

WE OWN THE ROAD

Uh oh, the thinking people seem to be getting bugged by the "Support Our Troops" stickers on vehicles. Jared Wolfsen (4/7) asks the sticker users several questions. As a person who proudly displays a sticker I would like to answer them.

How should we support our troops? By keeping them in our thoughts and prayers and being thankful that we have these brave men and women to protect our freedom and to help others be free as well.

What does that support look like? It looks like citizens demanding that their elected officials give our troops the tools they need along with good pay and benefits. It looks like funding modern technology to reduce the exposure of our troops to harm. It looks like many things to show our care and appreciation. Would supporting them mean bringing them home? Yes, when their job is done.

Why can you only have them (stickers) on an SUV? You may place the sticker on any vehicle. I see them on all types of vehicles. We have one on our SUV and one on our 1988 Volvo.

What is it about putting the sticker on your SUV that automatically makes you drive poorly? It is just a coincidence. We SUV drivers think that we own the road and our driving reflects that. It has nothing to do with the stickers.

Randy Kolb
Eugene

LRAPA APPS

Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority is seeking a new director and last week went over the qualifications needed by applicants. I would like to extend some suggestions just in case the new director wants to keep his job.

First, realize that you must not defend the citizens who complain of asthma, brown

skies, problems breathing, polluted water from air emissions or dangerous toxins. Listen carefully to instructions from polluting industry and make sure permits are few and never challenged by LRAPA. Ignore all those rules and regulations produced in the state south of us. They would never pass here.

Allow pollution to increase in our valley, approve every new industry or polluter who wants to build here and then assure the public that everything is safe and under control.

Job security is always part of the picture.

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

THE PEPSI FACTOR

The Eugene 4J School District has contracts with Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola bottlers that allow them to place six soda machines apiece in each of the four high schools.

The district keeps a 25 percent commission on all sales, but the dollars gained by the district for plying our children with high-sugar drinks are not worth it when weighed against the negative, long-term health consequences to our children when they consume soft drinks on a regular basis in our schools.

A study recently released by the nonprofit Community Health Partnership urges parents and school officials to take another look at the value of soft drink contracts. The Eugene 4J School Board should heed this advice and buy out the soft drink contracts, which run for several more years.

School board member Eric Forrest, who works for Pepsi-Cola, enthusiastically supports keeping Coke and Pepsi vending machines in the schools. Aria Seligmann, who's running against Mr. Forrest in the upcoming school board election, is calling for the removal of the soda machines.

Seligmann has an 8-year-old son in the public school system. Aria feels strongly that



our schools must provide her son and other children appropriate nutrition and that unhealthy beverages and snacks do not belong in schools.

The ballots for the Eugene 4J School Board election will be mailed out on April 29. Please remember to vote and mark your ballot for Aria Seligmann. She'll serve us well.

Michael Carrigan
Eugene

IGNORING EVIDENCE

Insanity has been defined as doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results.

Dan Carol's latest faux-populist, pseudo-gonzo rant ("Gluing the Pieces: A memo to

the millionaires," 4/14) is Exhibit A on why the D's became the minority party.

The 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were hacked with voting machines and racist disenfranchisements of voters. The Democrats' narrow focus on how they can "win" next time while ignoring vote fraud guarantees their permanent minority status.

For the next election, the groups that Carol works for will crank up their fund-raising and send out armies of idealistic students to register voters so that maybe *this* time the forces of good will succeed.

Carol cites a "great group" called "Wellstone Action," named after the liberal Senator who stood up to the Bush regime. Wellstone's plane went down Oct. 25, 2002,

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Gotcha Covered

Cutesy bows insult my no-nonsense behind.

A lert, alert. Last pair of underwear. My oldest pair of underpants signals from the back of the top drawer: *laundry time!*

These vintage undies – red, 1980s no-fly men's hip-huggers – are my last ditch option before I absolutely have to do a load of wash. I can still fit into these old back-ups, even though I've rounded out below the belt and long ago graduated to big women's cotton high-tops. Undaunted by my rotundity, these supple, well-used standbys will tide me over whenever I'm in need. And you can rest assured the elastic will never give out on these babies – they were made for men. They're the Humvee of undergarments.

Clothing from the women's department tends to be weaker, flimsier, more likely to fall apart. You know, feminine. The lace, ruffles, and cutesy bows insult my no-nonsense behind. I'd had it with the sexist underwear double standard.

As a rough and tumble kind of college gal, I was frustrated with the fragile and delicate undergarments allotted to women. Then I got wise. Men's stuff was better. More functional, more durable, more empowering. If women could become astronauts, surely we could move beyond the ladies' intimates department.

One inspired day 20 years ago, I mustered my shopping gumption and infiltrated the men's clothing section of Montgomery Ward. I felt the entire women's liberation movement surge forward as I boldly went where no woman had gone before. I was conquering another frontier, another bastion of male-only space.

Walking into menswear I crossed a monumental threshold. Like in fourth grade when the girls dared me to run into the boys' bathroom. Not one girl in our school had ever set foot beyond the ominous *BOYS* sign. I'd braved the haunted house at Susie Weisman's Halloween party, how bad could a bathroom be? I set my jaw, threw open the door, and marched inside. OK, the urinals were bizarre. And it



smelled of mothballs and stale pee. But I lived to tell about all I saw in there (no actual boys, phew!), and I was not, as predicted, infected with incurable cooties. Surviving the boys' bathroom set me on a lifelong course of challenging the *no girls allowed* rule. Everyone should have equal access to everything.

The men's department carried that same charge of defiance and trepidation. I was now entering the forbidden zone. Across the border (no Minutemen militia, thank goodness), I found racks of hardy overalls, sweatpants, jackets – all built tough and made to last. Out of the dainty into the durable. Nothing cute. Everything hefty. What a thrill. My aorta throbbed. And nobody could keep me from shopping there. Ha ha!

When my pulse stopped pounding, I checked out the boxer shorts, alien garments foreign to my girl-on-girl world. They were baggy and had that vulnerable opening. My crotch prefers a snug, protective undergarment, making men's cotton low-riders a more suitable choice. I liked the ones that came three-to-a-pack in reasonable, non-pastel colors – black, navy, and red. I could get all three for the price of one pair of girlie fancy pants. I felt like a total revolutionary buying them, even though the cashier made no fuss at all over my one-woman rebellion.

But my singular act combined with rebellious acts of women all over the country who began to protest being limited to flimsy panties until it became a movement and the movement created change. Now underwear companies make *Jockey for Her* and *Hains Her Way* and Fruit of the Loom's *Just My Size* – well-built women's drawers. We can buy our sturdy knickers in the women's department, thanks to each person who's had the nerve to take a risk, defy the norm, and assert their rights.

My faded pair of red undies remind me that the strong survive. I took a risk, ventured beyond a world that didn't honor my basic needs and I'm glad I did. Once I stepped out I've never looked back – except on laundry day.

Writer Sally Sheklow does her wash in Eugene. To enroll in Sally's "Ignite Your Courageous Spirit" playshop April 23, e-mail her at sally@wymprov.com