

BLUE RIVER TRAGEDY

Just 60 miles east of Eugene, 500 year old trees are slated to be cut. It is part of the scenic Blue River area that boasts one of the highest spotted owl populations in the area. Volunteers have looked long and hard and found physical evidence of sensitive and threatened species. The Forest Service and the timber company that now "owns" these trees are deciding to turn a blind eye to the evidence in your forests – our forests. But you would never know that by the decisions that are allowed to happen in our name.

This is surprising to me since the public overwhelmingly supports protection of old growth forests, upward from 80 percent. In a sinister yet calculated way, the Bush administration has stealthily dismantled the protections of wildlife that live in our mature forests. Along with that, the administration has been doing away with the public comments process and the safeguards inherent in the democratic process. What happens when the public owns the land and can act on that right?

Right now we have an out and out attack on everything that is of value to our lives. If I read another half-baked excuse that more things necessary to my life have to die to make another millionaire excessively rich, I don't know what I'm going to do. Already the "rationales" are flying to log the Elliot Forest and the upcoming massacre in the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area known as the Biscuit Salvage. It will never be enough.

The timber barons have been saying

since the '80s that they plan on being "sustainable" and it hasn't happened yet. There is absolutely no reason to believe they ever will. But this problem will not solve itself. Nothing less than us getting on the phones, putting the message out in public and letting our public officials know exactly where their responsibilities lie, will do. For our forests, there is nothing else I'd rather do.

*Kerstin Britz
Cottage Grove*

WILDLANDS & ECONOMY

Greg Vranizan questions Oregon Natural Resources Council's commitment to promoting wilderness protection and lack of commitment to communities (3/25). We don't feel there is any disconnect between our work to save wildlands and a healthy economy.

ONRC remains diligent in our work to see more wild forests protected for future generations because previous generations of decision-makers failed to do so. Sens. Packwood and Hatfield had a stranglehold on land protection in Oregon for decades, and the clearcuts that riddle our public forestlands are a testament to their lack of initiative. We owe a debt of thanks to people like Rep. Jim Weaver for the places that are saved, but even with their tireless work, less than 4 percent of Oregon is protected as wilderness, compared to 10 percent of Washington and 13 percent of California.

Thoreau said, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." Wilderness

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



areas can also be the preservation of our economy. Logged wildlands lose their value for recreation and produce few, short-term jobs. Look at the proposed Biscuit Fire "Recovery" logging — the timber industry predicts that the largest, most aggressive timber sale in modern history will have little affect on employment. Conversely, look at the vibrancy of communities like Sandy and Sisters, which are

the gateway communities to wildland recreation.

This is not to suggest that there are not stable, well-paying jobs to be had. As Mr. Vranizan notes, issues such as "how to manage NW forests in an ecologically sound, socially acceptable, politically sustainable way" have not been resolved. The rekindled controversy about logging old growth forests, however, shifts resources

viewpoint BY SPRUCE HOUSER

King's Prophetic Words

Using nonviolent means to improve society

'The choice is no longer violence or nonviolence; it's nonviolence or nonexistence.'

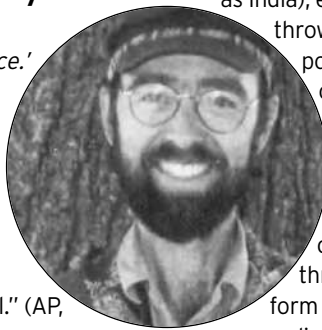
When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke these words to a packed church in Memphis just before his assassination, he seemed to be pointing toward an ominous collision course between humanity's propensity for violence and its capability to produce ever-deadlier weapons. A recent scientific development appears to only further confirm King's warning. "A research team backed by a federal grant has created a genetically engineered mousepox virus designed to evade vaccines, underscoring biotechnology's deadly potential." (AP, Oct.31, 2003)

The mousepox virus is very similar to the human smallpox virus, instilling deep concerns that such alterations could form super strains of bioweapons for which there would be no defense.

Another deadly weapon is the "silent nuclear bomb." This development has not received the media coverage it deserves because such weapons do not yield spectacular fireballs and mushroom clouds. Yet the potential killing power of genetically altered bioweapons would clearly rival atomic blasts. Even more sobering, these weapons would be much more accessible as the technology is far cheaper (see Richard Preston's compelling book *Demon in the Freezer*).

The choice between violence and nonviolence is perhaps one of the most fundamental and profound moral issues encountered in life. So many other ethical issues are subsumed within its overarching framework. What is poverty but structural violence against the poor? What is hatred but psychological violence against the hated? What is toxic pollution but violence against the earth itself? The list of manifestations of violence goes on.

Modern day zealots are another dangerous weapon. Here in Eugene, the issue is real and palpable. Opponents of nonviolence have even broadcast on community access TV the face of a local nonviolent activist superimposed on Jesus being crucified. The apparent message was that the nonviolent approach has



been an abject failure. I have to wonder whether the countless millions who have been moved by the teachings of Jesus would beg to differ. Those who advocated violence against the Roman empire were called Zealots. Those who assail nonviolence today do not realize they are replaying an ancient role in an ancient drama.

In painting a picture of failure, opponents of nonviolence conveniently ignore or distort the many successful social movements that were based on its principles. Women's right to vote, more humane working conditions, liberation of subservient colonies (such as India), equal rights for racial minorities, ending the Vietnam war, the overthrow of dictatorships in Chile and the Philippines, moratorium on nuclear power, capping an out-of-control nuclear arms race, and protection of old growth forests have all been gained through active nonviolence.

Opponents to nonviolence counter, "But is not the basic system still intact?" The power of nonviolent resistance has succeeded in each specific campaign in which it has been applied on the necessary scale. The transformation of society itself constitutes a larger challenge. However, society is not transformed by coercive threat but through inspiration. Nonviolence fully contains the capacity to transform our society. What power could corporate chieftains possibly hold

over our lives if: a) we who buy their products and work their jobs were to nonviolently refuse to cooperate? b) we participated instead in the creation of an ecologically based, sustainable economy and way of life impervious to corporate control? and c) if ballot initiatives were used to ban corporate money from dominating our political process? The only "failure" in this context lies not in the principle but rather in the lack of participation on the scale necessary.

While many of humanity's spiritual teachers, including Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi and King, have warned us to turn from the path of violence, that message has essentially been ignored. The spectre we face today of weapons of mass destruction seems a kind of karmic recoil of our refusal to turn away. It is as if a giant noose of our own making is tightening around the collective neck of humanity. This choice is being presented for perhaps the final time. If humanity does not turn from this path, it shall reap what it has sown.

If we seek a peaceful, just, and sustainable world, then the means we choose must also be peaceful, just, and sustainable. Our means must not contradict and negate the ends we seek. In the deeply profound words of Gandhi, "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."

Spruce Houser of Eugene has been involved in nonviolent resistance campaigns concerning nuclear weapons, nuclear power, industrial pollution, old growth forests and restoring democratic control over corporations.