

**SAFE DISPOSAL**

For the past 11 months, I have worked as a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer for HIV Alliance's Sana Needle Exchange Program. Sadly, the end of my term of service coincides with devastating budget and staffing cuts to the needle exchange.

Whether people realize it or not, the Sana Needle Exchange affects and serves everyone in our community by preventing new HIV infections, keeping used needles out of our streets and parks, and significantly reducing the costs of hospital and ER visits in our community. We exchange approximately 50,000 needles a month, which means that these needles are safely disposed of instead of being thrown into our neighborhoods. People need to consider what will happen to our community if this vital human service program ends. Needle exchange programs save lives.

More than anything, the past year has opened my eyes to how many amazing people live and work in our community. HIV Alliance employs some of the most compassionate, dedicated and empowered people that I have ever had the privilege of knowing, and I thank all of them for this experience.

In the face of serious funding shortages, Sana Needle Exchange staff and volunteers still show up every day to offer help and fight for what they believe in. We see the difference we make each day and I know what an incredible impact the Sana Needle Exchange has made in our community. If you care about the health and safety of our community, I urge you to support your local needle exchange.

*Emily Graham-Berks  
Eugene*

**DESTROYED LIVES**

I would like to thank Dr. Megan Schmidt for her Viewpoint (7/15). I agree 100 percent that it is time to hold *EW* accountable for the ads that appear in the back of the paper as well as those that promote businesses associated with the sex trade such as announcements of porn star appearances at Castle or mud wrestling at a strip club. How much money do these ads generate?

How many lives are destroyed in the wake of those who respond to the ads? Where is the cost/benefit analysis? By my calculations, the costs far outweigh the gains, and perhaps *EW* should be held accountable for reparations to those families whose lives have been destroyed following

repeated temptation broadcast through the pages of this paper. Counseling is not cheap, divorce attorneys are expensive, not to mention the potential exposure to STDs and physical abuse.

I call for an end to this section of ads and accountability for the social distress you have promoted.

*Jason Blazar  
Eugene*

**AWASH IN EROTICA**

In her Viewpoint of 7/15, Megan Schmidt claims that feminists and "other researchers" have demonstrated an "undeniable link" between the pervasiveness of porn/prostitution (to borrow Schmidt's melding technique) and sexual violence. The statistics presented leave me wondering about the nature of the research, and how the figures would look in a context of proper "sex industry" regulation, or with whole-population samples when looking at the effects of porn. After all, there are also studies that show lower rates of sexual assault in moderate European countries that are awash in erotica and have regulated prostitution.

It seems rather obvious that those prone to sexual violence would have a higher rate of recidivism while using porn, just as alcoholics have a higher rate of relapse in the presence of booze. Should society prohibit anything that could possibly support abusive behavior? And what percentage of the large number of porn viewers around the world coerce others into sexual activity, or see women as subservient? Where's that study? It's interesting how someone with a pet issue can selectively latch onto stats that seem to support their views.

As for gauging the willingness to choose porn or prostitution, I bet a larger percentage of people willingly engage in such activities, especially erotica, in cultures that don't readily stigmatize them. In this society, many people are conditioned to be uncomfortable with their bodies and their sexuality (particularly anything perceived as outside the mainstream), and this would no doubt influence their attitudes. But let's acknowledge that a percentage of the erotica out there is still truly non-commercial material released by people who *do* fancy being photographed or taped enjoying their sexuality. Shall we rail against all that freelance self-expression as well, because it might offend the sensibilities of ultra-feminists (a.k.a. anti-males) and those who feel they've been victimized? After all, there's a

**TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN** BY SHANNON WHEELER



lot of stuff out there that could be classified under the "P" word.

*Alex F. Jensen  
Eugene*

women and non-heterosexuals of their gendered "place" in this society.

*Jen McWeeny  
Eugene*

**GENDERED PLACE**

Three cheers for Megan Schmidt's words (7/15) about *EW*'s willingness to subjugate women. I have wanted to write such a letter myself for some time now. Schmidt does an excellent job at exposing how reformist progressivism often covers for the fact that progressives rarely call for revolutionary changes in the very social, legal and economic structures of society, especially when it involves gender roles.

I would like to add that in addition to the hypocritical political implications of *EW*'s relationship with the sex industry, the sex industry ads affect readers' personal experience with the paper. When I see images of a faceless woman grabbing her bare breasts in a pose intended for an invisible voyeur, or a woman sucking her fingers while wearing only her bra (7/15 issue), I am reminded that we live in a society where women are most often seen to have worth only in terms of their physical looks and in terms of their ability to please men sexually (one ad proudly states "available for businessmen" next to the image).

Thanks, *EW* for supporting these flawed cultural ideals and for reminding me, other

**A MAN'S VIEW**

By printing Megan Schmidt's succinct and direct appeal against *EW*'s sexual advertising, the paper seems to be inviting comment. I weigh in on Megan's side. She discussed the subjugation of women, and I'd like to address the issue from a man's perspective.

I turn gingerly to the back pages, hoping that "No Exit" will make me laugh, which it often does. But I know that in those pages, girls I've never met are going to be staring at me, and they WANT ME BAD. Only they don't. They want a hundred bucks or whatever. They want to exploit me and have no interest in my feelings or personality beyond what it takes to acquire what I've worked hard all day to earn.

Possibly a man's job is already somewhat demeaning, but he gets the rent together and has a few bucks for beer and laughs. Rather than focusing whatever remaining attention he may have on the character of the police force or the changing ecological regulations, *EW* compliments him by assuming he's a valid target for some woman (with no face) holding her immense breasts in her hands, a girl in a bra

**KUMBAYA Dammit** BY DAN CAROL

**On God and Country**  
I'm with Abe (and the Johns).

**J**ohn Kerry accepts the Democratic nomination tonight. I feel silly trying to predict what he will say. It seems like a time to pause – and listen.

Will he inspire and excite like the last JFK did a generation ago – and make a call for young Americans to be the Greatest Generation Yet to Come? I sure hope so.

But either way: The guy already has my vote – and it's a vote I already feel passionate about.

Here's why. In these weird new times of 9/11 and religious extremism on both sides, anyone who is willing to stand up for what's right when it comes to God and Country has got my support. Here is what John Kerry had to say July 11 about Bush, religion and



faith on CBS' "60 Minutes":

*Well, Abraham Lincoln wisely avoided trying to invoke God on the side of the North vs. the South, but prayed that he was on God's side. I think that's the lesson that John (Edwards) and I would bring to this. We are both people of deep faith. I think that – and I respect the president's faith, I don't question it. None of us do.*

*But I think it is important for us to be really mindful of not stepping over that precious line that the founding fathers drew, and I believe on a number of occasions, this president has stepped over that line. It is not the job of the president of the United States to decide what the religion of America is or what the religion of the world should be.*

You want a candidate with character and conviction? Folks, I think we've got one.

*Dan Carol is a Democratic political strategist and a founding partner of CTSG (www.ctsg.com), a progressive political consulting firm based in Eugene and Washington, D.C.*