

Letters in the Editor's Mailbag
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The Register-Guard welcomes letters on topics of general interest. Our length limit is 250 words; all letters are subject to condensation. Writers are limited to one letter per calendar month. Because of the volume of mail, not all letters can be printed. Letters must be signed with the writer's full name. An address and daytime telephone number are needed for verification purposes; this information will not be published or released.

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Support Department of Peace

I just returned from a conference of 700 citizens in Washington, D.C. We gathered to support a national campaign to reduce violence in our world and to support House Bill 808, calling for a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence.

The department would promote healthy growth and development for our children and prosperity and safety for adults. It would defuse terrorism before it gets started and complement the efforts of the State Department and Department of Defense, while providing the president with alternatives before engaging in combat. The department would harness the ingenuity of the American people to promote best practices in violence prevention at every level, domestically and abroad.

Although we heard many famous speakers at the conference, what excited me was the solutions-based approaches and the variety of folks attending, including many articulate young people who recognize the bill's importance. It lets our young people know there is a new direction, a direction that uses the latest violence-prevention technology. It's not against anything, but for a larger vision of a world that works for all.

Unlike designer drugs (letters, Feb. 16), you'll see no ads for this bill on TV even though it addresses the most important health issue of our time. You can find out more about the national conference, the campaign, and HB 808 by visiting www.thepeacealliance.org or contacting the local campaign at drdean@iconnectto.net.

Violence is a choice, it is not inevitable.

MARY JANE MOFFAT

Walton

Professional status important

It is commendable that the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic honors volunteers who give care to its patients.

On the full-page advertisement published by The Register-Guard on Feb. 1, providers who volunteer at the clinic were listed, along with their professional and academic designations: Ph.D. (2), M.D. (69), BS (2), BA (3), PMHNP (1), MNP (1), MA (4), MS (4), PA (3), FNP (3), PT (1), MED (1), MFT (1). Specialty consultations, referrals, lab testing and imaging included: M.D. (254), D.O. (3), AUD (3), ANP (1), MSW/SCWA (1), Ph.D. (4), DDS (1), DMD (4), PA (4), FNP (2), NP (2), OD (13), CPO (3), CO (2), PT,ATC (2), PT (38), TR (2), OT (1), LPTA (1), OTR/CHT (5) and CHT (1).

The last category on the page - nurses, pharmacists, office staff and other volunteers without whom the clinic could not operate (445) - did not include any professional license or academic designations, i.e. RN, pharmacist, CNA, etc. This lack of recognition of this last group's professional qualifications seems to belie the quoted statement in the clinic's heading, "May we have eyes to see those rendered invisible and excluded."

BEVERLEY THOMAS

BSN, MS, RN

Springfield

Vietnam vet data incomplete

In regard to Bob Thompson's Feb. 16 letter on whether U.S. soldiers were ever spat upon and his criticism

of Tom Preuss's Feb. 4 letter, I suggest that Thompson, and others interested in the subject, go to Jim Lindgren's blog at volokh.com/posts/1170928927.shtml, which investigates the claim and provides for a more thorough review of the subject.

Apparently the book Thompson cited, Jerry Lembke's "The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam," was fatally flawed in relying on electronic searches, not realizing - or caring - that most digitization of newspaper articles did not truly get under way until the 1980s, well after the events in question took place. While the entire blog cannot be reprinted here, I would like to include one paragraph as supporting the claim:

"Among the journalists who gave firsthand accounts of spitting on soldiers was James Reston, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Spitting was one of the actions tame enough for Reston to describe in his New York Times front page story covering the Oct. 21-22, 1967, Washington anti-war demonstrations: 'It is difficult to report publicly the ugly and vulgar provocation of many of the militants. They spat on some of the soldiers in the front line at the Pentagon and goaded them with the most vicious personal slander. Many of the signs carried by a small number of militants ... are too obscene to print.' "

Perhaps Thompson should give up totally relying on Google and keep his day job.

H. HILLIARD GASTFRIEND

Eugene

SB 426 increases benefit costs

I challenge Patrick Munyon's assertion (letters, Feb. 17) that an Oregon Educators Benefits Board, which would be created by Senate Bill 426, will reduce rates.

OEBB is structured after the extant Public Employees Benefit Board. PEBB benefits cost employers significantly more than capped contributions (on average) provided currently by Oregon's 198 locally governed school districts.

