

Weaning Ourselves

Anyone dare to get real about oil?

OK, It's May already. Thankfully, spring allows a bit of spiritual rejuvenation watching dead grass-colored fur-ball goslings toddle between adult birds near the Delta Ponds. Until I realize that this expatriate colony of wintering geese are the lucky escapees of the next industrial invasion – the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Set aside by that radical Dwight Eisenhower in 1960, ANWR is literally a maternity ward for more than 200 animal and 125 bird species. It is the most significant on-shore denning habitat for polar bears, already given a mere 50 years to survive by a University of Washington study and but a small portion of the Great Boreal System that rings the northern portion of our world. That front of the industrial war does not present an upbeat picture at this point. Last year the British ornithological study gave hundreds of European songbird species 75 to 100 years before being on the eternal brink. That's a lot of dead canaries on the floor of the mine shaft.

So, given that we do seem to be painting ourselves (or our great-grandchildren) into a corner of a gas chamber, what are we actually doing to change the outcome? Grabbing a slice of pizza on a recent Sunday evening at Theo's/Cozmik Pizza I heard lots of a retrofitted anti-Vietnam music. Cheers and hurrahs for a "new paradigm," advocacy for resisting a new military draft, oblivious to the Manifest Denial of sipping espressos while soothing our sensibilities with strident tunes in whatever motor vehicle one thinks is more excusable than others (I didn't see a single bicycle parked outside).

So much effort spent to compartmentalize our opposing thumb enslaved egos from being disturbed by the low price-point fossil fuel chemistry embalmed Cool-Max Go Duckee truly Dead Air bits of a mysteriously marvelous wonder we call a "planet" piling up about us. Instead we preoccupy ourselves with any variant of vividly pixelated plasma megahertz of out-of-sight, out-of-mind programming we prefer – which I suspect is actually the problem with our tasteless answer to maintaining security in the international juggle of greed and power just as we pass the peak of oil production. The increasing difficulty of maintaining the veil of delusion is a tad foreboding.

We can't be bothered with 10,000 human refugees living for years in abandoned train cars while we suppress warlords along the great Caspian Eur-Asian pipeline project. So why should bird, bear and caribou babies who have no such option even get a wince?

Well, tornadoes touching down in suburban San Francisco ought to alert us to cause and effect. Likewise, the unprecedented numbers of children now packing inhalers to school due to an asthma epidemic.

Shall we personally put into effect a daily effort to turn things around before the door is shut on the whole planet? As Ted Koppel observed on "Nightline": "If you thought getting Americans to give up their guns was difficult, wait until you try to get them out of their cars."

Our very sexual identities have been indoctrinated by mass media auto erotic-sizing propaganda since age 2, so it's not surprising that we are addicted to our jaloopies, or, as James Kunstler points out in his new book, *The Long Emergency*, we opened the world's largest police station in Iraq to keep a handle on the oil-endowed neighborhood.

All our frivolous addictions (but most blatantly our cars) cost more dollars, more atmospheric destruction, more destruction of this fragile terrarium we live in, and endless long-term military commitments.

Just maybe it's time we start weaning ourselves, "Do the right thing," and all that. Dare to live as many days and hours as we can without the grossest of our indulgent addictions. Because even if we want to commit suicide as a species or culture, we have no moral right to take out hundreds of other species with us.

"Let's go further," was the assertion Ken Kesey made at a roundtable discussion on "The Third World War for the Planet" (his term) 30 years ago. Perhaps in 2005 we can get past the nostalgia of burning draft cards and snuff out our addiction to burning fossil fuels 24/7? Can we positively challenge each other to forego the things for perhaps two or three days per week? Dare we even try one day per week for starters?

We all know it's real; each of us is one leaky spigot in the torrent of life being lost. Imagine other believers, assorted heathens and skeptics heeding the mounting evidence of mass extinctions.

We do not have to continue buying into the industrial invasions that "refine" the biological world into a patchwork of suburban toy boxes, rural junkyards, stadium fairs and factory tailings, setting into motion another generation's likelihood of joining the Disappeared much, much sooner consequent to our cooperating with the Shoah of so many species.

