

**DIVERSITY ISN'T PICTURE PERFECT**

As a minority, perhaps I viewed *Hustle & Flow* with a different perspective than the majority population. I saw a moving film about torment, disappointment and desperation. I was deeply offended by the insensitivity of some of the comments made by Debra Merskin (3/30) who felt that the movie glorified "pimpness." I don't recall Terrence Howard, in *Hustle and Flow*, wearing fur coats or feathered hats or lots of diamonds?

What I saw in this film was that these men, *pimps*, are human beings, who feel, who hurt, who have shame and anger. Yes, there are pimps who intimidate, who threaten, who use violence and abuse the innocence of children, but I don't think the American public is so naive as to believe that pimps are the only men in our society guilty of this crime.

The author offends me when she comments that the roles thought of when considering African American actors include "gang member, convict, hip-hop/rap singer," period! When I think about the roles my peers have played, I think of Don Cheadle in *Hotel Rwanda*, I think of Whoopi Goldberg in *The Color Purple* and *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, I think of Eddie Murphy in *48 Hours*, I think of Djimon Hounsou in *Aamistad* and *In America*, I think of Richard Pryor in *The Toy*, I think of Halle Berry in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, I think of Denzel Washington in *Philadelphia*, and I could go on. It is middle class white Americans who only see the "gang member, convict, hip-hop/rap singer," we minorities recognize something more.

I do believe her intentions were to express distress about the continuing problems of stereotyping in Hollywood and to highlight the wrongs within society concerning prostitution. However, I think what she has done is to make casual comments that actually further perpetuate the problem of stereotyping. It is easy to do in the pseudo-liberal climate of Eugene where the African-American population hovers right around 1 percent. It is easy as a society to say you are open to differences when there aren't many differences to deal with.

The Oscar-winning song is meant to reflect one man and his situation. I think most people are smart enough to understand the difference between the story of one man and a song about his situation, and a story about a group of people and a song that represents that group as a whole.

I am proud as a woman of color anytime any minority wins an award of such stature. I am proud that there are men and women out there who are brave enough to tell stories and sing songs that people may be uncomfortable dealing with. Isn't that how real change occurs? With discomfort? I don't know, may be it's just me?

Jinny McKenzie  
Eugene

**DREAM WEAVER**

At 3 this morning I awoke from a dream so interesting that I had to get up and write it down before I could sleep. A news commentator, perhaps in the spirit of Charles Osgood, was saying that a major corporation was going to use a billion or so dollars it had gained from some recent sale to make a purchase that would, in effect, extend civilization's lease on existence for a little longer. As I awoke it occurred to me, with a bit of further interpretation, that the error was the perception of dependence on, and viability of, rigid exchanges of money within the corporate network to keep us going, rather than confidence in the more flexible altruism, cooperation and synergy. Of course it was just a dream.

Dan Robinson  
Eugene

**FORCED VACATIONS**

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to *EW* for the "Pitchfork Rebellion" article (3/16) and the new toxic spray notification listing. It couldn't be more timely for us, because Seneca just completed a large clearcut a quarter mile from our house.

