

because, as long as U.S. forces are there, I believe they should have the equipment necessary to protect themselves, train the Iraqis, and get out."

This completely avoids his responsibility to take a stand. If he feels he must "support the troops," he should do so by getting them out of Iraq. As long as they stay in Iraq, they not only risk their own lives but continue to slaughter Iraqis. DeFazio is trying to straddle this issue to protect himself politically. He will continue to do so until we push him off the fence.

You can send him an e-mail from <http://defazio.house.gov/emailme.shtml>; even better would be to confront him about Iraq in front of an audience at one of his town meetings.

Lynn Porter
Eugene

BEYOND STRUGGLE

Alan Pittman's article, "Mayor Maybe" (9/15) illustrates both the things I love about *EW*, and the few attitudes that keep it from being even better. What I love is the consistent support of life-affirming policies on issues like enterprise zone tax breaks and the West Eugene Parkway, and quality investigative reporting explaining these issues to us.

What I wish would change is writing in a way that creates polarization. Alan refers to Dave Hauser, the Eugene Chamber of Commerce president, as a natural opponent of the mayor. I do not want to see Dave Hauser or anyone else as a natural opponent. When we stand strongly for issues we believe in, and then look for ways that others are aligned with us and ways to convince them that our strategies are in their best interest, we effectively create positive change in our world. When we see others as opponents, we help create a struggle, focusing on winning and beating the other guy, more than creating positive change. Sometimes we force others into the role of opponent because of how we see and treat them.

Pittman talked at length about whether Piercy is a progressive. Questioning whether Kitty made the best decisions and why, is good journalism. But asking whether she fits in the "progressive" box creates the kind of in/out, black/white thinking that creates struggle and polarization.

Kim Krichbaum
Dexter

PEDAL POWER

While reading a recent edition of *EW*, a friend of mine (who should've known better) asked me a question that I think many of your readers might be wondering. "What is Critical Mass?" Here's my response; others may vary.

Critical Mass is a group of people who are willing to stand together to make a social statement. In this case, the statement is one against the dominant car culture. It is a statement against oil wars we are fighting through-

out the world, not just the one in Iraq. It is a statement against the environmental destruction we are bringing about in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and along the Oregon Coast. It is a statement against massive deterioration of the ozone layer, global warming, air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, and a great number of other problems associated with irresponsible resource consumption.

It's not just about the oil either. There are a number of problems associated with each aspect of automobile production. From factory farms (leather seats), to strip mining (metal frames), to rainforest destruction (rubber plantations). Think about plastics, heavy metals and all the other toxic fluids.

There seems to be no end of reasons to make a statement against car culture, but Critical Mass is also a positive statement for many things that all "progressives" should be happy to support.

Critical Mass is about sustainability. It's about community building. It's about safety and environmental integrity. It's about forming and developing relationships with friends and neighbors. It's about supporting each other as we strive to create a peaceful and sustainable future for all life on this planet.

I hope that more of our community leaders will display the courage and support that Portland's Mayor Tom Potter did and join the ride, 5:30 pm Friday, Sept. 30 at 17th and Charnelton.

B (Bethany) Taylor
Eugene

VOODOO PLEASE

The evidence keeps mounting that the U.S. now lives under a dictatorship of sorts. The latest indication is President Bush announcing *he* will lead the inquiry into what went wrong in getting emergency relief to New Orleans.

While he alone certainly is not accountable, he is a key player, and an independent investigation would be the democratic — and more ethical — process. But this president and his administration don't ever seem to mind operating on the edge of totalitarianism, defined as "a system of government and ideology in which all social, political, economic, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual activities are subordinated to the purposes of the rulers of a state."

With normal checks and balances now more squelched than ever in American history, perhaps there remain in the Big Easy a few voodoo queens who can respond by somehow conjuring up truth, justice and the American way for all of us once again.

Steven J. Kunert
Corvallis

UGLY RESULTS

Have you noticed the irony in the timing of events relative to the recent destruction of New Orleans? While the finest minds of the



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- 11-11 Ken Peplowski



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