

Spring Cleaning

Some tidying, please, while we await renovation.

My last column on downtown, with its bold call for an end to more holes in our urban center, seemed to resonate with folks. So in the spirit of spring cleaning season, let me offer up a few *cheap* ideas for sprucing things up downtown while we wait for the next multi-million dollar Connor-Woolley renaissance pipe dream to come into our lives.



Tear down that fence. What is with the hideous chain link fence surrounding the parking lot behind the old Symantec building. Can we at least make it a standard that the city should tidy up empty parking lots behind formerly city-subsidized buildings whose tenants then bailed to Springfield so that they look like something besides a dog kennel with no clients?

Eugene Skinner statue. Is it just me, or does the statue of our town's founder in front of the library make him look really, really depressed? Since we can't give a bronzed fellow Prozac to help his mood, how about some new surroundings? I say move Eugene to over near his cabin by the river, where the guy can have a better view. Certainly staring at the Mighty Willamette would look far better to tired old eyes than the stagnant "lake" now growing in the hole that was once the Sears building at 10th and Charnelton. And then we can replace that art in front of the library with something a bit more cheery.

Sears Lake. Speaking of holes downtown, why not turn Sears Lake into a lively skaters' park or an urban art zone for our town's great muralists until the geniuses at City Hall figure out what's next. For folks who fear teens walking around our empty downtown, what better way to deal with the problem than to move their activity space down one floor? Better yet, there's plenty of time to make this site a Rockefeller Center-style ice skating park by Christmas.

Old Lane Elections building. Are you familiar with this building? It's across from the Hilton Hotel and backs up to the overflow parking lot used by 5th Street Public Market and Steelhead customers. Now that the Elections team has moved, it's time to do something here. Can we paint it with stripes, Science Factory style? Can we open up a new Dutch Bros? What gives? This columnist wants to know.

Town and gown. Hey, I heard that there was a university of 17,000 people located only about six blocks from downtown. To celebrate the rapid bus transit system we paid for to make it easier to go to Ducks games at the new basketball arena, wouldn't it make sense for Dave Frohnmayer and the Ducks to open a ticket store and sell UO gear downtown?

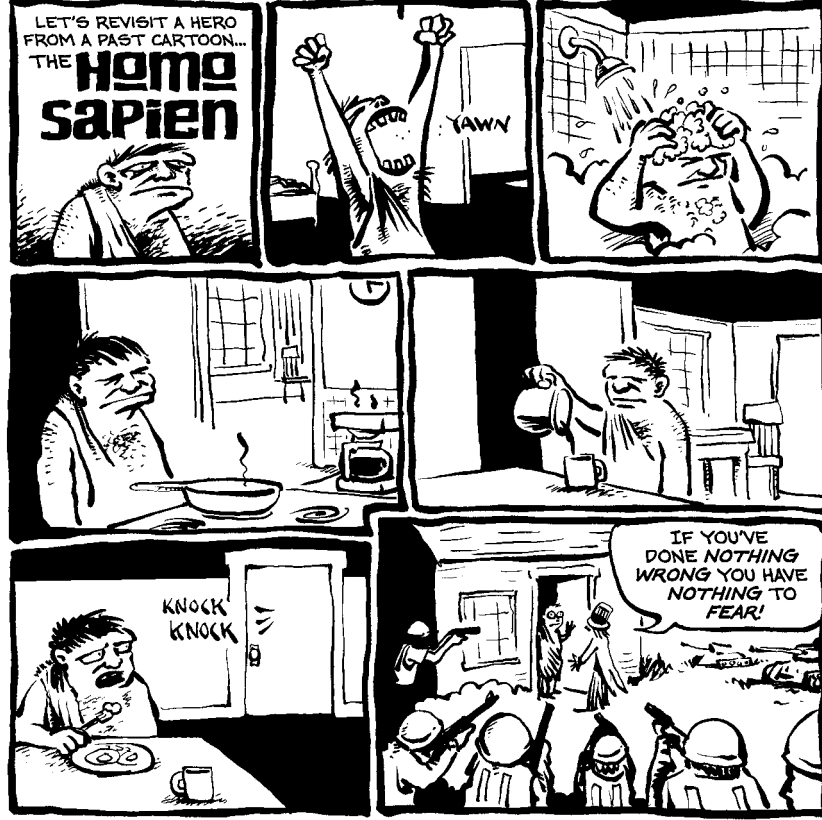
The Butterfly lot. Now that we are getting all this great new parking near Whole Foods, it's time to turn this area (across from Saturday Market and the county building) into either more park space or a better home for Farmer's Market. Yes, I know it is county land – I say let's make a deal with the new Fleenor-ized commission post haste. Better yet, ask Whole Foods to kick in some goodwill for this project as a down-payment on their promised support to local food growers.

The Kesey plaza. Don't worry, I love the statue of Ken Kesey reading to the kids at the center of downtown at Broadway and Willamette. But I don't love all the rest of what's there in the "plaza," which is uh, kind of another big hole. So can we get some striking announcement banners or some flags from our sister cities or some cool activity kiosks is installed here? A classy wrought-iron gazebo where we can read in the rain and sit in the summer sun? A fun fountain like they have up in Seattle? Something? Otherwise, I am worried that the statue of Ken is going to soon look as depressed as Eugene S.

Dan Carol of Eugene is a political strategist.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEFAZIO HAD OPTIONS

Congressman Peter DeFazio offers a convoluted, absurd explanation (news story, 5/25) of why he voted for a bill that would make it a felony to help illegal immigrants. Instead of backing the bill, he could have achieved most of his goals by simply demanding that the administration vigorously enforce existing laws and increase penalties on businesses illegally hiring immigrants.

Although the corporate media asserts that it is virtually impossible for employers to verify immigration status, businesses have a variety of means available to verify the identity, residency, and age of the applicant. Companies routinely rely on credit bureaus, commercial reporting services, background investigations and their own due diligence in checking references and conducting interviews to establish credentials. Background reports are available from a wide range of sources, including Mexican ones. In addition, employers check the integrity of applicants' Social Security numbers to ensure that names and numbers match.

Once again, the corporate media's reporting on the issue serves only to obscure rampant illegal hiring and does nothing to promote good public policy. As for DeFazio, he apparently could not resist the opportunity to inoculate himself against conservative attack dogs' charges that he is soft on illegal immigration.

*John Hofer
Eugene*

INFANTILE HUMOR

Recently *Eugene Weekly* asked for local musicians and bands to submit promotional material to be included in a special publication featuring local musicians. I assumed the "Locals Only" section was going to be a promotion of the diversity of local music. I expected that there would be a brief portrayal of me as one of Eugene's established musicians.

Instead, I find myself the object of infantile humor and poor journalism. I was appalled to be included on the "Short, Sweet and Sour" page where I was individually cursed, rudely called by my last name and then insulted. This was more than a bad review of my music. It was malicious and degrading.

The piano compositions on my CD are peaceful, contemplative and spiritual. The synthesizer compositions are soundscapes that deal with things like the rainforest destruction and artificial intelligence. You can hear these compositions in a more realistic light than portrayed by Mr. Stout at www.cdbaby.com/cd/loucrist

EW did a severe disservice to all the bands that were featured on the last page of the guide. Mr. Stout's rating system equating musicians and bands to sadistic behavior and pornography is disgusting. Why someone whose own bio states that he hates music was given this assignment makes me wonder where was the editorial staff oversight of this article?

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Eugene Weekly • 1251 Lincoln Street • Eugene, OR 97401 • 541.484.0519 • fax 541-484-4044



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