

EDITORIAL

Maybe we were wrong all along

We at Street Roots have used this column to encourage our readers to better understand what's going on around them, and seek the truth to the policies that shape our world. We've called on the city to reverse its anti-camping ordinance that punishes people who have no home to sleep in. We've asked people to rally around movements to create sustainable funding streams to create needed affordable housing. We've offered up our share of criticism of the 10-year plan to end homelessness, and more than a few rants about the city's sit-lie ordinance.

Looking back over our 10 years of publishing, we have to give pause to the notion that maybe we don't know jack.

We've set our sites nationally, joining the chorus of outraged citizens against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have diverted billions of dollars away from people suffering in our own neighborhoods.

This column has heralded systemic change over symptomatic efforts. We've criticized those efforts that keep us in the dark ages of repeating mistakes, or so we thought. We've taken to task the actions and attitudes that perpetuate stereotypes of "us against them," of the moral problem pitted against the economically justified.

Boy, how many times have we heard this comment: "It must be hard to be right all the time." Yes, it is a burden, but we've always taken it in stride given our role during these difficult times. However, we're reconsidering our role. We're thinking; maybe we are just a bunch of crazy idealists who believe that there is something better out there for everyone. Maybe the world is best left to the lowest common denominator. There are advantages to the expanding criminal justice system, for example, and it's such an economical way to deal with ... you know ... things. And why have we been so hard on the proliferation of private security guards acting as pre-paid witnesses to so-called livability crimes? The laws are plain and simple on the books, but we continue to bang our heads against the pavement thinking that this isn't really the will of the people. What do we know?

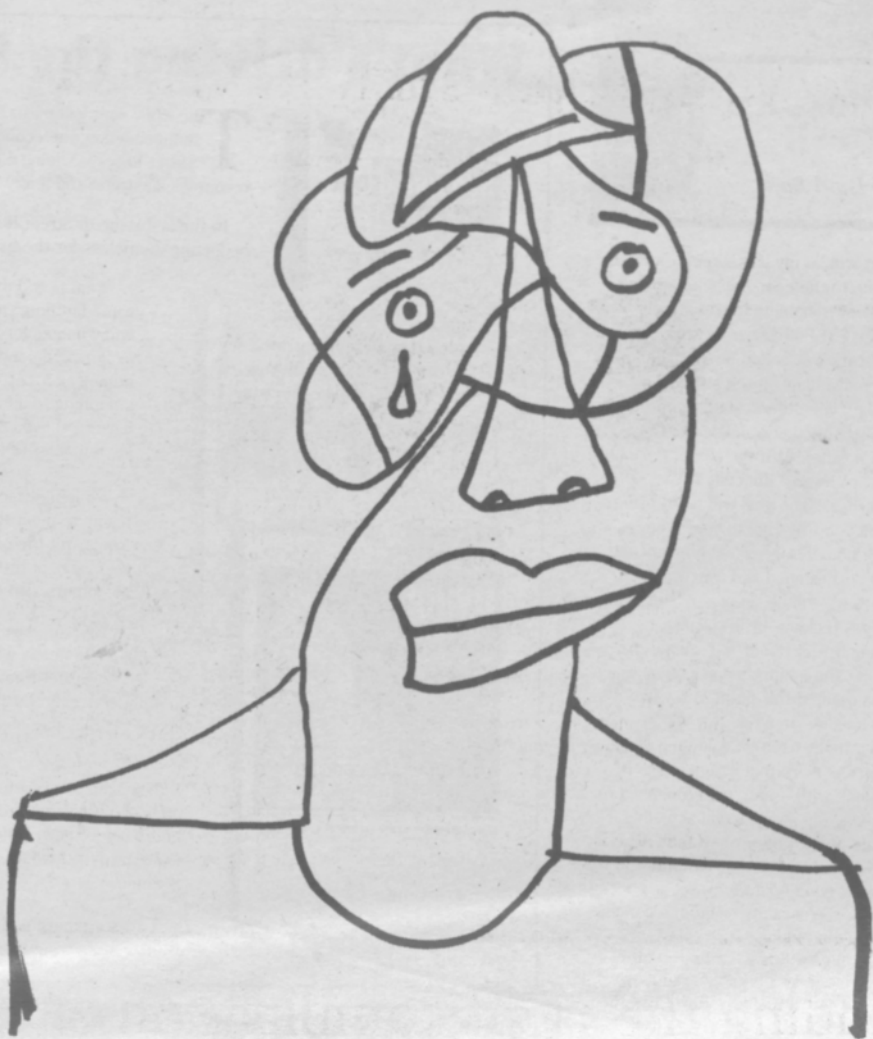
Maybe we were wrong.

Perhaps our "yes, we can" attitude has deluded clear thinking on these and many other issues that we face today. Looking back over our 10 years of publishing, we have to give pause to the notion that maybe we don't know jack.

Despite our gloomy forecasts, the world has not come to an end. People are looking forward to spring, as they always do this time of year. An endless stream of festivals will consume the vistas of Waterfront Park, and bare skin will be all over the city. Life goes on, and we only have ourselves to blame if we choose to fixate on the specter of economic inequality that darkens all our doors.

Perhaps everyone is wrong and we're not always right. It takes a strong newspaper to admit it, but we've been around 10 years now - mere babes in the institution of newspaper journalism - and we know there's always more that we can learn. It's been established throughout history that millions of people embracing the status quo can't be wrong. It's how business is done in this country, and it's how we'll pull ourselves out of the desperate situation it's led us into.

Everyone, grab a bootstrap, before it gets too deep.



By Bernard Patrick

LETTERS

I just wanted to say that I really appreciate picking up the paper, but it's always so serious. We live in a world littered with bad news. I fully support your efforts to cover homelessness, but it would be nice if you highlighted brighter spots of the issue. Would you ever think about doing a satirical edition of the newspaper? I think it would be fantastic.

BOB LOWE PICASSO
North Portland

What will it take for you guys to bring us some good news for a change? It's always so negative. What the people need now in this jittery economy is something to feel good about. I don't see why it's so hard for the newspaper industry to report on the positives that are happening around us every day.

HOUD DOG NELSON
Portland

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Street Roots encourages readers to submit letters and columns for publication. Letters to the editor may be submitted to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, faxed to 503-227-3117 or e-mailed to streetroots@email.com. Please address your submissions as letters to the editor.

I wanted to write the newspaper because I feel so sorry for your editor and the people who write for the newspaper. I've been reading the paper for the last year and it appears that no one ever writes letters to the editor at Street Roots. I'm sure you'll at some point have someone take the time, but in the meantime - keep up the good work.

"STUMPY"
Northeast Portland

Hi Street Roots. I love your vendors and your paper. But I really wish you would put in a crossword puzzle. I would buy your paper more if there was a crossword puzzle in it. I know a lot of other people would too. (If you publish this, please don't use my name or phone number)

RHONDA BETTENCOURT
503-227-3117
Portland

Editors note: We hope you enjoyed our little April Fools edition of Street Roots. In case you didn't, we apologize in advance to all the City Council members and staff, County Commissioners, advocates for the homeless, animal-rights activists, overweight children, puppet makers, state and federal politicians, copy editors, volunteers, nutria, journalists, astrologists, police officers, presidents, letter writers, vendors, soccer players, businessmen, social-service workers, housing experts, the Alberta and Mississippi arts district, members of abbreviated organizations, advertisers, candidates, protesters, the entire staff at Street Roots, the media, judges, kittens and, especially, lawyers we may have inadvertently offended. No harm was intended.

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