



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A tree-free plan is unacceptable

As a 40-year resident of the greater Cottage Grove area and downtown business owner, it is a welcome sight to see the 20-year Tree City flag flying over City Hall. This is a statement of our commitment as a community to respect and preserve trees.

The trees lining East Main Street in the downtown core provide welcome shade during hot days. I commend those with the foresight to plant saplings on Main and 99 South and the decades of care toward their growth. I do not embrace the mythology that they are either the wrong trees or meant to be cut down. Now they are our trees.

The verdant natural addition to our historic downtown is something not to be taken for granted. It has been decades in the making, tree by tree. How nice to see café tables out with umbrellas under the shade of the trees! How memorable to have children trick or treating under a

flaming canopy of leaves. How nice to visualize holiday lights in their branches in the dark of winter. The sterility of the environment without trees is not to be underestimated. Trees define that “X” quality that tourists and residents crave, and they boost commercial vitality in the downtown core.

The archway, flower baskets, the benches, the murals, All-America City Square with the Opal Whitely mural and historic signage — all add to the developing ambiance of the downtown core. The total effect helps generate more commercial success.

We are a community of vision and volunteerism. It is no accident that we have been an All-America City twice.

The proposed downtown core street and sidewalk development plan is yet one more improvement. Our city planners have put much effort into enlisting professional planners and grant seeking. I believe that although there has been a process of public feedback, there is a significant population that

has not voiced their opinion that feels passionate about saving the existing trees on Main Street. Many people have not realized that either 1) the trees could (or would) really be cut down or 2) they could influence if the trees would be cut down or not. It is to the City’s credit to have kept an open dialogue on the subject.

The probability of the existing trees surviving a sidewalk widening and street leveling has been evaluated. If the determination is a positive probability for the survival of the trees, I hope that we can develop a plan as a community that accommodates their survival. This might include walking around them on a widened sidewalk and definitely having larger opening for their roots so as not to disturb the sidewalk. Saving as many existing trees as possible of the over 40 existing trees is wise and strategic. It is not incompatible with sidewalk widening.

If it is impossible to save all of the existing trees with the construction process, it should be possible to salvage some

strategically placed existing trees. It is imperative that our Tree City has large and beautiful trees on Main Street as part of the proposed \$8 million plan. This is not an add-on later. This is a heritage and legacy we can embrace preserving. I cannot imagine Main Street without the existing trees, and I would not want to start all over again on

the 30 years it took for them to grow. I will not be here.

A plan without the incorporation of trees on Main, either new and or existing, within the initial planning process is simply not acceptable.

Elizabeth Chandra La Husen
Cottage Grove

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Offbeat Oregon History

Lafe Pence’s crazy plan: Wash mountains down to fill lake up

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

In 1904, a sharp-eyed 61-year-old hustler named Lafe Pence stepped off the train in downtown Portland for a meeting of the National Mining Congress.

The conference he was attending has been long forgotten. But had the group chosen Seattle or Bakersfield to hold it, the very shape of the hills in Portland would be different today.

Pence had the kind of colorful Western background that you’d expect in a man who sets out to literally move mountains. He was born in Indiana just before the Civil War and moved to Colorado to practice law when he was 24 years old. He became a specialist in mining law, and — likely representing the desires of his clients in the matter, as well as his own investments in silver

mines — a strong advocate of the “Free Silver” movement.

For a while he looked like he’d have a political career, and he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1892 on the Populist Party ticket; but he lost his bid for re-election two years later, and not long afterward, Populist party membership and Free Silver sentiments became insurmountable barriers to political advancement. So he retired back to private practice and the management of his mines.

His 1904 visit to Portland found him at loose ends, ready for a new project. And in P-town, he found one — one that could really make him rich.

Portland, at the time, was in a frenzy of preparation for the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition. The whole thing was scheduled to be held in a sort of park-like patch of wetlands just north of the city on the west

side of the river called Guild’s Lake (“Guild” was pronounced to rhyme with “Wild”). Mindful of the expense, the city had merely leased the land for a year, ignoring calls for the city to buy it and make it a permanent park.

One of the most persistent voices calling for Guild’s Lake to be made a city park was Colonel L.L. Hawkins, chair of the Portland Parks Board. Hawkins, who lived just up the hill from Guild Lake next to the newly formed Macleay Park (now part of Forest Park), even helped bring the Olmstead Brothers into town from New York to help the Parks Board make its case. Although the city had opted for the cheap lease, he still hoped the Lake might eventually end up as parkland.

The Expo grounds were right next to the busiest commercial part of the city, full of railroads and factories. Had it not been for the lake and surrounding marshy wetlands, it would have been not only in the path of progress, but on its very doorstep.

Pence noticed a few very interesting things about Guild’s Lake. First, it was not very deep; it was basically a low spot on an alluvial plain by the river. Secondly, it was surrounded by some remarkably extreme geography. The

surrounding hills towered over it, steep and close at hand; yet they were made mostly of soil and clay, not rock.

The other thing he noticed was that despite Oregon’s thriving hard-rock mining industry out east and down south, nobody in this, its biggest city, seemed to understand how water rights worked. Every river and stream in the city flowed free and unclaimed. The city hadn’t even bothered to claim water rights on the Bull Run River, on which its domestic water supply depended.

To Pence, this all added up to a spectacular opportunity. The Exposition was about to catapult the town to nationwide prominence. To make the expo work, they would need water by the acre-foot, piped in from somewhere, to keep the lake deep enough to navigate on during the entire summer and to power the expo’s many fountains and water features. He could supply that demand, cementing connections with Portland’s commerce-happy business elite; then, after the expo, with their support, he could turn his massive water rights to work sluicing down cubic acres of those nearby hills, filling the lake in so that the city’s business district could expand.

