


**BETTE
HUSTED**
FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

Fighting class issues by promoting inclusivity

The news this month has been beyond discouraging. Some days it's only the migrating lazuli buntings that keep me going, those small blue sparks beneath the feeder.

But stories do continue to sustain me. April's First Draft writer Joe Wilkins read from his novel "Fall Back Down When I Die," set in eastern Montana, and shared poems from his new collection, "Thieve." His 11-year-old daughter Edie stunned us, too, with her open mic reading. We watched her father filming her as she read, holding love in his hands like a camera.

We're grateful to be able to bring writers like Joe and Edie, like Thursday's Tom Titus and we look forward to visits from Charles Goodrich, Penelope Scambly Schott, Callam Angus and Debra Gwartney. It seems especially significant that we are offering First Draft in hybrid form now: in-person readings with a Zoom connection, because inclusivity is so important. It's why we keep First Draft free and accessible, and offer the works of both men and women, young and old, writers of every skin color and sexual orientation.

Still, discouragement is in the news, headline after headline. An authoritarian ruler is causing terrible suffering in Ukraine, and in our own country the views of an evangelical minority threaten to replace inclusive democracy with an authoritarian singleness. Under the reasoning of Justice Alito's leaked Supreme Court draft focusing on abortion, interracial marriages, LGBTQ and trans rights, even contraception could be threatened. And of course with insistence upon a single "truth," education has quickly become a threat.

The proposed cutbacks at Blue Mountain Community College are not the direct result of such reasoning, but the threat to inclusivity is much the same. This time it's not racial or sexual exclusion, but if students cannot continue to study in-depth vocational and academic courses and instead are offered weeks-long programs that shuttle them directly into the work force — with the justification that after all, they need only a roast beef sandwich, not a roast beef dinner — that's a class issue.

I've been fighting such class issues all my life.

I wrote about this struggle in "Lessons from the Borderlands," a collection of personal essays about my own "life with class," my working class childhood and my work in classrooms trying to kick down the blocked doors to let everyone in, hoping to help others' lives expand.

Yes, we need jobs. When school budget cutbacks left me unemployed in mid-life, I was terrified. We're mammals; we have to eat. Our families need shelter, clothing. But if we focus only on paychecks, we lose everything. We lose democracy, which is why public education began and why it is so necessary. Inclusiveness, again: not just your ideas or mine, but examining, exploring, discovering. Recognizing fallacies. Finding more and more potential for human joy.

But such words sound foolish to those who insist the purpose of a community college is work force development. "Developing whole workers who appreciate art, drama, music and literature in addition to their knowledge of their craft is a grand calling for this or any other school," scoffed an East Oregonian editorial of 25 years ago, when draconian cutbacks to what had been an excellent college began under President Travis Kirkland.

I must have more respect for workers than that editorial writer. After all, who decides how rich a mechanic's or a bookkeeper's life can be? "Students deserve discovery, new ideas," I wrote in "Lessons from the Borderlands."

"Areas of awareness expanding like fractals, taking them places they had no idea they wanted to go. Give them what they came for, yes, but more, more. Education isn't just information, a commodity you can package and buy. 'Bread and roses.' I had joked with my own students. 'Unlimited extra credit to everyone who can sing all the lyrics by the end of the term.'"

