

**EXCLUDING THE POOR**

Eugene is becoming arrogant. It seems to delight in excluding the poor from more and more activities and areas. If one cannot afford the fee to attend Art and the Vineyard, held in a public park, one is excluded from the city's July 4 celebration, as well as being outlawed from the public park and road. I guess Independence Day is really for the well-off. If one cannot afford the fee for the Eugene Celebration, one is not welcome at the city's annual party. It is the same for the County Fair, and other public park areas.

If I were boss, I would take down all the fences. It would be illegal to exclude a resident from any public park or public party held on public property for any reason. Any fees collected would be voluntary. If someone wants to have a party with fireworks and wants to charge for it, let it be held on private property. The Oregon Country Fair can get as exclusive and expensive as it wants, as it is on private property. The Art and the Vineyard crowd doesn't have the right to hold a public party on public property and not invite all the citizens of Eugene. Nor does the Eugene Celebration, nor the Lane County Fair, which has done what it could to exclude the poor.

*Hugh Massengill  
Eugene*

**REDIRECT OFFENSE**

Regarding Amy Gaudia's 7/1 letter "Stupid Articles," I am stunned that someone who has worked so extensively with sexual abuse survivors could read those articles and come away with contempt for the author's language choices instead of the alleged perpetrator of repeated sexual crimes against multiple women. I respect her right to feel offended by the language used to describe these allegations, but a bigger issue is that there might be a police officer in our

community who is a repeat sex offender, and that his actions have been overlooked by his superiors for years. Magaña's alleged actions against his victims far exceed any insult over the words "blow job" and "butt" used in the articles. Does it really matter whether he demanded a blow job or fellatio? Please direct your offense in the right direction.

*Kelly Bogan  
Eugene*

**PERVERSE LUSTS**

Sally Sheklow is lost to perverse lusts. No, I'm not referring to her lesbianism. I'm referring to her lust to get married. No doubt she wants an "equal helping of health insurance, retirement benefits, tax exemptions, etc." (Living Out, 6/17) But doesn't she really want an *unequal* helping of those benefits — unequal, that is, to those received by single people? Why should she (or heterosexual spouses) get paid more than single people for doing the same job?

I suppose anyone wants the financial perks of marriage (however unfair they may be), but I wonder if that's all Sheklow wants. What's next for her? Does she want the pink house with the picket fence? Membership in Daughters of the American Revolution? The vote in the Republican primaries?

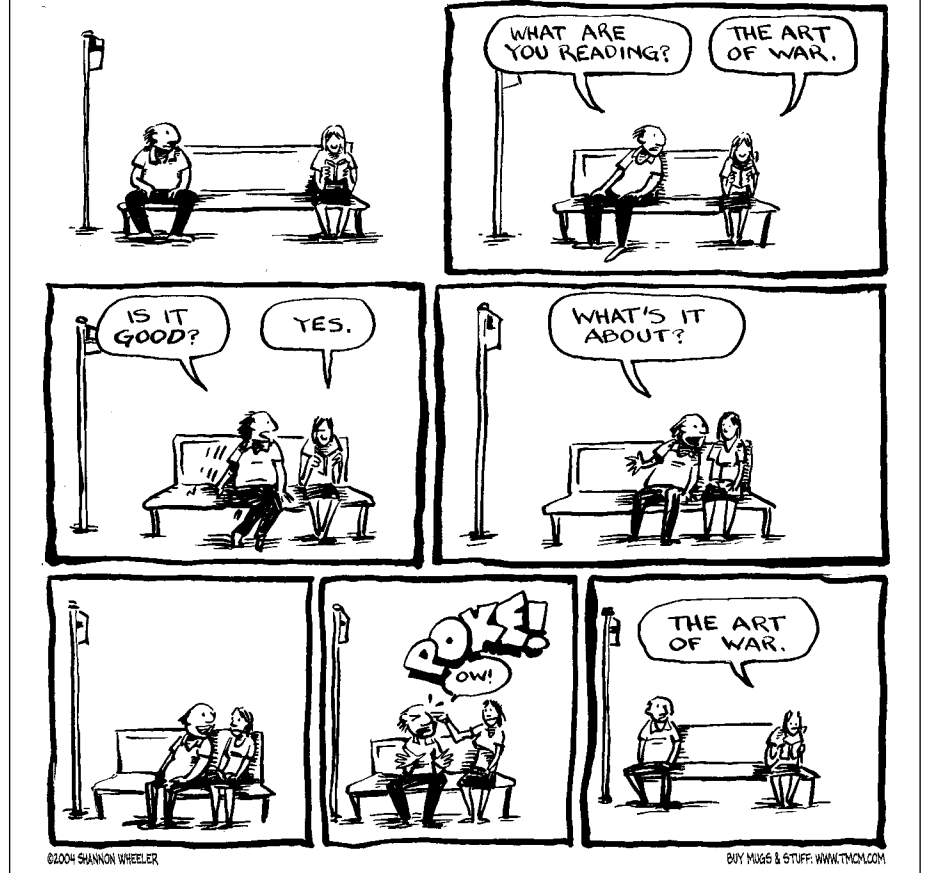
There are two ways to destroy a subculture. One is to repress it. The other is to assimilate it. Let's hope (for the sake of Sheklow's column) that she doesn't adopt all of the values of the mainstream. Today it may be marriage; tomorrow an SUV. Next thing you know, Sheklow will be writing columns deploring premarital sex.

