

## SCORCHED EARTH

Rebuild? Do we understand this is a new world and we have to change where we can live? Do we understand that this is only a beginning of hurricanes and floods and fires, and rebuilding is a huge waste?

We are too late.

Ruth Duemler  
Eugene

## FAKE VICTIM

In response to the political truth jackass claiming to be targeted by Antifa (Letters, Sept. 14), let's make a couple things clear:

You were hidden from the public's eye until you and your fake-goth girlfriend started doxing (publicly releasing personal information) those you believed to be affiliated with left-wing ideals. You were the one putting people's lives at risk based on Facebook likes and careless accusations. You were the one that chose to put yourself in the spotlight of antifascists.

Does that make you a Nazi? Not necessarily ... but if you use their terminology and are complacent in doing their bidding,

it sure puts you on the wrong side of history. Does that mean you are not welcome in Lane County? Absolutely!

It's obvious by the way you start your letter claiming to be against bigotry, but spend the entire time hating on those who have different opinions, that you have no idea what the word bigotry means.

Stop playing the victim and take responsibility for your actions.

P.S. Communism will win!

Lola Bravo  
Eugene

## CLINTON DIDN'T LOSE

In reply to Jerry Ritter, Hillary Clinton lost because she was up against the most childish, despicable, dishonest campaign in modern history, and that is "What Happened."

In reality, she didn't lose, because more Americans voted for her than for her rival, and only because of the flawed Electoral College system was the "deplorable, irredeemable" Trump declared the winner.

Spud Smith  
Oakridge

## UGLY EUGENE

After the imposing downtown buildings, condos, rentals, etc. were built right to the property line, so uninviting to the pedestrian traffic, I had hoped the community would see the error in this. If Eugene wants to increase foot-traffic downtown, or anywhere, there must be an attractive, inviting corridor.

But the trend continues, with big unforgiving walls right next to the surrounding walkways, encouraging hurried and directed traffic from A to B with no pleasant strolling. Now, on South Willamette, is the monumental eyesore that is McDonald's. I don't need to know anything other than that the visual impact of this building is abominable.

Please, can't we consider the visual effect and sense of invitation when allowing building impacts on neighborhoods? Big, stark walls are not inviting. They look like prisons and tag-friendly expanses, not public spaces.

Using basic architectural principles, we can still utilize land value and encour-

age public perception to invite people into public spaces. Please, Planning Department, put the kibosh on these seriously unfriendly landscapes with buildings that can reflect an interest in connecting people, rather than repelling casual interaction.

Janna Abraham  
Eugene

## PREVENTABLE OUTBREAK

I was disturbed by a recent news story from NPR reporting that an outbreak of hepatitis A in San Diego has forced that city to begin washing its downtown streets with bleach. At least 16 people have died in this outbreak and more than 400 people are infected, most of them homeless.

The report says part of the issue is an apparent shortage of public restrooms in areas where the unshowered population congregates.

San Diego County issued a directive on Aug. 31 demanding the city wash its streets with bleach and expand public restroom access.

I am wondering if Lane County Health

## VIEWPOINT

BY ROSCOE CARON AND LAURA FARRELLY

# Democracy and Education

TOO YOUNG TO TEST?

**K**indergarten: It's German for "children's garden."

Kindergarten is traditionally based on playing, singing, story-time, creative activities and social interaction. Not in the "corporate model" education era, however. Now, during their first three weeks of school, Oregon's 40,000 kindergarten kids are given standardized assessments in math, literacy and interpersonal skills.

How on earth did we get from the "children's garden" to the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment (OKA)? House Bill 4165 (2012) established early learning standards for children age 3 to 5. It empowered Oregon's Early Learning Council that "supports practice-based evidence and data-driven decision-making and accountability for realistic, measurable outcomes for children..."

Since 2013, all school districts are required to test kids upon entry into kindergarten. Oregon is one of 32 states that mandate such tests.

## 'The test didn't tell me anything'

In the "corporate model" era, teachers' voices are rarely heard. Their opinions are mostly unsolicited in the development of corporate education hallmarks such as Common Core or the Smarter Balanced tests.

Around the country, including locally, teachers are threatened with punishment if they criticize standardized testing. School districts, state officials and school boards are free to laud standardized testing as much as they want. Teachers, however, face sanctions if they offer a counter-narrative.

CAPE interviewed a number of local kindergarten teachers to ask them about the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment. They offered their views anonymously for fear of reprisal. Here are some of those views:

## On the worth of the tests

Teacher 1: "These tests are of limited use. They take away from the earliest and most important work in the first weeks: a child's sense of safety and of belonging in a classroom."

Teacher 2: "The test didn't tell me anything. It's a lot of time and doesn't give me the information that people think it's going to give me."

Teacher 3: "The assessments are not worthwhile. They are a snapshot."

Teacher 4: "The data? I don't really get any useful info from these tests."

## On the impact on the students and classroom

Teacher 1: "It's very invasive and not fair to the children and the community we're trying to develop."

Teacher 2: "We are building a new community. It's hugely disruptive."

Teacher 3: "For the 'interpersonal skills,' we are told to 'guess where the students are at' based on two weeks of observation. It's extremely subjective."

Teacher 4: "The beginning of the year is mind-blowing for kindergarten kids. They don't even know where the bathroom is and we're going to assess them? They get okayed by the state and then they get easyCBM'd (a district test) by the district."

## On the impact on teachers

Teacher 1: "It's not only kindergarten teachers. Assessment and fear will now start happening at pre-schools, especially in the Head Start schools. We're just going to start making pre-school miserable."

Teacher 2: "It takes away the autonomy, creativity and knowledge of the teacher."

Teacher 3: "I trust the assessments I develop. I'm not sure the district and state tools are the right ones."

Teacher 4: "We test the kids as soon as they are in our hands. It's simply not right. We are not trusted to make professional decisions about our own classrooms, yet we are trusted to have these kids all day long."

## Other Voices

Two internationally known "corporate model" critics with ties to Oregon have offered their views on the OKA.

David Berliner, author of *50 Myths and Lies That Threaten America's Public Schools*, says, "Remember the saying 'Everything important in life is actually learned in kindergarten'? I've noticed that none of these essentials are assessed on standardized tests."

Yong Zhao, author of *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon?*, says, "Going to kindergarten is not a job interview. Children do not need to be ready for kindergarten; kindergarten needs to be ready for children."

The only way we can get to a more rational assessment system is for the public to question deeply the current data-centered corporate model. New York and Illinois have passed Too Young to Test laws that prohibit standardized testing in grades K-2.

Oregon should do likewise. Contact your legislators.

*Roscoe Caron and Laura Farrelly are members of the Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE, oregoncape.org), 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. For more information about Too Young to Test legislation in New York and Illinois, visit publicleadershipinstitute.org.*