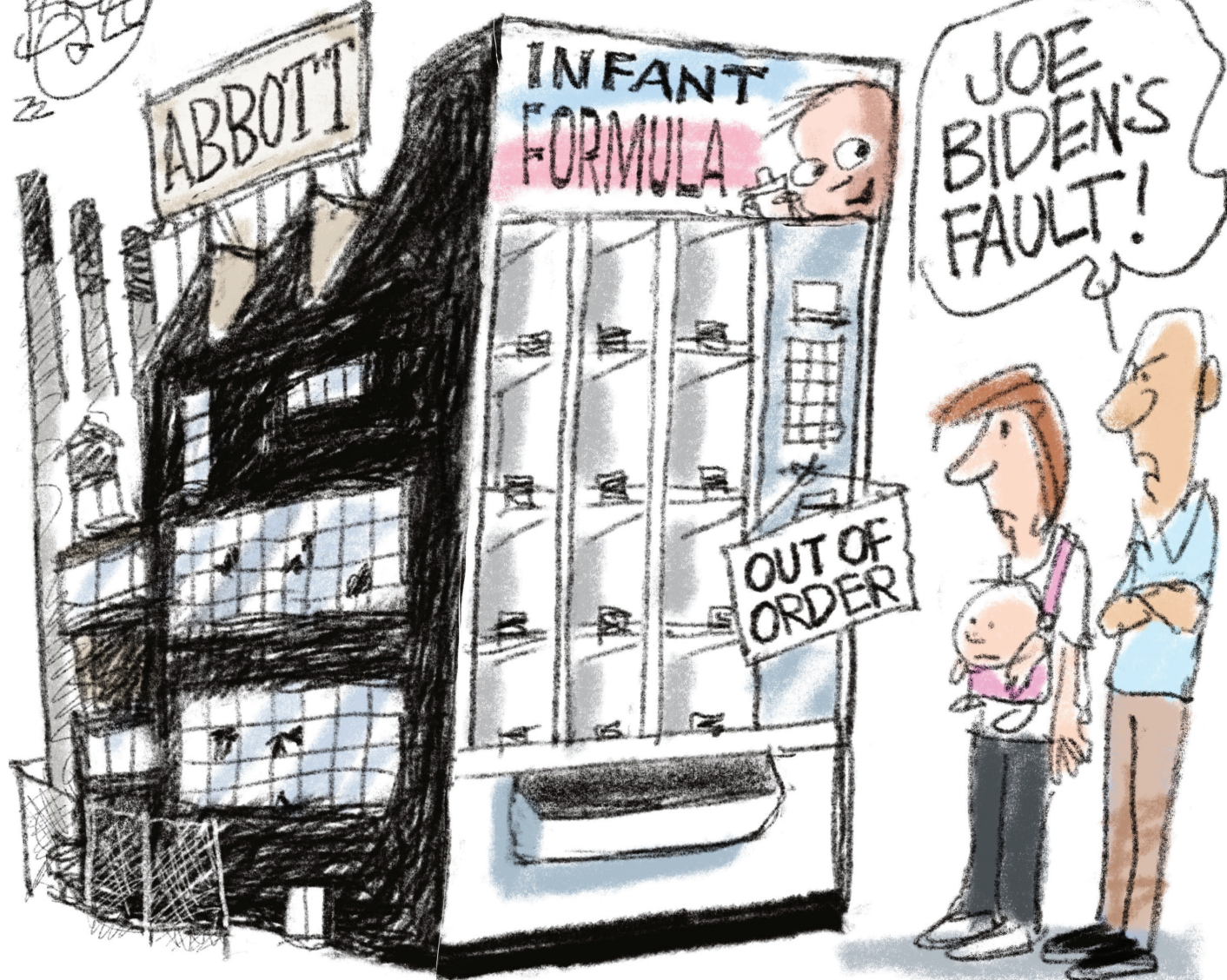
And of course without enough transfer courses — soon, perhaps, without the two year transfer degree — careers will be cut short before they can even begin.

It's about money, we are told — this, in one of the richest countries in the world. I would argue that it's about limitation. In a word, exclusion.

We deserve more.

Bette Husted is a writer and a student of tai chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.

FAGG THE ADI AKETREBINE - CAGLECARTOONS.COM



A miracle treatment is extending my life, Oregon might take it away


**JESSE
ARNOLD**
OTHER VIEWS

In 2017, my wife gave birth to twins. Watching them grow has been the greatest joy of my life — especially because I wasn't always sure I'd live to see them reach their first birthdays, let alone their first day of kindergarten.

Like 30,000 other Americans, I currently live with cystic fibrosis. Since the day I was born, genetic mutations have caused my lungs to fill with excess mucus, clogging my airways and leading to infections. Breathing — something most people do without thinking — is a struggle I've confronted my entire life.

Cystic fibrosis patients never know when a day may be our last. That's why guaranteeing access to cutting-edge procedures and medications is so crucial.

Those treatments have saved my life more than once. I received my first double-lung transplant when I was 28. The operation afforded me the rare gift of time — to accelerate my career, meet my wife and build a family.

Ten years later, my lung function suddenly plummeted to 8%. My doctors told me it was too risky to undergo a transplant and recommended that my family and I prepare for the worst. Thankfully, I found a specialist who could give me a second double-lung trans-

plant — and a new lease on life.

For that, I'm eternally grateful. Yet lung transplants are an imperfect fix, since they don't target the root cause of cystic fibrosis. And only about half of transplant recipients are alive five years after their procedures.

That's why I'm so optimistic about a new medication I'm taking. The drug works to correct the malfunctioning proteins in my

“CYSTIC FIBROSIS PATIENTS NEVER KNOW WHEN A DAY MAY BE OUR LAST. THAT'S WHY GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO CUTTING-EDGE PROCEDURES AND MEDICATIONS IS SO CRUCIAL.”

lung cells that cause cystic fibrosis. Taking three pills a day can increase a patients' lung function by nearly 15% and decrease the rate of serious infection by 63%.

