

Communicating to Build Public Will

Advocate's College 2 – Portland, Oregon – October 27, 2011

Agenda

Introductions

My Life in Thirds

Framing/Storytelling/Master Narratives

- *Discussion Exercise – how are your issues framed? What frames hurt your cause? Which ones help?*

Elements and Aspects of Framing

- Problems/Desperation vs. Solutions/Aspiration
- Portraits vs. Landscapes (*Ripple Effects discussion*)
- Values
 - *Discussion Exercise – what are the level one values that underpin your work, how often do you use them, lead with them*
- Elephants
- Metaphors/Analogies/Simplifying Models
- Tone
- Social Math
- Frame Deconstruction Exercise
- Homework assignments

1. How your Issues are Framed

Pick an issue you work on. How do you think this issue is framed in the public mind? What are some of the dominant stereotypes and perceptions that misdirect thinking? What are good and supportive frames? If you have opposition how do they frame this issue?

2. Using Level 1 Values

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Level One: Values | <i>Fairness, Opportunity</i> | Level One: Values | <i>Protection, Responsibility</i> |
| Level Two: Issue Area | Civil Rights | Level Two: Issue Area | Consumer Safety |
| Level Three: Policy | <i>Affirmative Action</i> | Level Three: Policy | <i>Seat belt laws</i> |

Pick a policy issue or change you are working on and fill out the chart below:

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|---|--|
| Level 1: Values What are the values that motivate and energize your action on this issue? | |
| Level 2: Issues What is the issue category that this policy fits within? | |
| Level 3: Policies What is the specific policy change you are seeking? | |

Now, write up a short statement – 1 to 3 sentences – that states the change you are seeking and why, leading with your Level 1 values.

3. A Frame Deconstruction Exercise:

Attached are three different articles/opinion pieces. Your small group will be assigned one of these to analyze and deconstruct the framing (or lack of framing) that is imbedded in the piece.

Each of you should read the article individually and mark it up. You might want to quickly scan the questions below so you have them in mind as you read the pieces. After each person in the group has finished reading, discuss the following questions together. Be ready to report out your findings to the entire group.

Deconstructing the Frames:

- If you boiled down the central idea of the article to a single sentence what would it be? What is the likely take-away from each article for the average reader?
- What is the issue/problem? Who is responsible? What is the solution?
- Can you identify any dominant cultural frames/master narratives that are deliberately or inadvertently being cued up by the author?
- What is the balance between problem and solution?
- Are there “Portrait” or “Landscape” stories?
- Can you identify any Level 1 Values?
- Any “Elephants” being triggered?
- Is there a good use of metaphors or analogies?
- How are numbers used? Any “Social Math?”
- What is the overall tone?
- What is being obscured or left out?
- Name at least two ways you would improve the piece.

Article 1

Former workers at Beaverton's View-Master plant left with more questions, few options of recourse

Published: Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 9:25 PM Updated: Wednesday, October 12, 2011, 6:09 AM -
By Dominique Fong, The Oregonian

About 30 people attended a Tuesday night meeting at the Beaverton City Library about the links between TCE exposure and certain cancers.

Many had worked at the former View-Master plant in Beaverton and suspected they saw the effects of the industrial degreaser, **trichloroethylene**, in their lives.

The crux of the conversation came down to: If TCE is proven to lead to cancer, what can former employees do with that information?

It seems that for many who attended the meeting, there aren't too many options of recourse right now, except to continue to shoulder healthcare costs and beware of future health problems.

Thomas Griffith, one of the administrators of an unofficial **health study**, said former workers could bring that knowledge to their doctor as a precaution. The study surveyed 633 workers, and of those, about 200 people self-reported that they had some type of cancer.

The most significant links suggested in the study, Griffith said, was the prevalence of kidney cancer in women.

In response, Sue Beard-Buccholz, 62, of Yamhill, said she told her doctor about TCE, but her doctor then remarked that he had never heard of health problems associated with the solvent.

Other implications could lead to more stringent regulatory standards, in particular for clean-up efforts, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These standards would depend on regional EPA offices and continuing reports and case studies of the chemical.

Jae Douglas, an epidemiologist with the Oregon Department of Public Health, said she has applied four times for government funding to conduct an official health study of former workers.

Douglas said two obstacles are hindering that state study: The state has an incomplete list of 13,300 workers of an estimated 20,000 who used to work at the plant during its time of operation from 1959 to 2001. An official study would need a sample of nearly all workers in that time period, she said.

The second problem, is major budget cuts in federal government, Douglas said.

