advocacy, partnerships and grant writing.

Judy is an innovator. She was among the first to recognize that early childhood education is the key to individual student success. She developed an innovative and highly regarded model for supporting special needs children and their families. Recognized in the county, state, nation and

world, she is sought after as an advisor, mentor and creative thinker.

Judy works tirelessly to meet the needs of others. She has served on the boards of Shelter Care, Lane County United Way and numerous state-level working groups.

Judy is a strong student advocate. She has consistently demonstrated exemplary leadership, strong values and an unwavering commitment to providing a high-quality education for every student.

Students in the 4J district deserve an excellent education and Judy Newman has the knowledge and expertise to make that happen. I enthusiastically endorse her for Eugene School District Board Position 3.

*Nancy Golden
Springfield*

FAKE LETTERS

Fake news has infected even letters to the editor.

Who are these idiots hissing and snarling in their echo chambers of vapid-ity? Have they been vetted? We need to know from whom the memes flow. Who taught them to talk? What educational ancestry (if any) they claim.

Otherwise we might fall prey to their seductive la-de-da and their lucid muse so amusing. Our hearts will be broken, our spirits riled. Beguiled by fake letters to the editor.

*David Hugh Tyson
Eugene*

GOD HELP US

A congressional hearing as a result of a POTUS tweet based on a Fox “News” report.

*Frank Schnebly
Eugene*

SCHOOL OF GREED

University of Oregon administrators have leaned a ladder against the tree of knowledge, climbed a few rungs and identified non-tenured professors, poor and hungry students and disabled persons without a leg to stand on as low-hanging fruit, slim but easy pickings as they teeter towards balancing an out-of-whack operating budget.

High-hanging and much riper fruit like senior-administration compensation, tail-wagging-dog athletics spending and edi-

VIEWPOINT BY DAN PENNINGTON

An Indispensable Forest

SAVING THE ELLIOTT AND ALL ITS VALUES

How do we assign value to a forest? Is it in board feet of timber? Is it in habitat for ravens, bald eagles, osprey, northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, belted kingfishers, juncos and chickadees? Is it in chanterelles, thimbleberries, fiddleheads and stinging nettle?

Is it in its ability to sequester hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide each year? Is it in its water storage, buffering and filtration? Is it in an old-growth fir who has fallen on her side, transforming into a nursery for young and vibrant hemlocks to sprout from her decomposing body, teaching us a universal rule that rebirth follows death? Is it in soil building and nutrient accumulation?

Is it in whispering secrets of an elegant universe by providing the window into a microcosm of a perfect system? Is it in preservation, so that our children can experience the revelation that life is brilliant and complex?

Taken from several perspectives, the forest may in fact be priceless.

In the mid-19th century, Oregon forests underwent a change as the values of the white settlers misaligned with the natural value of this particular landscape. For the native peoples, the preservation of salmon runs and sustainable forest stewardship was intrinsic; something they had been eased into over thousands of years of hunting and gathering. They were a functioning part of the forest whole.

Eventually, native tribes were pried away from their home forests concurrent with the forest being eroded from their lives. A once priceless segment of one group’s identity underwent a valuation by another set of people, and it became clear: In order to turn trees and salmon into money, the settlers needed to strip the human identity from the forest.

Dollar signs, instead of the forest itself, became the new standard bearer of value. The bountiful embrace the forest bestowed upon all its symbiotic inhabitants was disregarded in favor of mass-capitalization by a new tenant, hopelessly unaware of their (self-)destructive nature. The natives were conned into giving up their land-base and food source. They received last chance at the salmon runs after the commercial fisheries and white settlers took their share.

All along the Coast Range, away from their tribal bases of knowledge and identity, the First Nations people who had survived disease and violent attacks were corralled into the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations where language, tradition and a life of sustainability degenerated into the acquiescence to another man’s paradigm.

And as the new white settlers looked down upon their native counterparts as some primitive culture, they also looked down upon the forest, and all its components, as their God-given dominion.

This story starts to rhyme with other tales where man’s greed, ignorance and apathy turned lush growing regions into deserts, thereby thrusting future generations into hardship and calamity. Following the thread of this exploitative stewardship to today, most of the forests have been converted into tree farms, leaving behind a smattering of original growth forests squeezed between the scars of human activity.

Salmon runs are sparse and need significant human intervention to simply maintain their numbers. Just as salmon are a keystone species for forest health, so the forest is a keystone organism for societal and planetary health. As goes the forest, so goes humanity.

So where do we go from here? First, we must broaden our definition of value to include more than just monetary value.

Cultural value, environmental value, habitat value, educational value, sustenance value and tourism value are all factors that get lost when our minds are hyper-focused on revenue. We must find a balance in how we take and how much we take.

Wood products have a place in society, but cutting 35-year-old trees, pulping them and sending the pulp to China — only to have paper products returned to fill shelves at OfficeMax — is wholly unnecessary and a product of scraping the bottom of the barrel in order to squeeze every cent out of a diminishing resource.

We must find wisdom in how the original people of this land revered the forest and integrate that process into a new model of thought. We must reconnect and empathize with the forest and treat her with great respect, no longer apathetic to the gashes inflicted on her body. We must visit her, and thank her, and revel in her.

I support Gov. Kate Brown’s plan to buy out the Common School Fund from the Elliott State Forest using bond money. I support the governor’s plan to responsibly log parts of the forest. And I support her plan for public and tribal ownership.

I urge environmental leaders to proactively reach out to tribal leaders and seek an alliance born out of preservation, common ground and retribution. And I urge Treasurer Tobias Read to listen to his constituents. Save the Elliott State Forest!

Dan Pennington is a small-scale farmer and B&B host at Myrtle Glen Farm, located in the Coast Range forest of Coos County.