

DO THE DAMNED LAUNDRY

I write in response to recent comments on gender disparity in letters to the editor, both at a City Club luncheon (11/14) and in "Slant" (11/20).

Attempts were made to explain why only about 30 percent of all published letters to the editor come from women. Among the proposed ideas were that women want to avoid "harassing phone calls or other confrontations if they express strong opinions," that women's views have been traditionally marginalized, and that oppression is to blame. I think the answer is far less psycho-social, far more logistical: If you guys would do the damned laundry, write the thank-you notes and take the kids to soccer practice, we'd have time to write our letters!

Seriously, though my intent is not to reinforce gender stereotypes through an off-handed joke, there is some truth to this. In two-career families, women are still the ones who do most of the child care and household chores. (There are, of course, exceptions to this.) Women are most often in charge of the emotional well-being of the family, and they are more likely to manage the social calendar. Additionally, in cases of divorce, it is still women who are given the lion's share of physical placement of children. Where wages for women are, as we read, still only 80 percent of men's, women are less able to hire any help.

So let me backtrack: Perhaps oppression is to blame after all. But it is a more covert oppression than, say, the burning of witches or the invention of high heels. There are plenty of women who have no fear of expressing strong opinions (just look at Sally Sheklow, Mary O'Brien and Molly Ivins).

But the majority may be too tired, too distracted, too logistically challenged to do so. The solution? For me, getting less sleep seems to be the only answer. I would welcome more constructive suggestions.

Kathy Saranpa
Eugene

BODIES VS. THOUGHTS

Here's one reason why I think my opinion is not regarded at *EW*: In spite of repeated pleas from women and men who are offended by the sexist portrayal of women both on the cover and in the sex-industry advertisements, *EW* has refused to change its advertising policy. Clearly, *EW* is more interested in women's bodies than their thoughts. Perhaps if *EW* showed more compassion for the feelings of women, we would be more interested in sharing our opinions.



Second, thanks for publishing the article about College Republicans (11/20). It showed a despicable lack of empathy for human suffering — I'm surprised at the obvious white privilege and classism demonstrated by the students. In this time

of economic struggle, we need to pull together and help more, beyond our own family, because we are inextricably linked to one another.

Third, as a regular bike commuter, I find myself subject to harassment by auto drivers quite frequently. Although I disagree with our car dependence, I don't think yelling at each other is going to change anyone's transporta-

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



tion style. And I don't find the yelling at all conducive to building community.

Rose Wilde
Eugene

BRING BACK THE OAKS

Large amounts of resources have been expended to restore the west Eugene wetlands and Amazon Creek, yet the city Parks Department is harming the Amazon's upstream water quality.

The city should protect the open land in the Amazon Park. The city should commit park bond money to collaborate with the Army Corps of Engineers and BLM for creek restoration throughout Amazon Park. In addition, oak woodlands are currently under threat and are listed as one of the most endangered ecosystem types in need of re-establishment. Oaks could easily be planted in and around the park to beautify the area and accomplish an important ecological task.

KUMBAYA DAMMIT BY DAN CAROL

Bush X-Files Primer

Sins of omission and commission.

There's seldom a presidential campaign where the hint of scandal is not in the air. Next year is no exception. But how often do these scandals actually affect the outcome of the election? In truth, not that often.

Look at recent history: Iran-Contra had no affect on George Bush the Elder's 1988 victory; nor did the Whitewater mess hurt Clinton in 1992 or 1996.

As for Watergate? The June 1972 Watergate break-in brought down Nixon — but that was in 1974 *after* he was elected. It wasn't a defining issue at all in the 1972 presidential race against McGovern.

So how we manage our anger about what Bush knew (and when he knew it) on countless conspiracy theories is no small strategic matter. We need to pick our spots.

Yes Virginia, they cheated in Florida. But will the soccer mom in suburban St. Louis we need to sway against Dubya care to discuss this historical fact next November? No way.

Yes, they lied about the rationale for war in Iraq. But will this win us votes on the margin? Read on friends — the handy Bush X-Files primer is here to help focus your attention on the brewing scandals worth tracking — and the blind alleys we need to avoid.

CHAD II, THE SEQUEL?

If you are not over Florida yet, I suggest you read Jeffrey Toobin's *Too Close To Call*. It will make you realize that Gore's chief strategist, Warren Christopher, was outmaneuvered, pure and simple, long before we reached the Supreme Court. If that doesn't help, work your anger out this way: Lobby for passage of HR 2239, which is designed to stop another national voting scandal *before it starts*.

This X-file is happening right now: Faulty computer voting machines are being installed across the country, financed at taxpayer expense, under a post-Florida "election reform" law passed by the Republican-controlled Congress. The machines are built by a major Bush contributor and are called "inherently subject to programming error, equipment malfunction, and malicious tampering" by Stanford computer experts.

This scenario would be laughed out of Hollywood but it's happening before our eyes. Ready to get busy? See www.verifiedvoting.org for the full scoop — and tell all your friends who vote by computer next year to save (or get) a hard copy.



LOOKING BACK AT 9/11

This is a toughie. There's a lot of smoke over whether President Bush was warned in his Daily Intelligence Briefing about the hijackings in July, 2001. At this writing, several congressional investigations and commissions are hard at work on this matter and may prove that the president could have done more to stop 9/11 from happening. Is this sin of omission on 9/11 as big a deal as Bush's many sins of commission by hyping us into the current mess in Baghdad? While an important historical matter, I seriously doubt that the election will swing on what the president did before 9/11 (after all, Bush folks can just say that Clinton let Osama run wild on his watch). The election will be a referendum, however, on what Bush has done since 9/11 to make the world a safer place.

On that score, I'd like to know:

- Why the White House is exempted from questioning by the Senate Intelligence Committee on the matter of who cooked the books on over-hyping the threat of weapons of mass destruction from Iraq.
- Who in the White House deliberately "outed" CIA agent Valerie Plame in July of this year as a way to intimidate administration critic Joe Wilson (who is married to Plame) and was getting national attention for exposing the Bush lies on the war.
- Why we just named an oil industry lobbyist with no foreign policy experience to be the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.
- And uh, where in the hell are Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein?

STOPPING AN OCTOBER SURPRISE

We all would like to see bin Laden and Hussein brought to justice. Sooner than later, of course, but we'll take them when we can get them, right? So is it paranoid (or unpatriotic) to worry a little about Bush producing a handcuffed Osama in October 2004 just in time to win Americans' hearts and votes? I don't think so — not with a Bush family history that includes a *verifiable* cover-up of the Neil Bush Silverado S&L scandal that went down in October 1988, weeks before George Bush beat Michael Dukakis.

Yet can we even inoculate against such a so-called "October surprise"? Is it even productive to worry about something we can't control? Let me mull on that a bit from my secret bunker in Cave Junction and report back. Until then, over and out.

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