

(paraphrasing): no benefits would accrue from further growth in the nation's population, and that stabilization would contribute greatly to our ability to solve national problems.

This was presented almost 32 years and 90 million people ago, as issues of scale and complexity continue to assault and compound national quality of life. The nation's struggle for adequate housing is just one symptom among many.

Foremost in my mind is the tremendous "dilution in democracy" that has unfolded over our time. It would now take 8,700 members of the U.S. House to give back the "value" that existed for each constituent of the founding republic. You can do the math. Each district originally has 3,000 constituents; now they contain more than 600,000 (a 20-fold change in the ratio).

Who says numbers of people don't matter? Where is the discussion about a national population policy?

*Boyd Wilcox
Corvallis*

THE OTHER JFK

I wanted Wes Clark, you may have wanted Dean or Kucinich. Well, we got Kerry. Hopefully, he'll ask John Edwards for the southern and chick vote.

I would gladly marry Ralph Nader, but this man is an obstacle to storming the Bastille. We have got to remove Bush and Cheney. That is job one.

John Kerry is an awkward, Lincoln-esque

cuss. He is intelligent and war-tested. And a 60-year-old man who can play hockey and snowboard is scary. Read *Tour of Duty*. Sean Hannity would wet his pants reading Kerry's 'Nam work. Kerry knew what McNamara realized, only 35 years earlier. Vietnam was a blunder.

I'm asking you *EW* readers and voters to forfeit your conscience and devotion to your candidate. Vote Kerry, the other JFK.

To you 18 to 34 year olds: You are prime fillet for military service. The reason it ain't 21 to 34 is because so many of my generation were dying in the 'Nam, we forced a constitutional amendment. Old enough to die, old enough to vote.

*Greg Hume
Creswell*

HEADS OR TAILS?

It is time for the state of Oregon to choose a symbol for the Federal Mint to put on our own quarter. Gov. Kulongoski has convened a commission to make the final decision. The final four choices are: Mt. Hood, Crater Lake, The Leaping Salmon, The Covered Wagon Heading Down The Trail. I thought I would throw in my opinion.

Mt. Hood. Don't like it. Why? Because of the curse of the coin. New Hampshire put The Old Man In The Mountain (a natural cliff that looks like a man's face) on their coin and subsequently the face fell off the mountain. If we put Mt. Hood on our coin we may be tempting fate and get a volcanic eruption.

Crater Lake. Don't like it. I think seeing

this coin in circulation might just remind us all of our current state budget — a big, deep hole.

The Leaping Salmon. I like it. I like the salmon for the children. If we adults screw up and kill all the salmon we can at least show our children a picture of the great salmon on our state coin. "This is what a salmon used to look like, kids. A beautiful fish, good eatin'; now they are all gone. Sorry. My bad."

I love The Covered Wagon. The coin design has the Covered Wagon going away from the viewer so what we actually see is the back of a covered wagon heading down the Oregon Trail. Like many Oregonians and most pioneers, I came to Oregon as an adult. I grew up in Ohio and lived in NYC for 10 years. My moving to Oregon was a very conscious adult decision. So, to me, this coin says, "Kiss my ass — I'm moving to Oregon."

*Chris Pender
Eugene*

RIVERFRONT PETITION

The *R-G* is silent but actually a major land-use showdown is under way. The Riverfront greenway pave-over is being championed by David Kelly and others in the name of pursuing his vision of responsible, compact growth. The Riverfront urban renewal referendum petition being circulated may allow citizens more control over the emerging Eugene City Council plan for high impact development to replace the scenic

riverfront greenway.

In the past, millions of dollars have been directed toward riverfront roads for development to house companies like Electrical Geodesics. This distinguished company's work has even gained the attention of the CIA for their interest in improved methods of lie detection (6/23/99, *Portland Business Journal*). Last year, UO was reported to be considering a one-of-a-kind nanotechnology research center (the Multiscale Materials and Devices Center) to be sited near the riverfront southbank field (5/6/03 *Oregon Daily Emerald*).

If tax diversions are going to continue to fuel a riverfront pave-over for this type of business, then the public must be well informed and involved in the decision. The referendum petition is now far behind schedule and the last day to turn in signatures will be April 5.

