

Big money speaks

I picked up a copy of *The Oregonian* a few days ago. My attention was drawn to Steve Duin's column titled "A chance to tackle big money in Oregon politics." Big Money is here in our Oregon legislature, and it is not good. It is like a cancer that is spreading unseen throughout our state government.

He goes on to mention that on April 21, Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton) will testify in favor of allowing Oregon voters to consider contribution limits. She thinks that American politics have been taken out of the hands of the average American voter, the average citizen. Really? Well this senator has taken a bill that she sponsored that was totally rejected by the average Oregon citizen, and secretly stuck it into a bill in the Education Committee.

Early this year she introduced SB 442 that would remove the philosophical exemption to vaccines. This bill was withdrawn March 11, because of an overwhelming negative response by Oregon voters. A cosponsor of the bill, Sen. Alan Bates declared "the people have spoken, and they (senators) listened, (but not Sen. Steiner Hayward). Sen. Bates said they would not bring up the bill in the foreseeable future."

The foreseeable future passed quickly, and Sen. Steiner Hayward has, at the last minute, submitted this bill into the Senate Education Committee. SB 895 and 895-2. This bill favors the vaccine industry, requires lots of bookkeeping for schools, requires schools to publish their exemption rate online and on report cards, and states that if you want an exemption you have to get one from a physician, a physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner. She eliminates naturopaths and the online video you can watch for information on vaccines and sign off on it to get an exemption.

A word about the "exemption rate." It only counts two things: 1. If a child has had all their vaccines on schedule, they are counted as vaccinated. 2. If a child has had all but one of the required vaccines or less, the child is counted as exempt, or unvaccinated.

So the exemption rate doesn't tell anything about the real vaccination rate of Oregon children. It turns out, according to Sen. Bates, a physician, that Oregon children are vaccinated in numbers that put them in a high compliance rate. It is just that parents want to choose when and what vaccine when vaccinating their children, instead of using the Centers for Disease Control schedule.

The publicity for Big Pharma invented the "Anti-Vaxxer," the mythical parents who put us all in danger because they don't vaccinate their children. The popular media, including *The Oregonian*, will continue to push the idea of these mythical parents. They hope this idea will urge you into bullying others to increase vaccine rates. Big Money is speaking. Are you listening?

DIXIE GAINER
Nehalem

Name mill owners

On Tuesday, April 14, *The Daily Astorian* devoted 136 column inches of space to a feature on the evolution and ownership of the Wauna paper mill, now owned by Georgia Pacific ("Crown Z to GP").

Nowhere in the lengthy article, however, did reporter Mike Williams mention who owns the Georgia Pacific paper mill, information likely of interest to local environmentalists, progressive Democrats, and opponents of moving oil and gas by rail, barge, or pipeline through Clatsop County or the Columbia River.

In 2005, Georgia Pacific was purchased for \$21 billion by Koch Industries, the second largest privately held company in the U.S.

Koch Industries, with annual revenues in 2013 of \$115 billion, is controlled by the controversial, politically conservative Koch brothers, Charles and David Koch, who own about 90 percent of their giant multinational company.

Together the Koch Brothers every year — through their private fortunes, foundations, and

Gillnetters appreciate community support

Dear Clatsop County voters: I would like to thank you all for showing your support in helping the Columbia River commercial fisherman keep our jobs for a little while longer. I am a fifth-year fisherman on a Columbia River gillnet vessel. We, as a community, and our fishing fleet, are happy to have a few more years of fishing before they try to shut us down again.

We all know that the gillnetters provide hundreds of jobs for this community and this county, from dock

workers, to fish buyers, canneries, and the net builders — even Englund Marine would lose a lot, if not most, because we the gillnetters buy hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment. We are very happy that this community came together and voted to keep us here in the Columbia River main stem fishery.

This community, without the fisherman, would definitely plummet and lose hundreds of jobs and hundreds of community members if you all

had not acted as quickly as you did to the problem of banishing us fisherman from the Columbia River. We thank you for your support, and the hard work you do in decision-making to keep this great community and this great state alive and helping us be able to feed our families with this line of work that we so proudly love and cherish. Thank you once again, Clatsop County voters.

DEVIN ROBERTS
Astoria

political action committees — devote millions in lobbying and campaign funds to Republican politicians and political candidates willing to gut Social Security and Medicare through privatization schemes; to disenfranchise African American, Latino, elderly, young and disabled voters through voter-ID bills sponsored by the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council's Voter ID Bill being passed by Republican-controlled state legislatures throughout the country; and to support passage of the XL Pipeline that will greatly benefit the Koch brothers' oil and gas holdings in Canada.

