

Flat Out

Lessons to be learned on the freeway of life.



Stupid or not, Oregon voters banned gay marriage. If you want matrimony's legal benefits and you're not in a one-man/one-woman couple, the Constitution officially declares you SOL. But queer people are such rebels we keep on getting married.

When friends announced their same-sex nuptials about a hundred miles south of town, wild homophobes couldn't keep us away. Four of us made plans to drive down together in Jean's new car.

Jean, Wifey and I are big old dykes. For the special occasion of a lesbian wedding, we'd arrayed ourselves in our fanciest finery – Jean, in a freshly-ironed plaid button-down with Dockers, Wifey and I opting for elastic-waist pant and shirt ensembles. You know, dressed up.

Then Mary arrived. The one straight woman in our entourage showed up for the trip in a stunning blue silk suit. Next to her we looked like the Clampetts. But hey, we're down with diversity.

So there we are, toodling along the interstate, chatting up whatever it is homos and straight people find in common, such as who we'd like to see as Martha Stewart's new apprentice. We're into a good discussion about baba ganouj when blammo! A huge explosion jerks the car out of control.

Jean white-knuckles the steering wheel. Wifey and I squeeze bruise-marks into each other's thighs. Jean's freckly complexion flushes scarlet, clear around to the back of her neck, upon which my gaze is rigidly fixed. Jean and Wifey and I lose our power of rational thinking. Was it a sniper? Land mine? Off-target strategic air strike?

Mary remains composed and matter-of-factly points out we've blown a tire. The car hobbles to a stop. Life and limb no longer in danger, I assess our situation. A current AAA card but no cell phone.

I jump out and try to flag down help. I feel like an idiot. All those years of martial arts, assertiveness training, and lesbian empowerment have come down to this one bizarre moment – me flailing my arms in the wind like some berserk Olive Oyl calling *Help! Popeye!* Traffic zooms past.

My traveling companions stand at the open tailgate. Popeye not forthcoming, I give up on waving at speeders and join my gang behind the car. Turns out that while Jean has owned this vehicle two whole months, she has never looked at – nor for that matter even located – the spare.

Here we are, three lesbos in sensible shoes all dressed up in our Sunday-go-to-wedding clothes. Nobody wants to get dirty. Then Mary, our token straight woman in heels, takes over.

She lifts the floor panel. We big tough lesbians just stand there, staring at what is supposed to be the spare – a rubber ring the size of a hemorrhoid cushion. Mary hefts out the tire, biceps bulging under the still-pristine blue silk, and rolls it around to the front passenger side where the flat is.

The jack lies in tinker-toy segments of industrial-yellow metal tubing – assembly required. While we three galoots fumble with the pieces and argue over the possible meanings of the tiny-print instructions, Mary pries off the hubcap. The tire iron is too dinky to loosen the lug nuts.

Here's where I come in. Big dyke that I am, it's my duty to step up. Literally. Mary has me climb onto the lug wrench while she holds it in place, using my bounce for torque to loosen the lug nuts. Then she jacks up the car, removes the lugs and sets them into the upturned hubcap – all of this without getting so much as a dust mote on her nicely manicured hands.

By the time the flat is removed and stowed and the spare is mounted and secured, we three lezzies have managed to get ourselves filthy. Mary remains unsullied. Luckily, she has enough moist towelettes in her purse for all of us.

Note to self: Never go to a lesbian wedding without a straight woman along.

Join writer Sally Sheklow March 3rd in a demonstration for marriage equality at Oregon's state capitol. For Day of Action details see www.basicrights.org. For transportation from Eugene contact Religious Response Network's Jan Fairchild, familyzoo6@comcast.net, 344-7378.

killed by wolves in 2003. In comparison, 3,400 sheep were killed by domestic dogs during a recent year. Third, wolves are not being released into Oregon, they're *returning* from successful reintroduction programs in Idaho.

On another note, the balance of the ecosystem benefits everybody, even ranchers. Oregon and many other parts of North America have a lot of healing to do from past mistakes. Having the wolf return is a big step in that healing process. The Native indigenous people of Oregon didn't view the wolf as a problematic animal; they viewed the wolf as equal, valuing all that could be learned from this magnificent being. I really don't see any reason why it should be different for us right now. They gray wolf is a native species to Oregon, whereas European cattle are not.