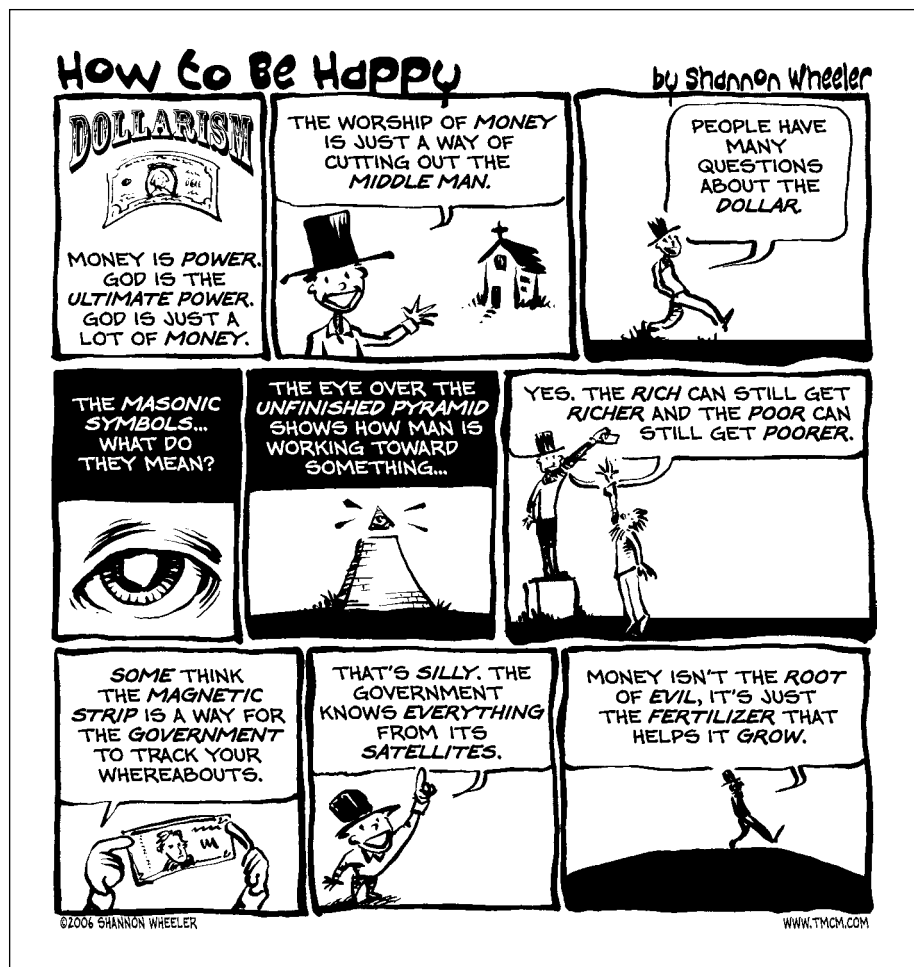
They have a history of some of the worst forest practices; this particular clearcut is steep, raw and completely denuded. Steep cuts are more likely to have aerial herbicide applications than "ground" (i.e. backpack) treatment, resulting in certain spray drift to neighboring land. Seneca is not required to notify nearby residents. With contacts from your article I signed up for the ODF subscription notification listing. Lynn Bowers, a local no-spray activist, was very helpful about this process.

At least with this notification process we can inform our neighbors and we can all take forced vacations around the time of the spray dates. I just wish we could send Seneca the hotel bill!

Cathy Boucher  
Rural Eugene

**BLOWING SMOKE**

In her recent (3/30) letter, Deb McManman states, "I do not pass judgement on *EW* for advertising American Spirit, I ap-



plaud them for it!"

FYI: On July 30, 2004, following approval by shareholders of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Holdings, Inc. (NYSE: RJR), Reynolds American Inc. (NYSE: RAI) became the new, direct parent company of RJR (which owns all of the stock of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company), and Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, Inc.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, the second-largest U.S. cigarette manufacturer, manufactures about one of every three cigarettes sold in the U.S., including five of the nation's 10 best-selling cigarette brands: Camel, Winston, Kool, Salem and Doral.

No applause from here.

Pat Hadley  
Eugene

**CANCER CURE**

My recovery from a second bout with breast cancer depended solely on organic foods and supplements that I purchased from local health food stores. I would not trust my continued good health to a Texas corporation that trucks food in from distant places.

My first experience with breast cancer was in 1986 when I had a lumpectomy, chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Chemotherapy was not difficult, but I became very ill with radiation pneumonia and was hospitalized for weeks. My recovery was very slow but I regained my health.

For eight years after that I was a strict vegetarian but slowly began to eat what might be called the regular American diet. I lived in fear of having

breast cancer again. In 1996 my husband died within 48 hours of a bone marrow transplant for leukemia. My reservations about traditional treatments grew.

In 2003, I noticed an indentation in my right breast — the same breast. A needle biopsy gave me the dreaded news that it was again cancer. I was 61 years old and decided to do no medical treatments.

My daughter convinced me to start a macrobiotic diet. I tried to follow the diet strictly and ate no meat, cheese or eggs. Every day I tried to eat organic short grain brown rice, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, mushrooms and wakami seaweed. Within approximately three months the lump was almost gone.

At that point I became aware of alternative cancer treatment programs in Reno, Nev. I participated in their three-day program and have continued the supplements they recommend. I have continued macrobiotic foods but I do drink decaffeinated coffee. It is important to note that regular coffee is not recommended.

It is now close to two-and-a-half years since my diagnosis. I feel good and have no indications of cancer.

Good health is too important to gamble on. Why risk the questionable purity and nutrition of something else from Texas?

Charlotte Higgins-Lee, Ph.D.  
Springfield

**CRITICALLY LACKING**

On March 31, my family and I went to Critical Mass. We used to attend Critical Mass in Berkeley and it was a party. We wanted to come and do our part to support visible action toward raising awareness of the beauty of bicycling.

We were pretty disappointed. Eugene's Critical Mass has received some bad press, and that, coupled with rainy weather, resulted in poor numbers. The police handed out postcards concerning moving violations. We started out with eight bicycles and ended up with four, all the while being followed by four police officers on bikes and four on motorcycles. Even with my two kids, we were totally outnumbered. I felt paranoid at every