The medicine gives me hope that my new lungs will continue working long into the future. Scientists at the Food and Drug Administration recognized how transformational the medicine could be for patients like me. That's why they chose to expedite its review.

It's vital that all patients suffering from chronic, serious and life-threatening diseases have access to treatments approved through these special pathways.

That's why I'm particularly worried that Oregon, the state I call home, is threatening to take these drugs away from the patients who need them most.

To cut costs, the Oregon Health Authority has asked for permission to allow our state's Medicaid program to limit or refuse coverage of drugs that went through the FDA's accelerated approval pathway, which is similar — though not identical — to the pathways that brought me my life-saving medication. This would be a massive blow, since over 1 million low-income Oregonians rely on Medicaid.

The proposal would deny vulnerable Oregon patients more than just a medication. It would strip them of the opportunity to experience the joys of a life they didn't think they'd get to live.

Thanks to unprecedented medical breakthroughs, those of us with cystic fibrosis are graduating college. We're playing 18 holes on the weekend with friends. We're finding our soulmates and starting families of our own. And we're enjoying simple moments with our kids.

To ensure that future generations of patients can do the same, Oregon must guarantee access to the miracles that make it possible.

Jesse Arnold lives in Portland with his wife and two children. This piece was written on his behalf working with a representative of the Oregon Bioscience Association to tell his story.

B2H seeks to overstep noise laws meant to protect Oregonians' health, safety and welfare


**FUJI
KREIDER**
OTHER VIEWS

Ever hear the snap, crackle, pop or humming of transmission lines? Would you want to live near them? How about hike, fish or recreate in your favorite park with those sounds buzzing in the background? This is corona noise. High-voltage transmission lines, such as the proposed Boardman to Hemingway line, emit a low humming or crackling noise that is referred to as "corona sound."

The corona sound emitted by B2H will not exceed Oregon's maximum allowable industrial sound levels (so you won't go deaf); however, it will exceed what's called "ambient antidegradation standard." This standard says that an industrial sound cannot exceed the natural (ambient) background sound more than 10 decibels in any given hour of a day (24-hour period). Every increase of 10 decibels is experienced by humans as a doubling of the sound. This ambient degradation standard was created and put into law to protect Oregonians' health, safety and welfare. Health studies have shown that this type of sound can affect sleeping patterns and people's health. So what is the Stop B2H Coalition's

contested case about? If the state of Oregon rules that Idaho Power must comply with the state's noise control standards, the project is unpermissible. Therefore, Idaho Power is asking the state for an exception to the rules and a complete variance from the rules. A variance would raise the ambient background an additional 10 decibels — a blanket variance for 300 miles. The exception would be for specific residents along the way where Idaho Power already knows there will be noise exceedances from the rules. There are 42 predicted by Idaho Power; we believe there are likely more.

Our case has been brought forward by Stop B2H plus four individuals. We have all taken different angles to this issue in an attempt to demonstrate that Idaho Power cannot comply with the law and should not qualify for an exception or variance. Our issues include: 1) Insisting on strict compliance to Oregon laws and rules, including what constitutes "infrequent foul weather" (when corona is loudest) and what qualifies for exception and variance (remember: sound doubles with every 10 dBA). 2) The boundary for the noise study was arbitrarily reduced by Oregon Department of Energy staff (1 mile to 0.5 mile). 3) The monitoring stations used to measure background (ambient) sound were not "representative" of rural residential areas (e.g., adjacent to the Union Pacific railroad). 4) The ODOE lacks legal authority to issue

the variance. 5) The mitigation measures proposed, which essentially amount to an "after-the-fact" complaint process and window treatments, are not mitigation. The law says that the Commission on Environmental Quality is supposed to be the only entity able to issue a variance — not ODOE.

By Idaho Power's admission, there is not a technological way to mask corona noise. Idaho Power is proposing retrofitting some houses and providing new windows to those affected as mitigation. Apparently, Idaho Power doesn't realize that many Eastern Oregonians spend time outside their homes: feeding livestock, working the land, recreating and enjoying the outdoors on a regular basis. Many of us live in this rural region of the state for the very peace and quiet we enjoy.

Corona noise is an industrial intrusion that our laws are supposed to prevent. Unfortunately, we have to prevail in this case to preserve what we have. Please support Stop B2H and check us out at www.stopb2h.org.

Fuji Kreider, of La Grande, is the secretary/treasurer of the Stop B2H Coalition. She is a community organizer and organizational development consultant who has worked in various sectors and countries. She loves to cook, travel to off-the-beaten-path locations, hike, raft and play with friends.