One of my biggest wishes is that someday maybe we will be able to live in a world where it isn't "us" against "them." That is how I felt at the last wolf hearing I attended. There is compromise to be found, and the only side seeking it is "us."

*Amy Sonntag
Veneta*

SLUG REPORT

If anybody has been on slug patrol, I must admit, I have been underground – the Baja, that is. Bringing in the New Year celebrating with the dowager herself, my mom's big 8-0 in Mexico. After returning to our lovely community, I caught up, or should I say down, with a gnarly bug that certainly justified my being truly deserving of the title "Queen of Slime." But, as they say, "The show must go on."

Why, it was such a pleasure to perform with Prince and Princess Peace at "Dance for a Reason." We got many accolades at the two-night sold-out event, which is most gratifying. I can only wonder how much better the act might have been if I hadn't been under the weather. Oh, fiddle-de-dee!

If you missed it, well, you missed some downright up-lifting talent benefiting the Young Writers Association. Now with all my rested senses back, I am ready to share my new vision. Yes, the slime shall rise again!

Ya'll want to have fun? I am throwing a Queen's Ball April 9 to help benefit FOOD for Lane County. Look to *EW* for more details. And remember, between the pain and the ecstasy, you know you are alive. Oh yes, I just adore the slimy cover of the *Weekly's* Love issue (2/10). It's simply sublime.

*Queen Scarlett O'Slimera,
Eugene*

SOLAR JUICE

Congratulations to the UO on the completion of their solar electric system (News Briefs, 1/27). The students and faculty involved in the project have much to be proud of. The student body could have elected to take all of the money and throw a block party. Instead they choose to create something of enduring value that will benefit the community for decades to come.

The picture that was used in the article was the wrong one. I sent a picture of my students at LCC installing a solar electric array on the Science Building, along with the UO solar pictures. Most of the people who

worked on the UO solar project have graduated from LCC's Renewable Energy Program. The solar equipment that we use at LCC is in an area set up as a classroom, and it is not tied into the building's electrical system. The solar electric system at the UO Student Recreation Center was designed and built by our company, Energy Design Co, in collaboration with Solar Assist, and LR Brabham Electrical Contractor. This system provides electricity for the building.

We would like to thank all of those that worked so hard to get the project off the ground. It was a pleasure to see the dedication of those that donated their time and effort to turn the UO into a green campus.

*Vincent McClellan
President, Energy Design Co.*

EYE FOR TYPOS

In defense of Alan Pittman ("Word Abuse," 2/10), I would like to point out the obvious; *EW* apparently does not employ a proofreader. There is rarely an issue in which I don't detect a glaring typo. Often, there are several. It makes me wonder if the editor is too busy editing for content to pay attention to grammar and spelling. If that is the case, then there ought to be a proofreader on staff. Yet, in the seven years I've been reading the *Weekly*, not once have I seen them recruit for such a position. Having earned a degree in English (in addition to possessing an overly sensitive eye for typos), I'd like to apply for the job. All I ask in return is a morning bagel and strong cup of coffee.

*Sabrina McNamara
Eugene*

EDITOR'S NOTE: We haven't had a proofreader on staff since the last century, choosing instead to blow that budget item on beer. Well, not really. We traded our excellent proofreader for a seasoned journalist. We poof each other now and catch 99 percent of the errors. But in cranking out 12,000 words a week, we occasionally stumble – might even be a typo in this paragraph. Also, thanks for the free proofing offer but state labor laws tell us we can only exploit interns.

REIGNING COPS

What is Ken Warren complaining about (letters, 2/7)? He disapproves of Alan Pittman's choice of words: "One does not 'reign' in abusive cops; one does not 'rein' over a divisive council." I hate to reign on Warren's parade (Crown me. I'll take the rains on the ceremonial carriage, but it's been so dry!). However, why can't one "reign" in (or at least over) abusive cops? Some benevolent dictator should do so.

Why can't one "rein" over a City Council (turning them left, I hope, with a deft flick of the leather)? After all, the words are being used figuratively whichever spelling is chosen. I'm glad that Pittman eschews trite metaphors and attempts original ones (however unintentionally!).

*Bruce Schennum
Eugene*

END THE MONOPOLY

To say that school choice is affecting 4J schools negatively, and that minorities have less opportunity to utilize these choices, is absurd. It's a distraction from the real problems in 4J schools. Perhaps it is that parents

james von boeckmann
attorney at law

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