Additionally, the Koch brothers fund suspect research reports and books from think tanks and hand-picked faculty members at universities endowed by the Koch Brothers directly and indirectly. These disinformation campaigns include donations to support university professors who deny climate change.

Certainly Koch Industries supports our local economy through production of toilet paper at Wauna. And Koch Industries have every right — especially since the recent Citizens United Supreme Court decision — to lobby an end to Social Security and Medicare, fund anti-union politicians, generate Koch-friendly disinformation, buy endowed professorships, and protect their climate-changing activities worldwide.

But residents in Clatsop County also deserve to be more fully informed about the ownership of an important local manufacturing plant being ballyhooed by their local daily newspaper.

JOSEPH BERNT
Cannon Beach

A long-term risk

Agarding Monsanto Corporation's disconnect with the American public mentioned that genetically modified organism (GMO) critics "have failed to produce any documented hazards for people who consume them ... biotechnology provides the best prospect for feeding the world's growing population with crops engineered to resist drought and disease" ("Monsanto is sorry, but decades late," *The Daily Astorian*, April 2).

The substantial risk of GMOs is not in consumption, but in producing a complacency in humanity that biotechnology solves everything: i.e. GMOs prevent famine, feed the world and people won't have to make any difficult fundamental changes.

Thirty-plus years ago the Green Revolution saved India from a great famine. The biotech then was petrochemical fertilizer, hybrid seed, and pesticides. We now know more about the risk of some pesticides (the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) report concludes glyphosate, aka Roundup, a probable cause of cancer). The downside of nitrogen fertilizers and improved seed is that while they produce greater yields, plants demand greater water input. Aquifers around the world continue to be depleted faster than they can be replenished.

In Punjab province, Indian farmers must dig wells that used to produce enough water at 100 feet to over 500 feet. The cost of wells and technology often exceeds monetary returns; 270,000 Indian farmers have committed suicide since 1995. India avoided famine then, but they didn't stabilize their population.

GMOs may be another Green Revolution, improving yields and saving the world from immediate famine, but

it may also be the Pied Piper — if humanity ignores its human reproductive responsibility and continues to exceed the innate carrying capacity of earth's resources.

DAVID FITCH
Astoria

Art changes lives

Congratulations to the Clatsop Community College Foundation for their recent success with the Arts and Experience Dinner and Auction.

As a local artist I receive annual invitations to donate art for this event. These letters promote the dinner auction as "a gathering place for art collectors" and stress, "donation of original work ensures the success of this event." The results of this year's dinner and auction certainly bear witness to these statements. Art is an essential component of community and learning, and should have a high priority in our community college.

While I have donated in the past, I have declined doing so for the last few years. With each letter I become more and more dismayed by the apparent disconnect between the appreciative words for the arts listed in the invitations, and what I see happening to the staffing and scheduling in the art department itself. One might think there was a plan to eliminate the art department altogether.

Studies have shown that art instruction increases the student's capacity to learn across the board, not just in art, but also in seemingly unrelated subjects, including the medical and maritime sciences. Art also provides graduates with the creative problem solving and observational skills that employers are looking for in all fields. All this is in addition to the creation of artists. Artists are the keepers and recorders of our community experience. They inspire reflection on our place in the community and our actions within the community. In short, the arts should be seen as containing and embracing all aspects of our college instead of being a kind of side diversion.

Art is much more than a mere leisure time activity meant to relieve the stress caused by more "important" pursuits; it supports, inspires and enables all else to go on. I ask everyone with similar thoughts to email the office of president Lawrence Galizio, pschulte@clatsopcc.edu, and make your support of the arts program at CCC known.

Art makes a difference — it changes lives.

RHONDA GRUDENIC
Astoria

Autopsy protocol

This letter is written in response to a letter by Dani Williams published April 24 questioning autopsy policy in a recent death ("Do an autopsy," *The Daily Astorian*). While we cannot, for legal and privacy reasons, get into the details of that particular case, we would like to take this time to explain how the system works in our state, and particularly in our county.

All citizens who die either unattended by a physician or under any sort of suspicious circumstances undergo a complete and thorough post-mortem physical exam. The exam is done locally by a medical doctor who is the district medical examiner. If further clarification is needed or unexpected injuries are noted, then an autopsy is requested to the state medical examiner. All autopsies are done in Portland, by one of the five forensic pathologists in the state medical examiner's office.

