



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Registration fee is selective taxation

The superior method to raise revenue is through user fees. For road use, increase user fees such as gas taxes or tolls. Measure 20-231 is poorly written and advocates selective taxation. Also, this type of tax must be administered statewide if user-generated fees are insufficient. Notice how the proposed levy intentionally punishes the LANE COUNTY 99 percent, exempting road-busting 7.5-ton RVs, eight-ton motor homes and six-ton trailers. It will nearly double the basic two-year registration fee from \$86 to \$161 just in our county!

That is NOT the definition of a “modest” increase. The law is written “upside-down.” Motorcycles and light-weight fuel-efficient vehicles are taxed for damage they have not caused while exempting the real culprits.

Vote “NO” and send a message to our “leaders” that we will no longer accept selective, “upside-down” taxation so that the One Percent can destroy our road infrastructure with impunity while being exempt from taxes. User taxes are fair because those choosing to haul around houses pay an additional few cents per gallon for their four-mile-per-gallon behemoths.

Gary Vaughn  
Cottage Grove

## The right to vote is priceless

It is a pity that in the face of spending millions of dollars to permanently transform Cottage Grove’s historic downtown, Mr. Palmer feels spending \$10,000 for the citizens of Cottage Grove to have the right to vote is too expensive.

Yes, there has been a lengthy public

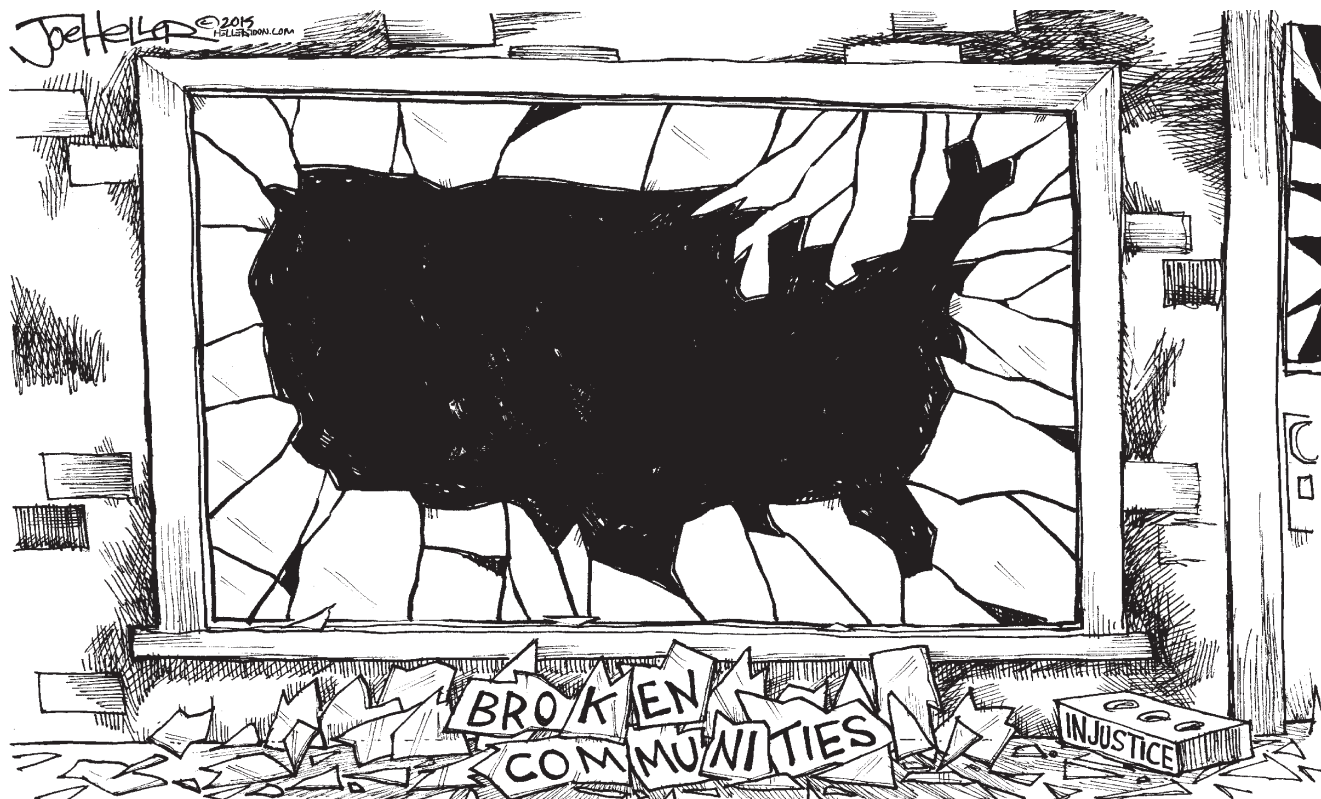
process for the Main Street Refinement Plan, and all those who participated should be genuinely thanked for their hard work on this endeavor. Even if the referendum succeeds and the Refinement Plan is put to a vote, this doesn’t mean that the process was a waste of time. Many ideas for what is needed have been clarified and weaknesses in the plan have been reconsidered. Most importantly, learning that improvements need to be made in communicating with public and encouraging participation will, hopefully, enhance the public comment process in the future. Even if the plan is voted down in an election, these lessons would help to inform the next plan developed and lead to a vision that reflects the best of what Cottage Grove can be.

