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## LETTERS IN THE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

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Health system faces bankruptcy

Regarding "Surgeons cut deal in Medicare fraud" (Register-Guard, Dec. 29): Only in the United States of America can a person agree to pay a fine doubling the cost of the theft they have committed and then continue to claim to be innocent.

These are the same people we hold up to our children as pillars of society. It is no wonder that our national health systems - Medicare and Medicaid - are headed for bankruptcy.

Medical care and medical insurance are fast attaining a level that will price them out of the reach of the majority of families in America. Insurance companies take clients' monthly payments and then pay less and less of the medical bill.

Many people, and the companies who try to insure their employees, no longer can afford to pay the premiums. More and more companies are hiring part-time workers in an effort to get out of insuring their employees. Hospitals and doctors almost have priced themselves out of the market or are refusing to treat people without medical insurance.

It is very sad that people can be ruined financially or left to die because of medical expenses while those often responsible for their predicaments can buy their way out and then claim innocence.

Boyd A. Lockwood

Myrtle Creek

Imagine suffering prejudice

I knew it was too good to be true. Imagine having to acquiesce to others' demands that you don't deserve to be treated as an equal under the laws of our land.

Imagine that those who discriminate against you do so in the name of Jesus Christ. Talk about an abomination of humanity. Jesus must be blushing with embarrassment at the way his flock has strayed from his true message.

Want to keep gays and lesbians from acquiring domestic partnerships? That's fine. At this point, all of those who claim to be doing God's work really have only proven that they are dupes of Satan, if you believe in that sort of thing.

Real estate's getting pretty hard to come by in hell, what with the recent population boom of all of those doing "God's work." I think I'll just continue to try living my life in truth as best as I can and let my love for my partner sustain me, because the people of America prove consistently that they don't really stand for the Constitution of our country.

Imagine what it will be like when all us gays and lesbians arrive at Satan's door only to be turned away because of the overcrowding by all of "God's chosen." Good work, people.

Hey, while you're at it, why don't you just legalize hate crimes, too?

Linda Cathey

Eugene

Hypocrisy - it begins at home

During the hotly debated Measure 36 campaign, many well-intentioned, moderate supporters of that measure assured me that they were not bigots. Nor were they interested in denying my partner and me fair legal protections enjoyed by married heterosexuals. Essentially, they had no issue with civil unions; it was only marriage to which they objected.

These well-intentioned moderates were reassured by the language used in Yes on 36 literature targeting uncommitted voters. The pro-36 pamphlets and letters promised that this was not a matter of bigotry, nor did Measure 36 seek to deny equal protections.

Why am I not surprised by the hypocrisy of the outcry that arose from the conservative backers of Measure 36 when our Legislature took action to provide fair and equal legal protections to all Oregon citizens? And why is not surprising that a group from outside our state sought to challenge the legality of Oregon's initiative process?

Aren't these largely social and political conservatives? Don't they constantly shout for states' rights? Why would they appeal to a federal court to overturn the action of a state legislature?

Maybe they want to champion states' rights and individual freedoms only when such rights and freedoms align with their narrow-minded ethics. Hypocrisy - it begins at home.

Craig Willis

Eugene

Science will be more spiritual

I can't help but applaud Todd Hoffman's Dec. 16 Commentary article, "Ignorance of science allows it to be distorted for a cause." He challenges all of us to question long-held beliefs about the nature of reality and the systems that protect those beliefs, be they religious or academic.

I think he is right on the mark in his prediction that science will upstage both war and politics in the future. But I would like to suggest that science in the future will lean less on materialism and recognize the foundation of all things as spiritual.

I agree that mystical experiences are not science. Yet neither religion nor academia will profit by excluding the science that Jesus lived and taught as an understandable and reliable body of knowledge. His demonstrations may not fit into the paradigms of physical science, but perhaps science is missing some very key pieces to the nature of reality by excluding them.

If anyone understood reality, it was Jesus. Jesus was conscious of something more. He saw spiritual reality where we perceive matter.

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, wrote more than 100 years ago, "The time for thinkers has come. Truth, independent of doctrines and time-honored systems, knocks at the portal of humanity."

This century, science will upstage all other topics. I suppose, as materialism crumbles, true science will permeate both war and politics with love. As Albert Einstein says, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it."

Shelly Richardson

Eugene

Update environmental planning

The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1969. It required that all federal agencies give equal consideration to environmental as well as technical and economic considerations as part of a transparent decision process when considering projects, plans or programs.

Since 1969, a total of 27 states have passed legislation requiring a similar and parallel process to be used for state projects and plans. Unfortunately, Oregon is not one of them, even though the Oregon Progress Board

published the "Oregon State of the Environment Report" in September 2000.

One of the key findings of the report was that the state's existing environmental management system was in dire need of improvement. The report states: "Measuring ecological conditions, trends and risks is fundamentally different from the problems Oregon's environmental programs were initially established to address. Resolving them will require new approaches."

It has been seven years since the Oregon Progress Board's report was released. Unless I missed something, there has been no mention at all of any attempt to even look into upgrading our state's environmental management system to come up with new approaches adequate in today's world.

California has the California Environmental Quality Act. Washington has the State Environmental Protection Act. We have nothing comparable, but we do have three proposals for siting liquefied natural gas terminals on our shores.

Is this because the three Oregon sites are the best from an environmental, technical and economic standpoint. Or might the LNG industry be merely following the line of least resistance?

Ron Sadler

North Bend

We need single-payer coverage

Why private health insurance? To suck resources out of health care like parasitic middlemen - building skyscrapers, running commercials, buying politicians and making investors rich - is the honest answer, but they'll tell you it's "to spread risk."

Compare these personal experiences: Mom-in-law had nausea symptoms 10 years ago. Her insurance company only authorized medication that masked her symptoms (increased profits) but not tests to find the cause. Recently, while in severe pain and nausea, it refused to authorize her admission to the hospital.

After her kids fought for several more weeks while she suffered, she finally was admitted to the hospital for tests. Her symptoms were from what was a treatable, slow-growing cancer; however, now she's terminal. She weeps with barely enough strength to push the morphine drip button.

By contrast, my father, a World War II veteran, had a life-threatening aneurysm. He's gotten the best possible care through Veterans Affairs - hospital treatment, after-care and home care, all with a minimum of paperwork.

The best solution is socialized medicine. There, I said it. It's the bogeyman the insurance industry will evoke. It relies on small-government Republicans who, while in total control of the government, spent our tax money like drunken sailors. Just consider the mangled for-profit prescription drug bill.

Rather than pay \$500 a month for catastrophic health insurance and fight a company which has its profits as much more of a priority than my health, I'm supporting single-payer universal health care. It's the health insurance our politicians have.

Ann Schwartz

Eugene

*Section: Letters Editorial*

*Page: 10A*

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*letters editor*

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