

HONEST PETE

Here in blue Oregon, some find it easy to criticize Congressman Peter DeFazio's calls for realistic goals in the fight against climate change. But when you take a step back and examine the country as a whole, it becomes clear we face serious issues in our attempts to address the climate crisis.

It's easy to launch criticism from the sidelines. It's another thing to be in the arena with climate-change deniers tackling this issue head-on.

Trump and the Republicans still deny that climate change is even happening! And because Republicans are beholden to money from their fossil fuel buddies, we're a long way from implementing meaningful solutions.

DeFazio has been outspoken about the existential threat of climate change for a long time, and we can always count on him to tell it like it is. But DeFazio doesn't only speak out. This year, he stepped up and organized campaign actions in red-to-blue districts around the county to vote out climate change deniers and elect a new generation of leaders to Congress who are committed to taking meaningful action on climate change.

Now, with our Democratic majority in the House, we should expect real progress over the next two years until we win back the Senate and the presidency.

But I also expect my Congressman to tell the truth about the political realities we face and have a clear-eyed vision of the problem. We can count on Peter to find — and fight for — real solutions.

Chris Wig
Springfield

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

When the Amtrak train that I was traveling on last year made an unscheduled stop in Oakridge, I saw a panorama of natural beauty and decided to come back to visit, which I did in early November.

The plan was a peaceful, quiet, scenic trip; that plan quickly fell apart when I discovered the following: hunting season; clear-cut forest; open, flat areas of land that were orange, yellow, brown and antifreeze-colored green (not natural, especially for the Northwest); and bulldozers knocking the land down flat.

When I found a flyer, written by an Oakridge resident, concerned about the increasing contamination in the area due to rock quarry mining, I understood what I had observed.

I'm glad someone in Oakridge is also disturbed about the environmental degradation happening in such a beautiful area, and then made the effort to inform the public.

Travel Lane County failed to mention

any of these things, so the lesson is that we should rely more on locals for accurate travel info.

The flyer directs the public to "Facebook: Save TV Butte" for additional information.

Robbie Sesso
Wilsonville

STAY IN YOUR LANE

In response to the letter "Sidewalk Rules" (*EW*, Nov. 29): The letter writer seems to be arguing in favor of cyclists using sidewalks. He writes that, "There is no requirement to use bike lanes citywide," and that "bike lanes... provide a false sense of security for bikes."

Both these statements are untrue. ORS 814.420 states that it is illegal to ride on a sidewalk if there is a bike lane "adjacent to or near the roadway." A 2012 study from University of British Columbia, titled "Bicyclists injuries and the cycling environment," found that bike lanes (especially protected ones) significantly reduced the risk of accident.

A separate study titled "Safe cycling: How do risk perceptions compare with actual risk?" found that cyclists very accurately perceive the relative safety of bike lanes. I personally think it's foolish to ride on sidewalks rather than bike lanes — it

forces an interaction with pedestrians in which one of you is going to have to move, and cars usually don't anticipate dealing with something traveling 15 mph on the sidewalk.

Zane Hager
Eugene

OUR HEALTH SCANDAL

Recently I needed medical intervention for a skin rash that had morphed into cellulitis in my left leg. I was in hospital a little short of three days.

My situation was never life threatening. PeaceHealth gave me blood tests, lab work, liquid antibiotics. I was discharged with a prescription for a generic pharmaceutical costing \$4. Cool!

But then came the reality, the bills.

Medicare took care of \$19,000 of the \$22,000-something bill. I became liable for around \$2,600. Two hours in the emergency room was almost \$1,000. Without Medicare I would have faced a \$23,000 bill. Ridiculous!

I requested a detailed breakdown of my hospital bill.

The presiding doctors? Almost \$500 per hour. An antibiotic available elsewhere for \$15? More than \$170. Saline drip? \$100 an hour. My windowless basement room? \$6,000.

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Of Blue Waves and Bah Humbugs!

POLITICIANS AND OPINIONATERS

Dear reader, we haven't visited since the election. Congratulations! Mostly the good people won. The Blue Wave showed up in Lane County with a 69 percent turnout!

My wife Jeannie and I headed to Mexico in late October and didn't return until after the election. I made the mistake of telling my grumpy friend "the congressman" beforehand that I was going down there. He assured me that Trump would never allow me back in the country. So I applied for a temporary permanent Mexican residence visa. Now I can be an alien from another country besides Ireland. I did sneak back into the Willamette Valley without letting Peter know. But I still don't know whether I immigrated or emigrated...

Some election results didn't surprise me. DeFazio's 34-point victory over Radiant Art Robinson — *for the fifth time* — was sweet. I hope Art continues to run in perpetuity! And I expected Julie Fahey to trounce that loser Rich Cunningham in House District 14 — she beat him by over 20 points.

Even the races I figured to be close were landslides. Kate Brown's final margin over Knute Buehler was more than 6 percent statewide and 16 percent in Lane County. Marty Wilde cleaned Mark Herbert's clock in House District 11 by more than 20 points. The best news was Heather Buch clobbering incumbent appointee Gary Williams by more than 12 points in the East Lane Commissioner race! We finally have a reasonably progressive board with Heather and Joe Berney joining Pete Sorenson in 2019.

Who You Gonna Blame? Dear Reader, you know I'm a direct-action kind of guy. Recently I concluded the *Eugene Weekly* Letters editor was one sick puppy. How else can you explain the juxtaposition of two recent letters, one on top of the other, from two of my favorite wingnuts — rightwing nut Jerry Ritter and leftwing nut Robert Emmons.

Jerry has an excellent handle on everything from uncontrolled immigration crushing Europe to Mitch McConnell and the Republican Senate saving us from the socialist Democrats just elected to the U.S. House. Not to be outdone, Robert is equally disgusting in his attack on DeFazio for ignoring environmental catastrophe. Hell, after reading these two guys, why should we even bother to hold elections anymore?

My favorite part of the *EW* is the Letters section. So I confronted the editor of the *EW*, Camilla Mortensen, at the paper's annual "holiday" party, and immediately blamed *her* for this odd juxtaposition. She assured me there was no conspiracy or collusion between the *EW* and these veteran opinionaters to suppress future voter turnout. And she immediately blamed senior staff writer Rick Levin for approving the letters. Since Rick was also at the holiday party, along with contributing editor Anita Johnson, I "Bah humbugged" them both for good measure.

I've known Ritter and Emmons for many years, and, even though they come from opposite ends of the political spectrum, their sideline soapbox rantings offer nothing in the way of solutions, of moving forward. Emmons especially seems to come out of the wood-

work every two years, right after elections, with an attack on Peter. As far as I know neither of these guys has ever run for or won an election. What a surprise!

DeFazio is now the longest serving House member in Oregon history. One big difference between him and his critics is that he's been elected in a tough congressional district for the past 32 years. Unlike either of those two clowns, Peter has developed a well-earned reputation as an independent, passionate and effective lawmaker.

I'm currently reading Jon Meacham's *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*, his best-selling take on how history shows we can survive even the Trump era. He has a quote from a 1910 speech by Teddy Roosevelt that is an appropriate response to these solution-less soapbox sociopaths:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood... who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place will never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Thanks for your good work, Peter. To hell with the nattering nabobs of negativism!

Former state Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is former legislator and a retired state employee.