

Up Against the Machine

BILLS IN SALEM FIGHT THE EDUCATION COMBINE

“You had a choice: You could either strain and look at things that appeared in front of you in the fog, painful as it might be, or you could relax and lose yourself.”

— Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

In Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, the character Chief Bromden could hear the hum of “The Combine” in the walls. It was the sound of the system that strips us of our humanity and individuality. It crushes spirits until they conform.

Pop quiz: What would Ken Kesey think of today’s corporate “reform” model of education that reduces much of the adventure and joy of learning to meeting pre-ordained metrics and benchmarks based on endlessly repeated standardized testing?

Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE) members have been busy in Salem working on legislation designed to challenge parts of the testing-industrial complex. Made up of testing companies, the vast data-gathering state and local educational bureaucracies, the corporate-backed “stakeholder” lobbying groups that promote “accountability,” and legislators who are unable to oppose those forces — this is “The Combine” that has run educational policy in Oregon for two decades. This is the machine that presently runs your child’s classroom.

The “Too Young to Test” bill (HB 2318) that would pro-

hibit mandatory testing from prekindergarten through grade two is stalled. House Education Committee members know this testing is excessive and inappropriate. Facing intense lobbying and not able to envision an alternative to the failed testing-based model they have historically supported, they are stuck.

The “Eliminate Oregon’s Graduation Barrier” bill (SB 456) is doing better. There’s less money involved and joining the 40 states that have no graduation testing requirement is less threatening but is certainly not a slam dunk.

Also up against the machine, our hero in Salem, Sen. Lew Frederick (D—Portland), has an “Opt-Out Strengthening Bill” (SB 433). Frederick, an author of the original 2015 opt-out bill, is furious at the way local districts are doing everything possible to prevent parents from opting out of state-mandated high-stakes testing. This includes minimizing notification of parents’ rights, ordering teachers to not talk to parents about their rights and directly discouraging parents from opting out. This is a system based on fear and misinformation.

Frederick’s other bill, “Comprehensive Audit of Testing

Costs” (SB 428) would document the real costs of mandatory standardized testing. It’s fascinating that the data-obsessed complex displays no desire to know the actual costs of its own system: “the impacts on instructional time, curricula, educators’ exercise of professional judgment, budgets and administrative time and focus”. If the public knew the real price of the corporate “reform” model, they would reject it. The testing machine operates in the shadows, behind walls.

Locally, last school year CAPE conducted a pilot study of time consumed by mandatory standardized testing with 10 local teachers keeping a log of time they spent administering, practicing or meeting to discuss tests with colleagues, administrators or parents. These teachers averaged 46 hours in the year — some spent considerably more time. We believe most teachers do. This computes to six school days — even more than the recently lost snow days. We moan about making up snow days in June but somehow accept days lost to testing. And so much more than time is being lost to testing.

Time to jam the machine.

Roscoe Caron and Larry Lewin, retired Eugene School District middle school teachers, are members of the Community Alliance for Public Education, which works “to defend public education from the damaging practices of reformers’ and corporate interests.” CAPE is a member of the Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN). Find us on Facebook and the web for more on these bills.



Nancy's
PROBIOTIC
FOODS

JOIN US FOR OUR 11TH NANCY'S
Recycling Round-Up

Saturday March 23rd 11am-2pm

Whole Foods Market
353 E Broadway, Eugene, OR

Bring us your **CLEAN** Nancy's containers and lids
and they will be made into *new items!*

Thank you for helping us keep Nancy's containers out of our landfill.

Springfield Creamery • Independent & Family Owned • Eugene, Oregon



NOW OPEN

PlantFashions Plus
LOCALLY OWNED PLANT NURSERY

Beautiful Spring Color!

Ranunculas • Pansies • Violas
Petunias • Dianthus • Stock

Expect the best quality! Plants grown on-site.

4380 JASPER ROAD • SPRINGFIELD
plantfashionsplus.com

TUE-SAT 10A-5P • SUN 11A-4P
CLOSED MONDAYS



STAY TUNED!
Springing up in the Whit!

Dew Drop Inn

RESTAURANT & BAR

CONSCIOUS CUISINE & CRAFT COCKTAILS

Serving 8 am - Late Night

BRUNCH ALL DAY EVERY DAY!

-options for alternative diets-

LOCAL INGREDIENTS
POSITIVE VIBES
ART * COMMUNITY * MUSIC

394 BLAIR BLVD.

@DEWDROPEUG
dewdropinneugene@gmail.com
541-844-1407

LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE



BECAUSE SOMETIMES THE ROAD GETS BUMPY. I'M HERE TO HELP LIFE GO RIGHT. CALL ME FOR AUTO INSURANCE!



Kerry Oliver
541-654-0737 888-493-9715
115 W 6TH AVENUE
EUGENE, OR 97401-2606
WWW.KOLIVERSFEUGENE.COM

Auto • Home • Commercial
Life • Health




Harlequin

beads
from around the world

2833 Willamette • (541) 683-5903
www.harlequinbeads.com