With this plan in mind, Pence re-

turned back east and got to work hustling the venture to investors. When he returned, later that year, he was ready for action.

The first thing Pence did was file water-rights claims on nearly every river, creek and spring in Multnomah County.

This came as rather a shock to most Portlanders, who hadn’t realized that one could simply do that. They likely wouldn’t have minded, but for one terrible public-relations blunder: he tried to claim water rights on Bull Run.

Pence backed off this claim when he realized how poorly it was playing with the public — which still remembered drinking from the Willamette and had a strong sense of ownership in the Bull Run water system. But the damage was done — and it was severe. Most of Portland now thought of him as the guy who’d tried to use a legal technicality to snake the city’s water supply out from under it and ransom it back.

Meanwhile, Pence’s plans to be of service to the Expo were proceeding nicely. Using his water rights on Balch Creek and other water sources uphill from the grounds, he supplied all the

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Stroke prevention: Hold the frank, have the beans

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Stroke is a leading cause of disability and death in the United States. About 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke each year. A stroke occurs when blood flow to a portion of the brain is interrupted, preventing oxygen and nutrients from reaching brain tissue. Most strokes, about 85



percent, are ischemic strokes, in which blood flow to the brain is blocked either by a clot or atherosclerotic plaque. The remaining 15 percent of strokes are hemorrhagic strokes, caused by bleeding in the brain due to the rupture of a blood vessel. Elevated blood pressure is the chief risk factor for both types of stroke; however, other causal factors differ between the two. There have been countless studies on dietary factors and their relationship to ischemic stroke risk; within the past few years, new meta-analyses have strengthened these dietary links. In particular, higher fiber intake

is associated with reduced risk, and higher red and processed meat intake is associated with increased risk.

Fiber and fiber-rich foods are known to be beneficial for colon health and healthy blood glucose regulation. However, for stroke prevention, the blood pressure-lowering effects of fiber and fiber-rich foods are thought to be primarily responsible. Elevated blood pressure is the primary risk factor for stroke, and greater intake of high-fiber foods (like beans) is consistently linked to lower blood pressure. Foods that are higher in fiber tend to have a lower glycemic load, which limits the rise in insulin after a meal; elevated insulin levels contribute to elevated blood pressure. Also, high-fiber foods are usually rich in phytochemicals and minerals like potassium and magnesium, which help to keep blood pressure in a healthy range. In addition to reducing blood pressure, high fiber foods improve several factors relevant to atherosclerotic plaque formation, such as cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

A recently published meta-analysis on fiber intake and risk of stroke analyzed data from six prospective studies, including over 300,000 subjects. In this analysis, for every 10 gram in-

crease in daily fiber intake, there was a 12 percent reduction in risk. A previous analysis of data from 10 studies found that each 10 gram/day increase in fiber intake was associated with a 24 percent decrease in risk of death from heart disease. Ten grams is the approximate amount of fiber contained in 2/3 cup of beans or lentils, two cups of cooked collard greens, or 2 1/2 cups of blueberries. The average daily intake of fiber in the U.S. is a meager 16 grams, but a Nutritarian diet, depending on one’s caloric needs, provides about 60-80 grams of fiber daily. I want to make it clear that it is the use of high fiber from whole foods that enable this degree of protection against stroke, not adding fiber to a standard American diet. It is more than just the fiber in fiber-rich foods that offers this protection.

Red and processed meats are calorie-dense, micronutrient-poor, saturated fat rich foods. Another major concern regarding red and processed meats when it comes to heart disease and stroke is heme iron. The human body absorbs heme iron, the form of iron found in animal foods, more readily than nonheme iron from plant foods. Iron is an essential mineral that transports oxygen in the blood

and has many other crucial functions, but can promote free radical damage, called oxidative stress when excess is present. As a result, high body iron stores are associated with increased risk of chronic diseases that have an oxidative stress component: for example, diabetes, heart disease, and dementia. When it comes to increasing stroke risk, heme iron promotes oxidation of LDL cholesterol and elevates blood pressure. Several previous studies have found that higher heme iron (or red and processed meat) intake was associated with higher blood pressure, and higher nonheme iron intake (or plant food intake) was associated with lower blood pressure. Again, it is not merely the high iron in meats, many other factors play a role including their hormonally-induced growth promoting effects that promote atherosclerosis.

Another recent meta-analysis reported on five studies of red and processed meat and stroke risk, and found substantial risk increases in ischemic stroke risk (the most common type of stroke): for each 100 gram daily increment of red meat eaten daily, there was a 13 percent increase in risk, and a 13 percent increase in risk for every 50 grams daily of processed meat.

Processed meats are nutrient-poor and high in heme iron like red meat but have additional sodium, which is likely why the authors found a steeper association with stroke.

These studies add to the already huge body of evidence showing that whole plant foods are health-promoting, while red and processed meats are disease-causing. Between the excessive amounts of protein and heme iron, new findings on detrimental effects of red meat compounds Neu5GC28 and carnitine, and the volume of evidence linking red and processed meats to cancer and premature death, there is no question — these are dangerous foods. People who still desire to eat meat should think of it as a condiment, only to be used a few times a week in small amounts.

Dr. Fuhrman is a No. 1 New York Times best-selling author and a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to news-questions@drfuhrman.com. The full reference list for this article can be found at DrFuhrman.com.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

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