The Oregon School Boards Association calculates, based on the PEBB/OEBB comparison, that Crow-Applegate-Lorane School District would have to spend an extra \$83,000 (1.5 teachers) annually on an OEBB. The district would likely pay for this legislatively imposed teacher raise by cutting programs.

The hard data show that OEBB would cost more, while hypothetical costs based on questionable studies (by the governor's office and supported by the Oregon Education Association) sometimes show otherwise. As a scientist, I'll stand behind hard data over speculation every time.

Munyon's other argument, that the OSBA "siphons" money from the benefits packages it sells, is specious. Sowing distrust of OSBA doesn't speak to the merits of an OEBB. But it is convenient to call OSBA (and school boards) the bad guys.

After all, SB 426 would reduce OSBA revenues and cut support for school board members during contract bargaining, a real benefit for the OEA. Could this be a scene where Oregonians are told to "pay no attention to the man behind the curtain" (the OEA) and obey the great Oz (the Legislature)?

DEAN LIVELYBROOKS

Member

Crow-Applegate-Lorane

School Board

Veneta

Odom's Iraq analysis excellent

I appreciated The Register-Guard's publishing of that thoughtful commentary on Feb. 18 by retired Lt. Gen. William Odom on the situation in Iraq. It's the most intelligent explanation I've seen of where we are in this mess and of our only hope of extricating ourselves from it.

But clearly President Bush is determined not to take the blame and to pass the mess on to his successor. The question is whether the Congress will be able and willing to do anything about Iraq. Frankly, I doubt it.

GEORGE WICKES

Eugene

Returning from Vietnam easy

I believe I must agree with Bob Thompson (letters, Feb. 16).

My experience was that returning as a Vietnam veteran was a simple event. Nor has any Vietnam vet ever related to me an incident about being spat upon.

The protesters, whom I met weeks later, simply asked that I join in the protesting, never once being disrespectful. The problems began when I attempted to enter polite society.

I went to Vietnam with a professional degree from the University of Oregon plus a year's engineering intensive from the U.S. Army and served as an officer with the Corps of Engineers. During my tour I was responsible for designing and building about \$10 million worth of construction.

On re-entering society and applying for an entry-level position, I was slandered, degraded, cursed, trivialized and shown the door whenever I mentioned being a veteran. Most firms told me they weren't hiring with the subtext of "don't ever come back, we don't hire your kind." I resorted to cutting a three-year hole in my résumé and pretending to not have any experience.

It was a "don't ask, don't tell" situation, often working only briefly, for as soon as an employer found out who I really was, I would be let go: "Last hired, first fired." One employer told me to always come in the back door and don't cause any trouble.

Just another draftee doing his civic duty. But nobody ever spat on me.

ROBERT L. SHAW

Eugene

State should end pot prohibition

Kudos to The Register-Guard for printing Jim Greig's outstanding Feb. 16 guest viewpoint, "Marijuana more than medicinal."

The people of Oregon can't help but benefit by moving away from blind adherence to a federal policy built upon racism, xenophobia and a corrupted moral and legal foundation.

It is the prohibition of cannabis which makes it so valuable that patients get robbed and assaulted for their gardens. All across the western states, criminal gangs and syndicates invade our national parks and forests growing huge farms of pot.

Marijuana is now the No. 1 agricultural commodity produced in the United States, with a harvest worth an estimated \$36 billion - without any taxes collected. Without any controls on distribution or limits on the age of consumers, the criminals reap the only benefit.

We Oregonians are intelligent enough to recognize stupid when it stands right in front of us. Prohibition failed once with alcohol. It has failed again with cannabis. Oregon should be the first state to end the stupidity of Prohibition II.

ALLAN ERICKSON

Eugene

Global warming about science

Oh my, here we go again. When I became convinced that evolution was a real phenomenon, I was assured by many writers that evolution was my religion. Now that I have become convinced that global warming is a mostly human-caused phenomenon, I have again been accused of being religious (letters, Feb. 17).

Get real! Religion is based on faith, but the idea that there is a human element of global warming (like evolution) is based on a growing body of solid research. It is an established fact that carbon dioxide and methane are greenhouse gases. It is also well established that levels of these gases in the atmosphere have been increasing since the beginning of the industrial revolution. That is only one small part of the overall picture.

My point is, please don't say global warming is my religion. Reason is my religion.

MIKE MILLAGE

Eugene

Recent letters:

Letters for the past seven days

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