

FUELING PROTEST

Amazingly, President Bush has finally agreed to take responsibility for his administration's failings in dealing with Hurricane Katrina. One of the hallmarks of his post-9/11 creation of the Department of Homeland Security was supposed to be making government more responsive to disasters, whether natural or man-made. Instead, he gutted FEMA and installed unqualified cronies in its top positions; eliminated funding for necessary levee repairs; sent the National Guard to fight an illegal war in another hemisphere; and to top it off, thumbed his nose at scientists who pointed out that global warming would result in more frequent and stronger hurricanes.

A full litany of the damage wrought by this administration would take pages, but there's no need to list it all; polls show that most of America has finally figured out that our president is incompetent and a liar. We impeached our last president because he lied about a consensual sexual affair; surely all but the most rabid righties now understand that the Bush regime's crimes have out-shadowed Mr. Clinton's.

Sept. 24 is the date set for a massive march on Washington, where hundreds of thousands will demand that Congress begin impeachment proceedings against this corrupt administration. If you are part of the majority who believe that the Bush presidency is a disgrace to this country, I urge you to join with other Lane County residents at the Eugene Federal Courthouse at 11 am that day, where we will add our voices to those of other Americans in demanding that Mr. Bush truly be held responsible for his failings.

Jim Johnson
Eugene

FALL 'N REIGN

Hi ya'll. As I come to the end of the trail as Slug Queen, I call it my "fall 'n reign." I do declare, I hope to never lose sight of our community striving together in an uplifting manner. I will continue to aim for the "lighter" side of life in the midst of all the surreal, ghastly slime that is affecting our Southern states and the whole world.

I believe in our own small ways, by doing random acts of kindness, we'll keep our world in balance, keep it going 'round. So, let us all

take this opportunity to be good to all our neighbors, share what we can and, above all, be grateful that we are alive! Thanks to everyone who greeted, supported, and honored your Southern Slug Queen. It's been a downright pleasure. Remember, the slime shall rise again!

Blessings for peace and love,

Queen Scarlett O'Slimera
aka Joanie Cypress

MISSION INCOMPETENCE

The dismal job by the this administration in responding to Hurricane Katrina should surprise no one. And it isn't ineptitude either. These guys didn't steal two elections by being clueless. No, this is purposeful. This administration thrives on the fear and suffering of others. Critique them on anything and they start blubbering about the lessons of 9/11. Neo-cons have been telling us for years that government is no good at solving problems, and they're out to prove it by doing the worst job they can.

They underfund education, neglect the rail system, don't enforce environmental laws, refuse to work collaboratively with other nations and run up huge deficits. Don't ask them to deal with health care or corporate price gouging or protecting your rights. And for sure don't ask them to care for the poor and the dispossessed.

By keeping Americans scared that they could be wiped out by the next Enron-style rip-off, the next natural disaster or the next terrorist attack (inevitable, they say), our leaders seek to buy a little compliance from a population that has ceased to trust them.

So don't expect a public works program to put folks back to work and rebuild the Gulf Coast, and don't expect any real commitment to the welfare of the victims. That's not the role of government any more.

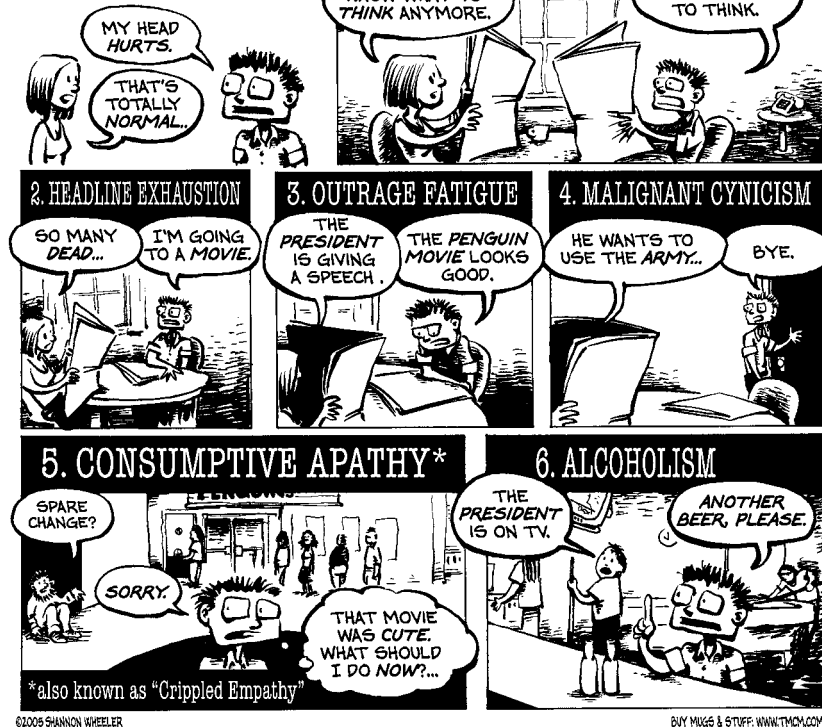
William Schwall
Eugene

TOBACCO'S BENEFITS

I just wanted to comment on the letter Julia Martin wrote (9/8). Although I agree 100 percent with her on the risks of cigars and cigarettes smoking and the shameful way the tobacco industry has lied to the public in order to build even more profits, I wanted to bring her attention on two different uses of that plant that do not require burning or smoking it.

