

IGNORE PROPAGANDA

I am writing to respond to Sonny Taylor's guest viewpoint (10/21) regarding the proposed Eugene Housing Standards Code, aka "Renter's Rights." This code succeeds in supporting ORS 90 by dealing with the most basic of housing needs: heat, plumbing, and structural integrity. Establishing this code would offer Eugene renters a viable alternative to withholding rent or suing landlords in small claims court; it by no means "narrows the scope" of options available.

Too many people in our town live in sub-standard housing; this is a human rights issue that can be ignored no longer.

Taylor argues that the proposed code would raise the overall standard of housing in Eugene. This is not a bad thing! Too many people in our town live in sub-standard housing; this is a human rights issue that can be ignored no longer. I urge the City Council to see through negative propaganda and move forward. Act now.

Brandi Minogue
Eugene

HOUSING RIGHTS

I am writing this in response to the viewpoint article "Raising the Bar" from the 10/21 issue of *EW*. I found a few of the points made about housing standards to be in error.

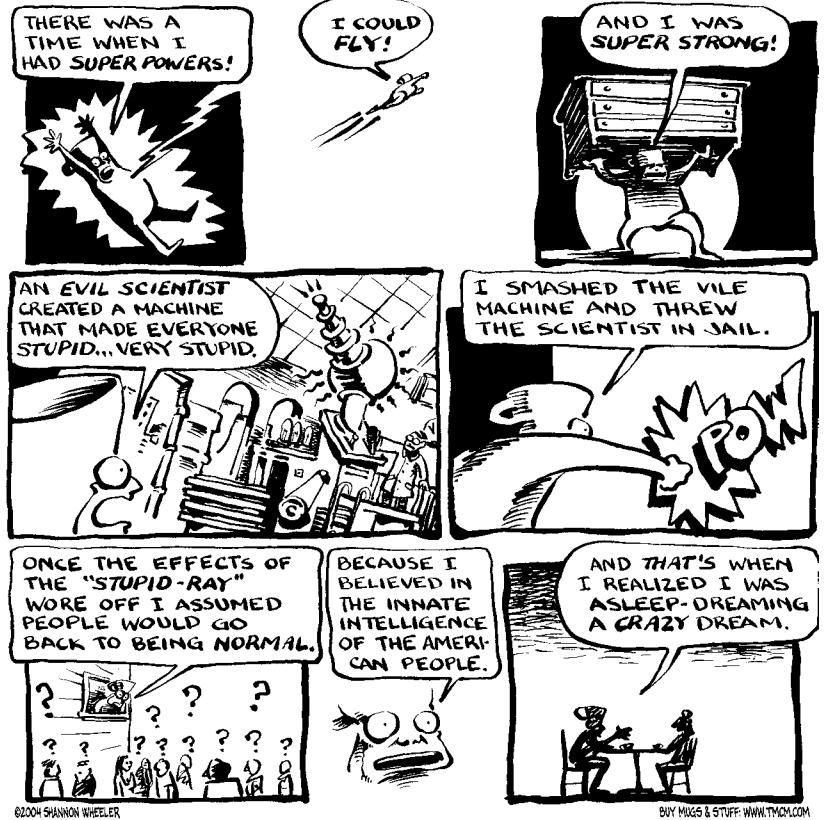
The proposed code is intended to develop an enforcement mechanism to implement the state laws of the Oregon Landlord and Tenant Act. It is focused upon the most basic human rights: heating, weatherproofing, structural integrity and plumbing.

Taylor wrote about shortcomings of the code; that it doesn't address every aspect of habitability concerns. The proposal is not intended to limit renter's rights, but to address the most serious problems first. If unsafe living conditions are improved, tenants should not have to seek alternate housing. Problems with rent reduction and deposit returns will decrease resultantly.

A housing code is not a way for CDD to randomly impose fines upon landlords. Fines would only be required if the landlord does not comply with state law. Under current conditions, renters are not necessarily given an option to complain besides civil court. The proposed housing code would help deter the use of courts and facilitate dialogue between landlord and tenant.

While ORS 90 outlines the entire regulations of state law, without a system of enforcement these rights are not guaranteed. If the City Council adopts this code, Eugene citizens will have the option of seeking to broaden it to include more of the ORS 90 regulations. The

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



code isn't perfect, but it's a start.