Autopsies are considered on a case by case basis, and are not automatic, even if request-

ed. Please know that all Clatsop County deaths are treated equally regardless of the backstory, and there is no discrimination in determining which cases are referred for autopsy, regardless of that person's ethnicity, lifestyle, or other issues.

The families are informed of the physical exam findings, and the reasons for the determination of whether an autopsy will be completed, or the reasons it is not.

We hope this clarifies how things are done in the state, and any further questions about the system can be referred to either of us below.

JOSHUA MARQUIS
Clatsop County District Attorney
JOANN GIULIANI, M.D.
District Medical Examiner

Deposit needs work

A few months ago, the Warrenton City Commissioners voted to enact, and passed a new \$100 utility deposit (for garbage, water, sewer, recycling) to be paid by all new utility customers, due to the high rate of nonpays they were experiencing when people moved.

In speaking with many Warrenton residents, they are not aware that any time they move from one Warrenton residence to another within the city limits of Warrenton, they are considered a new account, no matter how long they have lived in Warrenton, or that they have always paid their bills on time or use auto-pay.

Since Warrenton does not

use Social Security numbers to track customers — like NW Natural, Pacific Power, CenturyLink, etc., does — they give you a new account number and your old account, along with your payment history, does not follow you.

The \$100 is collected when you want to start service at your new location, and the money is kept for as long as you live in that residence, no matter how many months or years, interest free. In other words, you get penalized whether you pay or bill on time or not. Maybe this idea needs a little work?

DIANA TALARSKY
Warrenton

Help the helpers

I work as a home-based care provider in Hammond. In talking with my co-workers, I know that none of us are in this career for the money — we do this job because we want to serve others. Caring for others is a job we love, but we work for low wages, and without a retirement plan, making it next to impossible to save for the future and retire some day.

There is no way my co-workers can retire on the salary they're getting. It's a no-win situation all around, and it's not fair to people who work so hard. It certainly shouldn't be what we get after year and years taking care of others. We deserve to retire someday, too. There will come a time when we can no longer work, and then what will we have to rely on?

We need help. Legislative leaders in Salem are currently considering Senate Bill 615 and House Bill 2960, bills that would create the Oregon Retirement Savings Plan and give every Oregonian a straightforward option to save the money they earn and plan for the future. It costs employers practically nothing, and it's what we all deserve after a lifetime of hard work.

SYLVIA STEPHENS
Hammond

Brim questions

I am writing about the recent editorial, "Healthier airport makes for a stronger local society" (*The Daily Astorian*, April 13). While we agree, what was confounding to us is why the seriousness of the bar pilot injury, a Brim Aviation fatality, the proposed \$220,000 Federal Aviation Administration fine against Burl Brim, and his current FAA investigation of the illegal training tower, have not been given more investigation?

Is the almighty dollar ruling? Is the Port of Astoria so desperate for money that death and destruction of lives are negated? Why would the fixed base operator process be deemed so unnecessary that an open-bid process does not even take place? Why would an aviation outfit, with such a history, even be deemed worthy? Is it perhaps a, "it hasn't happened here yet? Or to me or my family?" One must ponder. We received an email from a paralegal who wrote, "if I did these things with my car, I would be behind bars."

It is hard for us to understand why the editorial seemed to mention Brim Aviation as a productive member of the Port, without substantiating all of the facts.

Hopefully, another tragedy will not happen, or be necessary, before people are no longer afraid (or unwilling) to speak the truth. If money or friendships over-rule safety and common sense, no matter what the Port does, it will not succeed — and that would be a shame.

LINDA LEWIS
Ashland

living with alzheimer's

an education program by the alzheimer's association



Living with Alzheimer's: For Caregivers – Late Stage

Saturday, May 16 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Clatsop Community College

Columbia Hall, Room 219

1651 Lexington Ave., Astoria, OR 97103

In the late stage of Alzheimer's disease, caregiving typically involves new ways of connecting and interacting with the person with the disease. Join the Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter for this class to hear from caregivers and professionals about resources, monitoring care and providing meaningful connection for individuals with late-stage Alzheimer's and their families.

This class is free, but registration is required.

To register, call **800-272-3900**.

Offered in collaboration with:



alzheimer's  association®
24/7 helpline: 800-272-3900