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN MODERN INJURIES

BY SHANNON WHEELER



The leaves can be macerated in water until it turns dark brown and that solution can be used to fight aphids and other unwelcome insects. The nicotine being a violent poison, in this case works for you.

The second use has been part of the Native American tradition for centuries and it involves the "giving" of tobacco for ceremonial purposes. You will see drummers passing a pouch and giving thanks while sprinkling a pinch of tobacco on top of the drum before starting the chanting and drumming. The same pinch can be sprinkled as they give thanks for something as simple and beautiful as a good day, and a whole pouch will be given to an elder to show respect.

There is a good side in everything.

Alby Thoumsin
Springfield

PARTNER SCHOOLS

Thanks for your wonderful article (9/15) about local school gardens and what kids get out of them. I would just like to clarify that the

School Garden Project of Lane County (SGP) does not work only with the Eugene 4J School District; we also have partner and member schools in the Bethel and Springfield school districts, as well as a private school, Headstart, and the court school which is run by Lane ESD. Currently, we work intensively with seven partner schools and less intensively with nine member schools. We have worked in the past with 14 other school gardens, for a total of 30 local school gardens that have benefited from the SGP.

Working in conjunction with the School Garden Seminars offered by the UO Department of Landscape Architecture, SGP was involved in the creation or substantial expansion of 20 of these local school gardens.

While it is true that SGP would like to see our local school districts contribute more to the creation and maintenance of school gardens, we would like to thank 4J for devoting considerable staff time and materials to the deer fence and irrigation system at Eastside and to the new garden shed going in at Chavez. We be-

DEFENDING KITTY PIERCY

I like Alan Pittman as a person and appreciate some of his investigative reporting. But the piece "Mayor Maybe" (cover story 9/15) exemplified what I sometimes don't like about EW. It struck me as a counterproductive, polarizing exercise in negative innuendo verging on character-bashing, with its tone not fairly reflecting either the facts or community sentiment.

The article itself contains the seeds for this conclusion. The cover illustration is a mocking cartoon. The pull quotes, including praise from the president of the Chamber of Commerce, seem to be disproportionately selected to cast doubt on Kitty's progressive credentials. And the structure of the article – with the lead paragraphs and many other sections dedicated to quoting Paul Nicholson, who was apparently the only person with a predominantly negative view of the mayor that Alan could find to interview, seems designed to cast Kitty in a bad light, as do the title and subtitle. Paul has a right to his opinion – and does a great service to the community through his excellent bike shops – but the dominance his voice is given in this article seems excessive for a supposedly unbiased piece of reporting.

When the mayor's one major critic and Alan's own insertion of opinion (through the frequent use of disparaging language) are filtered out, the actual content of the article reveals that many more Eugeneans of all stripes are happy with the new mayor and the efforts she has made to be a "mayor for all Eugene" than are dissatisfied. She hasn't pleased everyone, but she's earned high praise from many more quarters than any mayor I can recall. I think that's because she's listened to people, and tried to bring peo-

ple together to find solutions, rather than forcing one agenda.

She's encountered challenges along the way, but even most of those progressives interviewed don't fault her for things that in retrospect she might have done differently. (After the County Commission double-cross, I'm sure she "won't be fooled again.")

The implication of the article and the way it is presented seems to be that if a mayor is not polarizing the community – if the presidents of both the Chamber of Commerce and Friends of Eugene are saying she's doing a good job – then she must be doing a bad job. When she refuses to answer complex questions in simple yes/no, pro-/anti-, black/white terms, Alan describes her as being "hard to pin down." But life, and politics, are not black and white. Seeing them that way, no matter which side of the fence you are on, ultimately leads to social/political dysfunction. The 2004 Presidency was acquired through (among other things) use of a good/evil paradigm that trumped an appreciation of complexity among many voters (those who got their votes counted, anyway).

I think EW can do better than that. Trying to make people into good guys and bad guys – or evaluating them endlessly, trying to figure out which category they fall into – doesn't strike me as a way to create positive change within a community. A spirit of appreciation and constructive feedback seems much more helpful. Personal opinion pieces, even quite critical ones, are fine too – but they're more palatable when they're not disguised as news stories.

Chris Roth
Dexter