

Letters to the Editor

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achievement, a young smile that says "Mom, please, I need you"...and off I go.

And how does one keep going, keep a positive attitude and optimism for the future? By getting involved! By participating with and for your children. There are many positive things going on in our town.

The new Parent Teacher Club is a wonderful opportunity to get involved with your child's educational process — speakers, teachers and parents want to share in growing and learning together. I foresee great things to come from this.

Our high school is working very hard to attend to our youths' sense of self-esteem, [toward] goal setting and outreach to education, to opportunities beyond high school. Their team approach of working together, giving positive reinforcement and looking beyond today, is a bright new outlook for our seemingly intransigent adolescents.

Let us, as parents, stop complaining about how overwhelmed we are with just everyday survival, thinking our problems are different than everyone else's. Let's join the new wave of enthusiasm that is rising from our schools and our children. By showing up, speaking your thoughts, sharing who you are, you too can gain the positive reinforcement and feel good about life. Look around, there is always somewhere, someone or some project that will not only benefit others, but will let you reap more than you sow.

To the teachers and administration of our schools—keep up the good work, we're behind you all the way!

Barb Fulmer
Co-Chairperson
Parent-Teacher Club

Surges and Trojan

To the Editor:

I have two things on my mind this month: first, at the last WOEC board meeting, the new general manager, David Seuss, told the board that he wanted to cut expenses. Bravo! One class of expenses that he wanted to cut was the repair or replacement of burned-out appliances [that are] charged to the COOP by members who suffered failure of those appliances due to voltage spikes or to low voltage. He also didn't want the COOP held responsible for losses such as freezers full of food going bad due to the loss of power altogether.

Seuss suggested that each COOP member should sign a document holding the COOP harmless in the event of power failure. I see a problem in that. There is a practice that the COOP should be held accountable for — namely, having high-voltage transmission lines directly above the low-voltage distribution lines as on Timber Road, so that when almost ANYTHING happens, the high-voltage lines touch the low-voltage lines, creating a spike that burns out appliances. The COOP has installed devices on the lines to prevent the spikes, but it appears they are not 100% effective, since reports of appliance loss are still heard. The COOP also has encouraged members to purchase spike protectors for their homes. In general, that is a good suggestion, but Timber route is a special case.

There is no reason why COOP members living on Timber Road should pay more for electric service, by having to pay to protect all of their appliances or by paying to repair burned-out appliances, than those living elsewhere in the COOP who don't have such an acute problem.

A possible solution would be to bury the lower voltage distribution line on Timber

Road, thus effectively isolating it from the high-voltage transmission line. If the lines cannot be effectively separated, then the COOP should consider self insuring, so when the lines come together, we collectively help pay for any damage that is not covered by the COOP's liability insurance policy.

The second thing on my mind is the WOEC annual meeting. I was expecting to hear the same lame mayoral speech at the start of the meeting, but Mayor Scott Sword shocked and surprised me by outlining the problems the city has due to our high electric rates. After thinking about it, I came to the conclusion that even though his remarks seemed a bit harsh, they had the effect of allowing the board and the membership to share the city's distress, thereby perhaps bringing us closer to a solution.

The exercise in free speech didn't stop with Sword. We were also treated to the thoughts of nuclear activist, Lloyd Marbet. Some people happily listened to what he had to say, others were upset, expressing distress that a political figure was allowed to speak at the annual meeting. I maintain that the issues he raised were germane to the meeting in that they were power issues, specifically about the safety of the nearby Trojan nuclear electricity generating plant. Besides, the board had already taken a stand on the issue. Regardless of whether or not they agreed with his stand, COOP members in attendance did get to hear a respected, knowledgeable, interesting and controversial person speak on a subject rarely debated in Columbia County.

Marbet, incidentally, was impressed with our annual meeting. He said he has been at other utility meetings, but they were nothing like ours. Here, he said, the members seemed more interested and enthusiastic. The meeting

seemed to him to be more "down home", with its chicken dinner, door prizes, and remembrances of anniversaries.

I invited Marbet to the meeting and worked to get him heard for many reasons, but mostly because he is an interesting speaker and would make a good substitute for the scheduled speaker, Sen. Packwood. Also, I thought it would be the only opportunity for people from our area to hear him and meet him. After the meeting, several people said they had never before heard that side of the Trojan debate. That's not surprising, since Marbet's "Yes on 4" campaign has spent a little more than \$40,000 to reach the public, while the opposition has spent more than \$1,500,000.

Some people thought it would have been more fair had PGE also been invited to speak. I tend to agree, but both the COOP manager and the board members I talked to before the meeting said they didn't want the annual meeting turned into a debate on nuclear power.

Fear was expressed by some board members that by letting Marbet speak, BPA might halt the program under consideration between BPA and the COOP. The BPA certainly should not quash a deal as important as helping a utility with the toughest service area and the highest rates in the state because some member of that utility has exercised the right of free speech in a public meeting.

Jim Buxton
Keasey

Republican choice

To the Editor:

A well-orchestrated vote led by a few "closet" Roberts supporters took place at the Columbia County Republican Central Committee on Tuesday, September 25, 1990.

Many Republicans were inspired to support the Independent Candidate for governor.

I believe that this action was inspired by single issue politics. Our party is much larger than any one issue. I grant these people their personal choice, but I also have a choice. I choose not to be chairwoman of an organization whose active members

violate the purpose of the organization.

I can assure the "real Republicans" in Columbia County that I will maintain an office for all Republicans at 2035 Columbia Boulevard, St. Helens.

Joanne VanNatta,
Former Chairwoman
Columbia County Republican Central Committee

A real fish story

To the Editor:

Let us consider the fish shortage from the fishes' point of view:

This salmon egg is hatched in a mudflat, the clear stream of his forefathers having been sullied by logging and road building. The stream-shading trees have all been felled so the sun shines warmly on him — but warm water does not dissolve as much oxygen as cold water does, so he is half suffocated.

If he finds a bug to eat, chances are the bug was poisoned by aerial spraying and dropped into the stream carrying its load of pesticides. Leaving the stream for a small river, our poor fish encounters the toxic overflow of an overloaded sewage plant and gasps his way on to the big river, where he finds the fish-crunching suction of power turbines.

If he gets to the ocean, there's not much to eat, for we have vacuumed up all the little fishes to make cat food and [we have] built condos on the wetlands where other food sources used to breed. Everywhere there are seals and sea lions hunting him, for these are cuddly critters, protected by Federal law.

Thirty-mile-long drift nets lie in wait and if he meets another salmon, it probably came from a hatchery. The hatchery fish has both diseases and antibiotics and the wild fish gets only the diseases.

When it comes time to go home he may be spotted by the sport fisherman's sonar, which tells the exact depth, course and speed at which to

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