I was also sorry to read that Mr. Palmer is so opposed to the idea of allowing an issue this vital to stand before the people it will affect the most. For good or ill, the Main Street Refinement Plan, if carried out, will have a dramatic effect on the face of our historic downtown. The proposed streetscape with its narrowed traffic lanes on Main Street will impact residents and businesses on a daily basis. The citizens of Cottage Grove should have the right to vote on an issue of this magnitude.

Cristina Hubbard  
Cottage Grove

## School Board recommendations

The Blackberry Pie Society held a public forum for candidates for the South Lane School Board at Bohemia School last week. Each candidate was asked the same questions submitted by the Blackberry Pie Society and by members of the audience. Based on responses given by the candidates at that forum, the Blackberry Pie Society endorses the following candidates for



the South Lane School Board in the upcoming May 19 special election:

Position 1 - Tammy Hodgkinson

Tammy’s open and forthright communication style make her an excellent candidate. Tammy is running unopposed.

Position 3 – Merlene Martin

Merlene’s long standing, wide-ranging experience with the South Lane School District helps her bring thoughtful and sound reasoning to her decision making process.

Position 6 – Nevin Beckes

Each of the Position 6 candidates has something to offer, but Nevin’s experience as a student in South Lane schools and as a parent of young children helps give him a solid, community-based perspective that will be a valuable addition to the board.

Position 7 – Gary Mort

Gary’s research oriented approach to problem solving will help ensure the

board will consider policies and decisions from an objective point of view.

The Blackberry Pie Society thinks this slate of candidates will result in a well-rounded school board that reflects the community and will effectively represent the community’s voice in the South Lane School District.

The Blackberry Pie Society is a Cottage Grove based political action committee dedicated to promoting good politics and great people in South Lane County and beyond, and having fun while doing it.

Cathy Bellavita

Alice Doyle

Brian Forge

Gail Hoelzle

Steve Kilston

Julie Parker

Leslie Rubinstein

on behalf of the Cottage Grove

Blackberry Pie Society

## Stripes are nice, let’s make a walk

High-fives to Cottage Grove for painting curbs and center stripes bright yellow.

Down yonder in Hollywood, brass and terrazzo stars inscribed with the name of a local celebrity are embedded in the legendary Walk of Fame. Let’s place into our downtown sidewalks brass, bronze or stainless steel squares describing a local historic event, person, place or building. Sponsors could help defray costs.

Call it the walk of history.

Bob Hardy  
Cottage Grove

## Refinement referendum aims to ensure broader representation

I’m Mary McNamara, and neither Michelle Rose nor I, whose names are listed as the chief petitioners on the petition paperwork for the referendum of The Main Street Refinement Plan, Ordinance 3053 are part of the group, “The Friends of Main Street. We do believe the process of planning the Main Street Refinement Plan was not adequate as reflected by the 21 downtown businesses that are opposed to the plan. We are collecting signatures on a referendum petition so the Main Street Refinement Plan can be put to the voters of our community to have the last word.

Why is that so worrisome to Mr. Palmer? In his words, “The process doesn’t include a public

vote for a reason,” suggesting the general public is not capable of voicing their opinion and making an informed decision on a plan that will completely gut Main Street as we know it and spend \$9 million doing it. We disagree.

A referendum is the right of submission of an issue of public importance to the direct vote of the electorate, YOU. This Refinement Plan is an issue of such public importance that, if passed, will have the most profound effect on downtown Cottage Grove of anything that has taken place in the 40 years that I have lived here, including the four years that I served on the City Council.

Michele and I have under-

taken this petition process because we believe in the process of democracy. The exchange of views is integral to the democratic process. When turning in our petition request I was told by the Secretary of State’s office that we had to select the first upcoming election for our referendum, and that was in September. I don’t feel our tax dollars are being wasted in this process. It is a democratic process, a decision by the people, for the people.

I have lived in Cottage Grove for 40 years. What I love about Cottage Grove is the downtown, the trees, friendly business on Main Street, a quick walk from 99 to the river. That’s what attracted me to Cottage Grove.

It’s the part I talk about when I ‘sell’ Cottage Grove. The city has been awarded Tree City, USA several times, yet much of the new plan eliminates many of the current trees, which may or may not be replaced.

