

SPIT SHINE

I would like to thank Alan Pittman for his articles on the Magaña trial. He gave us a raw and uncensored view of the assaults, thus giving a glimpse of how “dirty” these crimes really were.

It will take more than a “spit shine” or internal investigation to restore luster to the EPD badge. Numerous times the city has asked voters to approve needed money for the department. It is apparent how our taxes are being spent. The city of Eugene should be held accountable as well as Magaña. No amount of investigation or reform can make up for what’s happened here.

Magaña new what he was doing. He preyed upon our city’s most vulnerable. He targeted alleged drug users and prostitutes, women already in uncertain situations. As a civil servant he should have tried to help these women, but instead he blackmailed and raped them.

I pray the courts can see beyond who these women are or what their habits may be. These victims deserve monetary compensation. Let the city right its wrong. Let them pay back what they owe.

*Joy Holmes
Eugene*

UNPROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE

Hats off to Amy Gaudia (Letters, 7/1) for verbalizing her concern about EW’s recent editorial choices. As a survivor of attempted rape, I’d like to emphasize Gaudia’s point that the Magaña articles used terminology that was likely to distress victims of sexual assault. I felt very troubled by the unprofessional language, and I cringed at the thought of how the X-rated wording might affect other readers, including children who happened to catch sight of the objectionable titles. Ouch.

The articles seemed to be a prime opportunity to inform us about the kinds of mental illness that could enable an officer to commit such unconscionable acts of abuse. In “Policing Police” (7/1), I appreciate that Alan Pittman held the police department responsible, yet I’d like to know more about the factors that contributed to the severity of the situation. Was it, for example, extreme self-loyalty, or the need for camaraderie and self-protection that allowed it to go on for so long?

I value EW’s willingness to address contro-

versial issues. Please consider expanding the impact you make by providing insights that facilitate more in-depth understanding.

*Lisa-Marie DiVincent
Eugene*

CRITIC KICKING

I am greatly offended by the 7/1 “Too Much Coffee Man” cartoon. In this cartoon, a critic discusses the apparent self-hate of a cartoon character that kicks his loving and receptive cat. Then the same angry man invades this thoughtful discussion by kicking the critic. I would ask, “Does this cartoon give kids and adults the idea that it’s alright to kick critics?” I would say yes. Perhaps you should think about the hundreds of critic abuse cases that are reported in Lane County. Why would you want to encourage this kind of abuse? Why is critic abuse funny? What next, politically incorrect humor? Freedom of speech?

I call for a suspension or removal of Shannon Wheeler, the cartoonist, and apology to the cool critics of Eugene. We love critics and seeing them being abused is not funny. And to James Bakerhall who wrote the amazingly absurd letter 7/8 I say: Get a life.

*Marc Calvary
Eugene*

MERCURY SPILL

I am writing you regarding the current concern surrounding mercury. I would like to stress here that mercury is not only an environmental issue but also a health issue. Mercury primarily affects women and children, and EPA reports that almost 630,000 babies are born with high levels of mercury in their blood. Studies have shown that these babies are prone to suffer from neurological disorders and brain damage.

Now the EPA is deciding to declare mercury as a nontoxic emission, allowing power plants to spill 23 tons more of mercury into our waterways every year. This will not only prove to be disastrous for our wildlife, primarily fish, but will also ultimately create a countdown for the death of our fishing industries, our fishing sport as well as the consumption of fish in our daily diet.

Today in the 21st century, we not only possess the necessary technology to prevent this from happening, but we can also allow our in-



dustries to continue without affecting progress. Ironically, the EPA has proven in their own studies with a science-backed plan that we can reduce emissions by 90 percent, which would result in helping our economy.

As a community, we need to team up to avert this. We are fulfilling a responsibility to preserve Oregon’s rich heritage of wildlife in our waterways and protect our loved ones from harm. We cannot allow the EPA to declare mercury as a nontoxic material. Please write Senator Smith and urge him to help solve this problem. With concern,

*Rachel Lee
Eugene*

creasing political polarization in our country I see many signs of hope. Young people are on the streets registering people to vote. I have conversations with strangers about the torture at Abu Ghraib prison and my daughter has the opportunity to attend multi-faith services here in Eugene. All of these activities reflect different and beautiful capacities in human beings: to engage with our world, to recover our ethical sensibilities and to harbor the curiosity and openness that I believe will ultimately lead us all to higher ground.

*Barbara Sklar
Eugene*

HOPEFUL SIGNS

I want to thank Todd Huffman for his letter to the editor (7/8) entitled “Common Ground.” It challenged me to reexamine the ways that I fall into the habit of painting people into corners. If we can take the time to listen deeply to different points of view, shaped by different experiences from our own, labels will seem shallow and ultimately meaningless.

In the midst of what appears to be an in-

SPECIAL TALENT

Well, Ed from Creswell (7/8) I hate to burst your bubble, but we are not all born “artistic” and then “thwarted” by some teacher. Your recollections of the “good ol’ days” when everyone was allowed to be an artist is a myth. People can be handy or crafty or even innovative in their chosen medium but that doesn’t make them artists. I know there is scholarship out there that says we are all artists in our own right and some of us are just waylaid out of being such, but to

OUT in THE COUNTRY BY SCOTT THIEMANN

Hiding Out

Beneath currents of guilt and confusion

I grew up the oldest child in a middle class suburban family, involved in church, doing well in school, pursuing dreams similar to most teenagers.

I was almost too normal. Except for one big secret.

Exploring the hidden me entailed shrewd timing in the form of many short visits to the city library. Pulling out the card catalog drawer, turning it away so the librarian couldn’t see the books I was looking up. Writing down numbers without titles on small scraps of paper, meaningless to anyone not a librarian. Memorizing a title, matching it to the Dewey Decimal number, removing the book, hiding in the carol protected by its mini-walls. Digesting all the words possible within my daily time limit, not letting the librarian see me replacing the forbidden book on the shelf.

The next day I retrieved the same book, absorbing what I could during another limited, time-precious sitting, replacing the book and continuing the cycle daily until finished.

Repeating this process, I devoured numerous books and magazine articles until I had completely convinced myself – the hidden me growing exposed, like tree roots that were securely buried gradually becoming visible, now jutting outward from a once-solid bank



with water lapping in waves of self-discovery and underlying currents of guilt and confusion.

As I exited the library one fateful day, making my pilgrimage homeward, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I was homosexual. I said the word out loud. There was no turning back.

How could a 16-year-old be so self-aware, when nothing around him reflected such a possibility? Was I the only one in my high school of over 2,000 not attracted to the other gender?

With no role models, no context for making sense of being other-than-heterosexual, and the American Psychiatric Association determining that I didn’t have a mental illness or disorder, I made it through – as have many of your children, your brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, various relatives and friends.

Although the process of discovering one is not heterosexual may not be quite as lonely an experience today, having available resources and people aware and sensitive to such a reality can make a big difference in the quality and potential of the life of a young person who feels like a round peg in a square hole regarding the world of sexual attractions and relationships.

Such support could even provide the means for a child or teenager to make it through their adolescence alive.

Scott Thiemann’s column has been running for several months in the Port Orford News, but was recently canceled due to advertiser pressure. His columns and commentaries have also run in the Brownsville Time and the Brookings Pilot.