

OFF TO A BAD START

I am deeply disturbed by the new City Council's first actions. Where was the citizen involvement in the decision on a 7-1 vote (thank you Betty Taylor) to re-establish tax subsidies for big corporations who relocate or expand in Eugene? Had such a proposal been publicized enough to elicit real community dialogue, our new (and returning) councilors may have been educated on the various studies that show this type of economic stimulus does not benefit taxpayers or a liveable community.

Without citizen input, it is only business as usual downtown, regardless of how much kinder or gentler the new rules will be.

Had the Council taken its time in establishing priorities, it might have considered the recommendations by the 2002 Citizen Charter Review Committee. Among these were — surprise — increased citizen involvement in city governance. Also recommended were an independent city auditor, an in-house legal counsel and instant run-off voting. Couple these priorities with establishing an external police review board and a living wage ordinance for city employees, a corporate responsibility code and a green building ordinance for the city, and suddenly we have a populist (as in popular with the people) City Council agenda. And as for economic stimulus, a little creative dialogue would serve the voters better than a dogmatic belief in tax giveaways.

Trey Burns
Eugene

SMALL POND

In response to Shyrra Adams (3/10) I have to say, as always context is everything. When I suggested in my interview that minority youth leave Eugene, it was in this sense: "If you were born here, get out and see the world. The world is bigger than Eugene. Come back if you want to. Stay and fight the good fight if you want to."

Eugene is a perfect laboratory in which to study and engage both individual and institutional racism in battle. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Rosa Parks all had intact, diverse, and complex communities of color in which to organize, engage, and renew themselves. There have been free people of color here since before Eugene was founded, and all during its history to the present. Every time a geographical community of color began to form in

Eugene, either by legal or illegal discrimination it was broken up quite deliberately. Though discrimination became illegal, it still remains profitable and continues, preventing community. Obviously a sense of community has to be developed in other senses than just a 'hood', a barrio or the block.

In Eugene we've proven there are many ways of engaging civil rights struggle without a geographic center, just as there are symbolic and tangible victories (street and school names, leadership), and continuing issues. I love the land here. I've raised my children here. I own property here. Eugene's small pond is predictable after 20 years. My home is the ocean. *A luta continua* — the struggle continues.

Mark Harris
Eugene

HELL RAISERS

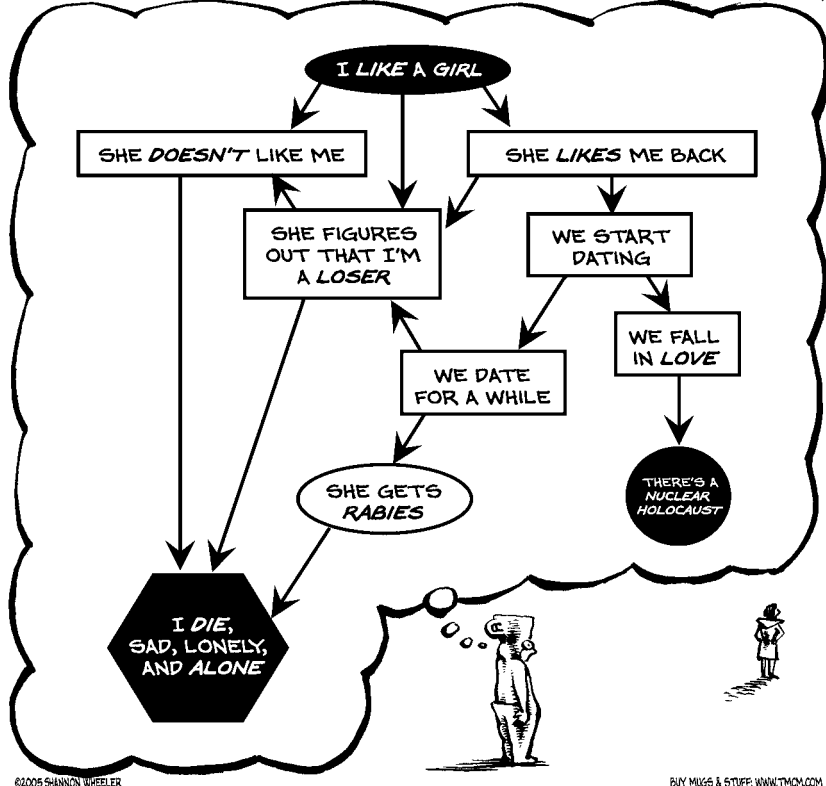
While the majority at *EW* are settling into the la la land of "sex, drugs & rock-and-roll," a bunch of old guys are raising hell. I guess by the age of 65, the allure of the familiar triad is replaced with a concern for the people and the inheritance passed on to future generations. Give a listen to these recent comments:

