

## Letters

### Bush policies promote high health care costs

To the Editor:

Healthcare costs are out of control, in no small part because of actions taken by the Bush administration.

For example, Bush's much vaunted Medicare drug program gave billions to the pharmaceutical companies, while making it illegal for Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.

45 million Americans are enrolled in Medicare, most of whom use prescription drugs. That's a lot of clout that Bush prohibited us from using. If Medicare prices were lower, private insurance companies could also demand lower prices. Instead, Bush protected his big campaign donors, the pharmaceutical companies.

Another example: The administration is systematically cutting funds for the Oregon Health Plan, the state version of Medicaid, which provides health care insurance for the poorest Oregonians. With no insurance they have no choice except to use emergency rooms for any illness, which costs a lot more

than a doctor's office visit. ERs have to see them, and they can't pay, so the rest of us pay higher and higher bills for all hospital services. There are 44 million Americans without health insurance, unable to afford basic health care, in the richest country in the world.

We need a president that doesn't pay off his buddies at the expense of the rest of us. Kerry has a sensible plan to provide most Americans with health insurance, which would reduce costs for all of us.

Protect yourself and your family: Vote for Kerry.

**Sue Goodhope  
Vernonia**

### Malpractice costs not driving doctors away

To the Editor:

Insurance companies want us to think that doctors are leaving Oregon to avoid paying high medical malpractice premiums. But I just read about a study by Public Citizen showing that the number of doctors in Oregon is actually increasing. Measure 35 won't help doctors but it will limit our rights by changing the constitution. Vot-

ers should not be swayed by the insurance industry's slick campaign. Please join me in voting No on 35.

**Janice Martin  
Astoria**

### Hyde's leadership is good for the county

To The Editor:

Each day we are faced with many, many choices. During election time, the choices sometimes feel overwhelming. But some of our choices are much simpler than others.

Over the last eight years, Commissioner Tony Hyde has worked tirelessly for us. He has proven his integrity, honesty and commitment to Columbia County. His efforts brought new businesses to our county, increasing and diversifying the tax base for public services, including education.

Simply put, Commissioner Hyde has the experience, commitment, fortitude and skill to continue to lead Columbia County into the future.

During this time of choices, make the simple, clear choice. Choose proven leadership. Choose experience. Choose

integrity. Choose honesty. Choose a hard-working, caring leader with no hidden agendas. Choose Tony Hyde.

**Jan Richard  
Scappoose**

### Veteran fought for the rights of Americans

To the Editor:

As an enthusiastic young Marine I served in Viet Nam with the 2nd Battalion 5th Marine Division near An Hoa in 1966-67. Like thousands of other idealistic young Americans, including John Kerry, I went off to defend freedom for all Americans. This included Freedom of Speech and the right to speak out against our government if we believed it was wrong.

John Kerry returned and courageously spoke out against a war that he believed, after seeing it first hand, was wrong. With hindsight most Americans, including me and many of you, would agree that he was right about Viet Nam. He worked to put an end to a war that had taken the lives of over 58,000 of our finest young people.

I think Mark Twain said it best, "*Patriotism is supporting your country all the time and the government when it deserves it.*"

I hope that you will join me in voting for John Kerry.

**Mike Litwin  
Scappoose**

### Economic insecurity just one U.S. problem

To the Editor:

Are YOU better off today? As I write this, the price of crude oil is about to reach \$50 a barrel. The United States has lost 1.2 million jobs since 1999. Today 42.3 million people in this country do not have health insurance, 3.8 million more than in 1999.

In 2003 corporate CEO's saw their pay increase by 27 percent. In 2004 we will have a federal deficit of \$430 billion.

During the month of August 2004, there were more attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq than in any previous month. Recently the 1000th American soldier was killed in Iraq. More than 700 of those lives have been lost since President Bush proclaimed an end to major combat operations and announced "Mission Accomplished!"

As I look around, it seems like things aren't going very

well.