Yuri Samer is a local social studies teacher, chess tutor and coach who can be reached at chspsk@mindspring.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

redeems them at local grocery stores. Her neighbors bring returnables to her house. I save and collect cans for her and a sad-faced retarded woman. Last week, Jimi was sorting through bottle discards (rejected by the machines) at one store when she was accused of stealing, marched out the door by two security men and banned from the store. She apologized, saying the cans had been rejected by the machines and left behind and she hadn't seen it as stealing. Nevertheless, she was stripped of the small shred of dignity she has left for doing something another store's manager encouraged. It is interesting that the generous manager works for a corporate chain whereas the inhospitable one runs a new local natural foods supermarket.

How many paychecks are you from living at the margins of society? Be warned that such a life requires stamina, wits, and the kindness of strangers, so if you are low on any of those, you might really be screwed.

*Linda Powell
Eugene*

CROSS, FLAG & SOAP

Regarding the Cultural Competency bill in the Oregon Legislature: It's good to see Oregon House Republicans want to preserve a place for bigots and child molesters to teach in the public schools. It's unreasonable to demand that teachers hold specific values, such as valuing children's rights not to be touched in certain ways, or valuing the cultural knowledge that children bring to school.

Children should obey the teacher and do whatever the teacher asks. Children should have their inferior cultural traits scrubbed out of them, just as their skin should be scrubbed as white as possible. Their mouths should be scrubbed out with soap if they tattle about things the teacher told them to keep secret.

In Oregon, there is no place for legislation telling teachers what values to hold. In Oregon, we worship the cross, the flag and soap. Let's keep it this way.

*Ann Tattersall
Eugene*

HERE'S YOUR SIGN

Peggy Starr in her "Keep the Truth" (4/21) letter takes the stance and imposes the same discriminating behavior I experience a lot as a faith-practicing citizen of this community: claiming to be a part of a religious community, then turning around and complaining about a person of faith's ability to practice their chosen faith how they choose to.

Starr focuses her discriminating behavior on "poster-proselytizing folks" who express their faith in words on their own property. She says that these posters are "intrusive and offensive." These signs are far less intrusive than the infinite number of political campaign ads that were generated by every form of media known to man.

Then the guilt trip that gets slammed in every Christian's face: how our history includes "wars in the name of their God." If we all take a moment to trace our family tree we would find someone that has irreparably hurt others. The one common denominator is that man has a sinful nature that causes hurt and destruction.

My poster-proselytizing friends and I happen to believe in a candidate that deals with that nature. We are offering our candidate to others as a choice in their election called life. Take Him or leave Him, we just ask that you leave our right to campaign for our candidate alone. Our campaign is up and running and we are making our new posters. We are leaning toward, "Jesus is the reason — always!" In the words of Bill Engvall, a comedian I like, "Here's your sign!"

*Karen Ibach
Creswell*

TIME FOR EQUALITY

For more than 30 years, Oregonians who care about fairness and equality for all Oregon citizens have asked the state to pass a law making it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation. For more than 30 years, the issue has been stalled, ignored or cast aside. There comes a time when it is no longer acceptable to be politically cautious or cavalier about doing the right thing — and that time is now.

After all these years, it is now time for lawmakers to show the leadership and courage we expect of our representatives in the legislature by protecting same-sex couples and their families with civil union legislation and banning discrimination based on sexual orientation throughout the state. Oregon's promise of fairness and equality for all of its citizens is past due and it is time for Oregon to pay up.

After a painful and divisive campaign season, we now have an enormous opportunity to find common ground. Most Oregonians — even those who voted yes on Measure 36 — believe that discrimination is wrong and want same-sex couples to have legal recognition for their relationships. To squander this opportunity would be shameful and at odds with Oregon's fundamental values.

It's time, Oregon. Let Oregon be one of the states that is in the forefront in ensuring equal rights for *all* Americans. Let's do the right thing. Right now.

*Celina McClaren
Eugene*

LOOK FOR EVIDENCE

Learn from history about false threats to our neighbors. Aristotle, Socrates and Plato passed down a story that they had translated from the early Greek moral storyteller Aesop. "Crying Wolf, Too Often" tells of a shepherd boy who got neighboring grown-ups to come running to help him when he shouted out, "Wolf, wolf!" A

WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

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