Frank Pitz in the *Online Journal*, age 67: "We white progressives need to become angrier, we need to reach out in true togetherness to the minority and oppressed community in Bush's America and get mad as hell. Maybe we even need to bust a window or two, or three; forget that old aphorism about 'catching more flies with honey than vinegar,' we have been laying out the honey for years and haven't caught a damn thing."

West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd, age 84: "We, unlike Nazi Germany or Mussolini's Italy, have never stopped being a nation of laws, not of men. But witness how men with motives and a majority can manipulate law to cruel and unjust ends ... Yes, we believe in majority rule, but we thrive because the minority can challenge, agitate, and question. We must never become a nation cowed by fear, sheep-like in our submission to the power of any majority demanding absolute control."

Martin Litton (*EW*, 3/10), age 88: "If you sit down with your enemy, it's crazy. I don't mind being ignored, hated. I think we're in desperate straits. The Earth is dying, and we don't want to even recognize it."

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



So if the choice is between getting mad and raising hell with the government and with ourselves, or conjugating with new bodies, acquiring an illegal smile, and pounding out some good tunes, my question is, what choice? Comfortably-sedated Americans will always choose the easiest path offered to them. Just don't Bogart that joint, my friend.

Robert Simms
Eugene

NOT GONZO

Maybe you should start editing taste. When I breezed through the latest issue of the paper (3/3), I was perturbed at the crass nature of the Hunter Thompson depiction committing suicide. This irreverent, senseless, cartoonish drawing is not what I call "gonzo"; it's what I call immature, disrespectful, ignorant, and what you've been brainwashed into believing is acceptably PC.

Michael C. Cleereman
Eugene

PROTECTED SPEECH

As a card carrying member of the ACLU, I would like to respond to Max Weiss's concerns (3/10) about the recent addition of Date Girl column in the *Weekly*. I may not agree with either Max's opinion

or the *Weekly's* need to print thought-provoking articles, but both opinions must be protected. The most important of our civil rights is the right to speak your mind. Even if you are the only one who believes you, your right of opinion must be allowed. Whether it's the American Nazi Party petitioning a permit to rally in Skokie, Ill., to the civil rights movement to the protests in recent decades, positions need to be valued and protected.

The point here is that if anyone is silenced then we are all censored. To all present, I am not espousing total acceptance but rather the right to exam all points of view. With protected rights comes respectful responsibility. Your right also comes with circumstances that will unfold as you choose. For most these choices come and go with each decision you support.

For Max, there are several choices he can make. He can rip the pages he has issues with. He can try to sway the readership to his way of thinking or he can relish in the notion that all opinions are valued and respected. The *Weekly* and/or *The Register-Guard* should have freedom to print and pursue ANY line of potential newsworthy events or position they deem worth publishing. Date Girl is provocative, racy and raunchy with an in-your-face

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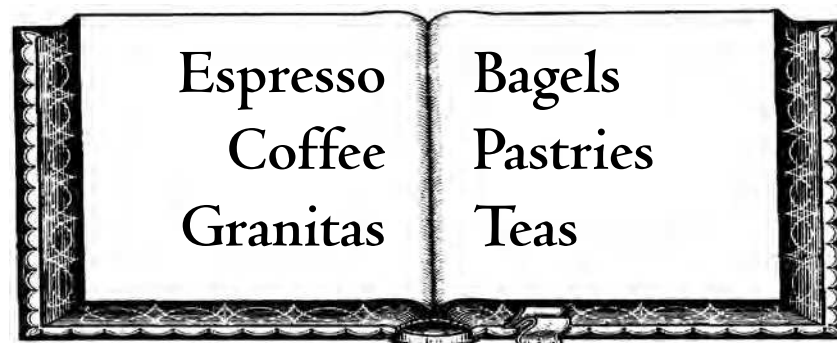


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