Are there any senior citizens reading this, who are using the new prescription drug card benefit? The one that doesn't allow Medicare to negotiate prices with the drug companies? How is that new benefit working for you? How are our public schools doing? Any problems finding funding for our programs? Is anybody out there having trouble finding work that pays a decent wage? Or know someone who is?

Did you know that under the Bush tax plan the average tax break for the top 1 percent of wage earners is \$96,634, while the average break for the bottom 60 percent is \$350.

A recent study by the Pew Global Attitudes Project shows that around the world, the percentage of people who "view the United States favorably" is on the decline. In Germany the number of people who view the U.S. favorably is at 45 percent, down from 78 percent in 1999. In France it is 43 percent, down from 62 percent. In Morocco, 27 percent, down from 77 percent, and in Turkey 15 percent, down from 52 percent. I don't know if this concerns you, but it sure concerns me.

Does it concern anyone reading this that in the United States, where free speech is supposed to be one of our basic rights, people are being arrested and jailed for wearing anti-Bush tee shirts or holding anti-Bush signs at public appearances by the President.

At the Republican National Convention a few weeks ago, George Bush's daughters, Barbara and Jenna, addressed the convention crowd. The twins said that they were hitting the campaign trail with their father, since they had recently graduated from college and "needed something to do." Well, I've got an idea for them. Why don't they volunteer for military service and go over to Iraq and risk their lives. Oh, that's right, this family doesn't actually **GO** and **FIGHT** in the wars it says it supports.

One last thing. Has anyone heard George W. Bush mention the name Osama Bin Laden recently?

**Scott Laird  
Vernonia**

### Ike Says . . . From page 2

December, but was well ahead of the previous three years. Whether the increased harvest was due to excellent weather conditions last year, or to the cumulative effects of fewer hunters and reduced length of the last two seasons, is yet to be seen. My guess is that it was a combination of all three, but with that said, that may leave fewer bulls for this year, especially with this year's higher bow harvest.

Interestingly, the hunter numbers between the two seasons was almost identical, at 1260. What puzzles me is, with only 1260 hunters spread out over 960 square miles, why are we seeing so many hunters during the season? I think some of you know that answer, don't you! The Oregon State Police should interview every group of hunters it encounters and get information on how many people are in the woods without a tag and, while they are at it, count the number of weapons in the vehicles. I think this would provide the answer to my question.

Most of you know that I am not an ardent supporter of locked gates on the timberlands around us. This year proved to me what is really going on with our corporate neighbors who own the surrounding lands, but not the wildlife. Bow hunters this year – for the first time in a long time – had a very wet season, which reduced fire danger to a very low level. Longview Fibre was a responsible corporate citizen and recognized that they had little risk of fire from allowing bow hunters' vehicle access onto their lands, as they do for rifle hunters later in the year. The other

timberland owners did not open their gates, but allowed walk-in-only access. It is my belief that this is a long-term strategy of the big timberland owners (Longview Fibre the only exception) in our area to gradually wean us off of their lands.

It is well-known that the big corporate timberland owners would be very happy if we hunters didn't exist, and though they have some valid concerns, we are still a fact of life. This is why, this year, I am going to vote for Measure 34. Measure 34 is the 50-50 plan for managing the Tillamook and Clatsop forests. I can see the handwriting on the wall and, quite frankly, I do not think that the big corporate timberland owners need to log all of the Tillamook and Clatsop forests.

I can also see far enough into the future to know that if Measure 34 fails, it will be a green light to keep forest harvest operations as the primary goal of these two publicly-owned forests. Measure 34 provides for sustainable logging on these lands, while protecting critical habitat for threatened birds and fish, and preserving recreational values in the process. If Measure 34 fails, don't be surprised to see NO ENTRY signs on your public forests because of timber harvest operations. Remember, this time the land is ours, not theirs! Vote yes on Measure 34.

**Izaak Walton League  
Nehalem Valley Chapter**

Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
Call 503-429-7193 for location of meeting.