You may sign the petition or get your own copies to circulate among neighbors at both locations of Paul's Bike Shop or sign the petition at Sundance Market (24th and Hilyard).

I am not a chief petitioner of this referendum and my views do not necessarily reflect those of the businesses or activists involved in circulating this petition. Some of them have not yet seen the danger of the Smart Growth America agenda (this organization receives thousands in donations from Nike, Intel and Les Schwab) and David Kelly's brand of anti-sprawl extremism.

*Zachary Vishanoff
Eugene*

viewpoint BY SHELLY RICHARDSON

Searching for insight

Reflections on *The Passion*, Easter and baby chicks.



To see it or not to see it. That was the question. For several weeks, friends and I have had ongoing discussions about whether or not to see *The Passion of the Christ*. Some of my friends say the message of Mel Gibson's movie reignited their compassion and love for their fellow beings. Others found the violence distasteful. I vacillated for several weeks between the expectation that the movie offered spiritual insight and philosophical objections to portrayals of violence.

I haven't always objected to violence in movies. There was a time in my life that I wanted to see every Vietnam story that came out on the big screen. I thought that if I experienced the pain and sorrow of the Vietnamese people and our soldiers who fought there, I could somehow atone for the sins of our country. After I started a sincere spiritual search, the desire to see violent movies stopped.

As a follower of Jesus' teachings, *The Passion* put me in a quandary. Understanding Jesus' ability to love in spite of unbearable hate is crucial for my own spiritual journey. I am humbly grateful that Jesus was willing to go through the crucifixion in order to help me, 2,000 years later, to understand my unstoppable relationship with Divine Love/God. Often, I've searched the Bible and scoured over the story of the Passion for insight into how to heal like Jesus, love like he did, and even think like he did. The Bible says "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Like many other sincere seekers, I pray to understand and accept for myself the goodness and purity of that Christ-like mind. For me, this means that anyone has the right to practice in some degree the healing power of Truth or what I call The Christ. So, after much contemplation, in a "if this will help me understand how to love better moment," I made a date with myself to see the movie.

The theater parking lot was practically empty for the noon showing. I sat in my Subaru feeling very sorrowful. This was not an experience I was looking forward to. It wasn't hard for me to visualize the images of pain and hate that were coming to my thought and of Jesus' humiliation and defeat in being nailed to a cross. I gave

gratitude to the presence of Divine Love that is always with me and reminded myself that the loving presence of God never abandoned Jesus. God is with me in my darkest moments, whispering messages of love, victory, and the permanence of heavenly Life. I felt such gratitude for the sacrifice Jesus made so that we could all understand that violence and fear don't have dominion. The resurrection proved them powerless.

As I opened the car door, I asked, "How can I love like Jesus loved?"

Then my cell phone rang.

"The chicks are in," my husband said.

"What?"

"The chicks are in. I've picked up the kids from school and we're headed over to the feed store to pick out baby chicks. Do you want to come?"

He and our girls had been patiently waiting through the winter to get baby chicks so we could have fresh eggs.

The dichotomy of the situation was a bit startling. The crucifixion or baby chicks?

I sat for a moment wondering if going with my family was a cop out. But then, I had just asked "How can I love better?" Maybe my husband's call and asking me to meet them was the answer to my prayer. I told him "yes."

At the feed store, hundreds of baby chicks, bunnies, and ducklings snuggled under heat lamps for warmth while the girls bounced from cage to cage unable to decide because of their immediate love for every chick. The picture of all of them together was so innocent, so harmless. It was as if God said, "If you want to know how to love, look here." The verse from the Bible written by Paul when he was in prison came to my thought:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." *Phillipians 4: 8*

I stood in the feed store allowing myself to embrace all the qualities of goodness and love. The humility, meekness and humanity that Jesus had are really innate, simple, and natural to all of us. Perhaps the message from Paul was that in order to love, I needed to embrace and affirm all the good that God has already created.

We left the feed store that day with five baby chicks. I haven't thought about Gibson's movie lately, but when I've been pressed to react to a thoughtless remark or act, I work to remember and acknowledge my simple natural desire to love like Jesus did.

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