*Bruce Schennum  
Eugene*

**UNFAIR TO GAYS**

Out-of-state ex-gay political activists

**TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN** BY SHANNON WHEELER



tricked the *EW* into publishing a letter (6/10) promoting unethical and harmful faith-based therapies for "converting" gays to be straight. Would *EW* publish a similarly offensive letter from neo-Nazis promoting ex-Jew groups? After all, unlike being gay, being Jewish really is a choice as was proved when the anti-gay radio host Dr. Laura converted to Judaism.

The writer of the letter "Being gay is a choice" has a right to spout his ethnic hate speech against gay people. But publishing it is not being "fair and balanced" to gay people.

*Thomas Kraemer  
Corvallis*

**TWO CENTS**

While there is some truth to both Charley Larson's and Wayne Ford's letters (6/24), I come down more on the Ford side, especially in these days of mass murder/suicide/torture for fun, profit and damaged religions.

The more truth we are exposed to, the sooner we can extricate ourselves from our (mostly) manmade dilemmas of overpopulation, over-exploitation, over-pollution and ever more grisly wars. We need as big a dose of truth as we can stand or else the meat grinder of reality will chew us all up and spit out our bones.

And to Pam Driscoll: Forget evil, it's just a dumb word from the past without signifi-

**REASONABLE DOUBT** BY TOM LININGER

**Grid and Bear It**

Energy grid thwarts conservation, invites manipulation.



This just in from the Bush administration: There is probable cause to believe that Ken Lay, the former CEO of Enron, may have committed fraud three years ago when he plunged his company into the biggest bankruptcy of all time. In other news, the Bush administration announced there is probable cause to believe that the sun rises in the morning and sets at night.

The glacial speed of the Lay prosecution contrasts with the "detain now, ask questions later" approach taken by the Justice Department in its investigation of Brandon Mayfield, a Muslim lawyer in Portland who was jailed for weeks without any indictment until the FBI realized it had the wrong man. Why so much haste in the Mayfield case and so much inertia in the Lay case? Here's a hint: The Justice Department moves a little slower when the president refers to the suspect as "Kenny Boy" (Lay is one of W's biggest campaign contributors).

Last week's indictment of Lay is good news. But we need to be careful that the vilification of Lay doesn't distract us from systemic problems in the energy industry. Lay is not the only reason why our energy policy is in shambles. The lack of meaningful regulation, coupled with the nature of energy on the interstate grid, will cause more problems in the future.

How does the grid work? It's a vast network of wires that spans several different states and connects virtually everyone — sort of like *The Matrix*, only less tedious. When you flip on the light switch in your house, the power you're using could come from a local source or from a source hundreds of miles away.

The grid offers many benefits. It promotes competition among suppliers, and it distributes energy to areas that might not be capable of local generation. The grid is basically just a free market of electrons, and it offers all the advantages of a free market.

On the other hand, the grid invites abuse by unscrupulous energy suppliers. The in-

terconnectivity of the western states allowed Enron to ship power back and forth across state lines during the energy crisis of 2001, jacking up prices along the way. A recent lawsuit by the Snohomish County Public Utility District turned up evidence that Enron made \$220,000 in three hours by shipping power from California to Oregon, masking its origin, and then shipping it back to California at wildly inflated prices. The

Snohomish PUD obtained transcripts of recordings in which Enron officials joked about swindling "Grandma Millie" in California. Is there any way we can get Grandma Millie on the jury trying Ken Lay?

Environmentalists worry that the grid hinders conservation by mismatching costs and benefits. Most of the proposals for new power generation involve burning natural gas. The new gas-fired plants can't be built in big cities like Portland, because of political pressure and because the air quality in Portland is barely within EPA guidelines. So energy speculators want to satisfy Portland's demand for new power by building gas-fired plants somewhere else. One set of developers wants to build the Willamette Valley's biggest gas-fired plant near Coburg, just a few miles north of Eugene. A state agency controls the siting of power plants, so local jurisdictions can't prevent the construction of a plant that sells power to faraway customers. Would Portlanders have much incentive to conserve electricity if their power came from gas-fired plants in other areas? Of course not, because the harmful consequences wouldn't be felt in Portland.

If you could eat a gallon of ice cream every day, and magically put all the pounds on your neighbor's backside, what would you do? You'd eat a lot more ice cream, and your neighbor would have a lot more junk in the trunk. Ben and Jerry would become the richest men in America. The president would be palling around with "Benny Boy" instead of "Kenny Boy."

By the way, do you know who put up the money for the Coburg power plant back in 2001? You guessed it: Enron. If the energy speculators get their way, we'll have a \$500 million monument to Ken Lay's legacy in our backyard, even when he's behind bars.

*Tom Lininger is a law professor and former county commissioner.*