However, she added that the state may be able to use college students as interns to help track down and interview the thousands of employees.

"The study design is solid," Douglas said. "We just need serious boots on the ground."

Former workers who attended the meeting had other questions about health effects.

Beard-Buccholz said she gave birth to a son while she worked at the plant in 1975. Her son is the only one of her four children who has health problems, she said. People need to be better informed so they can pass information along to future generations who might be affected, Beard-Buccholz said.

In response to a question about legal action, Amanda Evans-Healy, founder of the advocacy group **Victims of TCE Exposure**, said while she could not give legal advice, she would encourage people to seek counsel from personal injury lawyers.

Evans-Healy was one of five families who settled lawsuits in May with Mattel. It took her two years to find a lawyer willing to take her case, she said.

"I did not take no for an answer, and I don't think anybody in this room should either," Evans-Healy said.

After the meeting, Steve Johns, 66, of Lake Oswego, said he was disappointed that he did not have more options of recourse. Johns said he worked in the paint shop of the plant around 1965, and he not only drank the water, but he smelled the vapors when he fished out buckets that fell into huge vats of the degreaser, he said.

His wife, Bessie Johns, 67, had breast cancer. She worked in the assembly area of the plant for 15 years.

"I want to have more proof that this in fact is what's causing all of this," Johns said.

Article 2

Where all the teachers are above average

Published: Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 4:59 PM - The Oregonian Editorial Board

The Oregon City School District sends back \$2.54 million because it can't abide merit pay

Frank Caro, the Tigard High School social studies teacher honored Monday as one of the nation's best teachers, is lucky he doesn't labor in the Oregon City School District. Teachers and administrators there are so sure that there's no fair way to distinguish great teachers that they've rejected a \$2.54 million federal grant.

Oregon City may be flush with money and fabulous teachers, but we'll side with the Milken Family Foundation, which recognizes and rewards excellence with its \$25,000 National Educator awards, known as the "Oscars" of education. Said Lowell Milken, chairman of the Milken Family Foundation, "We created the ... awards to proclaim in a very public way that greatness in education must be recognized and rewarded."

That's far from the philosophy in Oregon City -- and throughout much of Oregon's public school establishment, which quit a national competition, Race to the Top, because of its emphasis on merit-based incentives, or performance pay. Oregon City is sending back its share of a federal grant, minus \$55,000 that it's already burned through, because its teachers union and administrators could not agree on a plan for experimenting with performance pay.

Never mind all the excuses about the lack of time to negotiate a thoughtful merit pay plan, and the claims that everybody in Oregon City tried to make this thing work and well, the feds just weren't flexible enough. As The Oregonian's Nicole Dungca reported, from the moment the federal grant was announced in September 2010, the Oregon City Education Association, the teachers union, made clear it would fight merit pay. Nancy Noice, president of local union, said then: "There's no way that Oregon City is going to go there."

You won't find a neater description of the closed minds of Oregon's teaching establishment to merit pay. And on this issue, Oregon teachers are on the wrong side of the Obama administration, and we predict, the wrong side of history. Ask yourself: In every school you've ever been in, couldn't you and everyone else identify the best teachers, the Frank Caros? That's the case in Oregon City, too, no matter what the school district would have you believe.

We're not arguing that this is an easy issue. Any major school reform comes hard. And like everything else, the devil of performance-based pay is in the details. All over the country, school districts are trying different ways to measure and evaluate teacher performance, through student improvement, administrative evaluations and other metrics. The six other Oregon districts that shared the 2010 federal grant with Oregon City are also experimenting, trying to devise ways to reward and incentivize great teaching.

The point here is that Oregon City -- and much of Oregon's educational establishment -- isn't even willing to try to develop a fair and workable merit-pay system. It would rather send back a federal grant than work out a plan to provide the money as bonus pay to the Frank Caros who are teaching in its schools.

The Milken Foundation believes in honoring teaching greatness.

Oregon City?

It's not interested.

Article 3

Ending federal timber payments to Oregon: Rural economic collapse will harm metro area, too

Published: Saturday, October 08, 2011, 10:00 AM - By Dennis Richardson

If you aren't hungry or worried about your next meal as you read this, be grateful. One of every five Oregonians is now receiving food stamps.

If you aren't checking Craigslist for a job or sending out résumés, be thankful. Almost 10 percent of Oregon's workforce is in the unemployment line.

Somber statistics, but the deepest devastation lies in Oregon's rural counties. And it's about to get worse, much worse. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack predicted during his recent visit to Oregon that the federal program that provided as much as \$253 million a year in payments to rural Oregon counties, the Secure Rural Schools Act, will not survive the Congressional supercommittee's work to cut \$1.5 trillion from the federal budget deficit.