I owned and operated the Main Street Deli here in Cottage Grove for over 12 years, so I understand when a business owner tells me that, “I don’t think I can make it if construction blocks my customer base for very long.” That is just one of the legitimate concerns for several of the downtown businesses who oppose this plan, yet it was approved by the City Council.

One of my main concerns is the safety of our citizens related to the changes to the roadway

plan, the much-widened sidewalks and effect on parking. Come downtown, park out a few extra feet from the current curb. You now are about seven feet from the sidewalk. Open your car door, slowly, and see if you feel safe. I did that and I was afraid to open the door of the car onto Main Street. You decide. I am concerned about the condition of the sidewalks. They are a safety hazard and need to be repaired but not widened to the degree planned.

Mr. Palmer’s comments seem intended to squelch participation in the larger democratic process. This referendum is not a slap in the face to those involved in the planning of the Main Street Refinement Plan. It is simply in-

tended to ensure a broader representation of views on a proposed project that would have huge implications for the future of downtown Cottage Grove.

What can you do? Get involved simply by signing the petition (at The Bookmine) to put this incomplete plan to a general vote of the electorate. Ask questions of the process team and better yet, ask city officials or the Chamber why this Main Street Refinement Plan wasn’t brought to the voters in the first place. It is a \$9 million plan, not a small commitment.

**MARY MCNAMARA,**  
CHIEF PETITIONER, REFERENDUM  
OF ORDINANCE 3053

## Diet-related endocrine disruptors linked to earlier menopause

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD  
For the Sentinel

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are hormonally active synthetic substances that can mimic, alter or oppose the actions of our body’s natural hormones. EDCs are con-

sidered by scientists to be a significant public health concern. Exposure to EDCs is associated



with reproductive abnormalities and breast and prostate cancers. Although we are exposed to EDCs on a daily basis, there are steps we can take to reduce this exposure.

New research suggests that exposure to certain EDCs is linked to an earlier age at menopause. Earlier menopause is significant because it can represent a premature decline in ovary function. At earlier points in time, this could cause reduced fertility. A premature decline in ovarian function may also increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis after menopause.<sup>2,3</sup>

Awareness of bisphenol A (BPA) and other EDCs in plastics and food can liners is widespread. However, we are exposed to many EDCs in addition to BPA, such as PCBs, DDT and phthalates. The study used data collected from women across the U.S. on age at their last menstrual cycle and blood or urine concentrations of many differ-

ent EDCs. High blood concentrations of 15 EDCs—including nine PCBs, three pesticides and two phthalates—were associated with earlier age at menopause (by 1.9-3.8 years).

How are we exposed to these chemicals? PCBs have been banned since the 1970s. Although the quantity has declined, PCBs still persist in the environment and accumulate in the fatty tissues of animals. So we can be exposed to PCBs by eating fatty animal products. Some of the most contaminated foods are fish, butter and ground beef. Farmed salmon is one of the most dangerous foods when it comes to PCB content. According to data from the Environmental Working Group on certain PCBs, farmed salmon has 16 times the PCB content of wild salmon and four times the PCB content of beef.

The pesticides that were associated with early menopause in the study were DDE (a breakdown product of DDT),

beta-HCH and mirex. Similar to PCBs, all of these pesticides were banned in the 1970s but still persist in the environment, and primarily we are exposed to these chemicals by eating animal foods.

The strongest links to early menopause were for the two phthalates, which are indicators of exposure to a plasticizer called DEHP. Phthalates such as DEHP are used to make plastic materials (especially PVC plastics) more pliable. Phthalates are also used in cosmetics and fragrances, pharmaceuticals, cleaning products and insecticides. For DEHP, our exposure comes primarily from plastic food packaging, and limiting intake of packaged foods has been shown to reduce urine DEHP concentration. In a dietary intervention study, participants were instructed to eat fresh foods that were not canned or packaged in plastic for three days. Urine levels of DEHP (and also BPA) decreased during the three-day

intervention.

Ways to minimize exposure to these EDCs:

Avoid or minimize animal products, especially fish.

Minimize foods packaged in plastic (especially plastics with recycling code #3).

Check ingredient lists on personal care products for phthalates.

Avoid cleaning products and personal care products with “fragrance” in the ingredient list.

*Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his website at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com). Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to [news-questions@drfuhrman.com](mailto:news-questions@drfuhrman.com). The full reference list for this article can be found at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com).*

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The Cottage Grove Sentinel receives many letters to the editor. In order to ensure that your letter will be printed, letters must be under 300 words and submitted by Friday at 5 p.m. Letters must be signed and must include an address, city and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. No anonymous letters will be printed. Letters must be of interest to local readers.

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

If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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