Megan McCusker
Eugene

WHY THE GRIMACE?

Why is it that saying that I'm in a Eugene band brings a grimace to the faces of people

from Eugene? I recently saw Mike Henry, with his bass in the *EW*, talking about the blues and the Eugene Celebration (9/16). As I read the article, it solidified in my mind a lack of acceptance of local arts.

I don't believe this attitude comes from the EC coordinators. I believe that Steve

natural resistance BY MARY O'BRIEN

Cultivating Gratitude

Finding solace in human potential, regardless of the election.

Oct. 29, five days before the 2004 election for president

For 59 years I've been fortunate. Personal fear has not lodged inside me except in a few rare and fleeting moments.

This election (which will have taken place by the time this is published) has been sitting as Fear inside me. I have wakened in the night with cold realizations of one or another outcome that hangs in the balance. I have worked around the clock on conservation problems because so much is being destroyed in such deliberate ways, and work helps me fend off despair. I have phoned and walked in Eugene and Springfield neighborhoods for candidates and measures. I have listened to the radio. I have given money. I finally realized just how frightened I am at the thought of Four More Years of George W. Bush.

"Well," I thought, "THIS is a fine situation. The only reason I write this column is to try to help. How can I help if I'm afraid?"

I decided to first figure out exactly WHAT was so scary to me about Four More Years. And then to figure out, NOW, what I will do if that's what I and my country are stuck with, legally or illegally.

So first, what is so scary? Obviously it is not George W. Bush per se, but George W. Bush in a position that allows numerous people (e.g., his appointed Cabinet, Supreme Court justices, and agency heads) to make fateful decisions along lines that are scary. Too many of George's appointees (as well as George) implement what I find most threatening in humans:

- Aggressive militarism. Being willing to preemptively and unilaterally wage war on other humans and their lands as a means to force those nations to serve our nation's material desires or to respond to social problems.
- Religious fundamentalism. Adhering to a formal religion that denies the validity of different, deeply-held human values.
- Anthropocentrism. Actively promoting human population and material consumption at the expense of the lives and homes of our other relations.
- Nationalism. Acting as if the material interests and values of humans in one geo-



graphic area are more important than the culture, material interests, or needs of humans in another place.

- Destruction of public sharing on behalf of private control. Advancing private, for-profit enterprises at the expense of public lands, health, education, regulation, wildlife, air, water, and oceans.
- Installation of authoritarian government in place of democratic processes. Reducing public access to information and eliminating public presence at decisionmaking tables.
- Frequent lying. Ignoring the responsibility to tell the truth; disrespecting the public trust of communication.

Obviously George W. Bush & Co. do not have a corner on these ancient human tendencies that threaten the health and well-being of people and the Earth. With the apparent exception of religious fundamentalism, Saddam Hussein emphasized them in spades. Thousands of other authoritarian government heads and functionaries have practiced most or all of them throughout history. Many citizens in my and other nations subscribe to most or all of them in practice.

However, when the political leadership of a country as rich, armed, and technologically equipped as ours subscribes to them, our democracy, people throughout the world, and all our relations suffer or are lost.

So, what to do about Four More Years, if that is the outcome of Nov. 2? What I came up with is gratitude, and the courage gratitude brings.

- Gratitude for everyone who is public spirited, democratic, inclusive, truthful, tolerant, non-violent, and careful of the Earth. There are millions of them, and many of them have acted with grace and courage in the midst of far more immediately dire circumstances.
- Gratitude for every inspiring being. The chickadee who calls in a frozen morning. The salmon who goes home over 10 dams. The tree that heals itself after lightning. The moon that floats in silence and power. The decrepit oak that sports new, tender leaves each spring.
- Gratitude for humor. When I hear Nez Perce Tribe members come forth with quiet humor in the midst of having lost nearly everything to my people, I know I am standing on bedrock. When I see humorous signs in an anti-war parade, I know many know what's good.
- Gratitude for being alive. To have the opportunity to help; the chance to watch another sunrise; the chance to change things four years from now.

Perhaps there won't be Four More Years. But if there are, perhaps we will find that in the midst of giving thanks, courage enters in.

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