If you live in an urban area and you still have a job and a home, maybe you don't care that this will likely bankrupt at least two Oregon counties. Maybe you don't have time to worry about rural unemployment rates that have hovered near 20 percent for almost two decades.

But if you do care, then before you leave for work or go out for lunch, take a close-up look at poverty in our state; take a moment to google Coos County or Curry County, or for that matter just view the sweeping satellite image of our state – nearly half of which is blanketed with deep green forests -- Oregon's richest natural resource.

And yet these are Oregon's poorest areas, where methamphetamine destroys already broken lives, where hopelessness evicts the young and ambitious, where urban idealism has outspent and outlawed rural initiative. Where generations of hard-working timber families once labored and thrived, depression now is a way of life.

Imagine if you lived in the midst of the natural resources necessary to save yourself and your family, and were ordered to abandon your tools, your dreams, and your community.

Rural Oregonians acted in good faith and believed in their elected leaders when they helped negotiate President Clinton's 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, but since then teams of environmental lawyers have blocked the timber sales, closed the mills, and thwarted alternative recreation plans, leaving rural Oregon underemployed and dependent on government hand-outs.

How could the urban elected officials who set the agenda for our federal forests turn away from our most plentiful renewable resource? How could they ignore our comparative advantage over other

states? Who is responsible for Oregon's rural poverty, high unemployment rate and declining income? How did this happen?

During the 1980s and '90s timber revenues from federal forests in rural Oregon counties plummeted. Well-funded eco-elites shut down Oregon's timber harvests by obtaining federal court rulings over the endangered species listing of the spotted owl. More than 100 mills closed. Thousands of family-wage jobs were eliminated, drying up incomes and businesses in small mill towns across our state. Annual timber harvests now hover at around 10 percent of levels associated with a more thriving Oregon. Rather than correcting the misuse of the Endangered Species Act, Congress approved the Secure Rural Schools Act. Instead of continuing to fund county services from timber harvest revenues, rural counties were paid hundreds of millions of dollars in federal welfare payments.

The counties were ordered to develop alternative economic plans. Having achieved their goals of making Oregon's rich forests of renewable timber legally off-limits and unavailable to be managed or harvested, Portland's urban eco-elites promptly turned their backs and abandoned the counties to fend for themselves with meager resources.

For the past decade, politicians and the environmentalists have allowed rural Oregon counties to deteriorate and become ever more dependent on government handouts. Now, in the face of massive federal deficits, nobody wants to defend any longer what are essentially welfare payments to counties in 40 states.

Portland and Oregon's other major cities should wake up. The last federal timber welfare payment checks are being issued, and they will mark the end of the primary source of revenue to some of Oregon's rural counties. There will be consequences felt in Portland, Salem and Eugene from the bankruptcy of Oregon rural counties. As the urban eco-elites watch placidly from the sidelines, they should realize this rural economic meltdown will financially affect their schools, their county services, and their tax rates. State government is already being asked to intervene. What will be the cost and how should we respond?

The solution is clear. Ignoring Oregon's vast timber resources is a failed policy and must be reversed. Democratic leaders now must "man-up" and face their coalition of environmental supporters and say, "No more lawsuits. Our neighbors are suffering; our rural communities are collapsing; our rural counties must be saved. We must moderate our forest policy."

Action is needed now. Words are not enough. The federal government controls 53 percent of Oregon land, and rural counties depended on effective and productive management of those resources. They have been abandoned and betrayed.

The truth stares rural folks in the face day and night. There are no alternatives. There is no replacement economy. There is only the forest -- one of the richest, greenest, fastest-growing forests in the world.

There is only one solution -- it's vast, green and sustainable. The particulars of a new Oregon timber

policy must be hammered out in Salem and in Washington, D.C. Management and control of Oregon's federal forests should be placed with the counties in which they are located. And, safeguards must be included that will stop the use of our federal courts as an eco-elitist weapon against responsible timber harvesting.

The time has come to reopen Oregon's forests in a responsible manner. The time has come to reclaim our bounty, our birthright, and rebuild Oregon's natural resource-based economy. The economic future of both rural and urban Oregon depends upon it.

Dennis Richardson is co-chair of the Oregon House Ways & Means Committee, and co-chair of the Oregon Transformation Project. In his Oregon House District he represents two Southern Oregon counties that would be affected by the cessation of federal timber payments.

Concluding Thoughts

What is one "aha" moment from today?