

HISTORICAL REALITY

I am a bit surprised to be called a vigilante in *EW* ("Flames of Dissent II," 11/9), and would like to make a comment.

Just a few years prior to the history told in Kera Abraham's article, I had been nearly killed twice during street rioting in Kathmandu while covering the revolution as a photojournalist for a European news agency. That revolution brought down one of the world's last monarchs, and was bloody and dangerous. People standing next to me on the street were shot dead, bone and brains disgorged. To be confronted in my own neighborhood in Eugene not long after by radical politicos shouting intimidating bullshit slogans, who were not honest and who were targeting the innocent for brutality, was for me like being heckled by bantams. What most surprised me was that many of my neighbors were afraid and confused, yet of good heart and right intent.

Kera got the timeline slightly confused, understandably so for a story so complex. It was first the Scobert Park incident, in which the citizenry went through an intense and proper public debate about how to end the debauch taking place there, that showed the community that the newly arrived rads were bent on hijacking public process, not on joining and participating. It was, for them, about cop-baiting, and Whiteaker was their chosen bait.

For Whiteaker residents, many of whom intentionally live here because of our diversity, radical ideologies are welcome and the choir wishes to be preached to. But as with other radical movements we've seen, the Charlie Mansonoids eventually arrive, the poison Kool-Aid is served and the choir sings off-key. Sadly, the beautiful green tones of the movement morphed into jagged black dissonance. When one of the black-shirts fired a rifle through the front door of the Red Barn one night as his way of counting coup against life's cruel injustices, my gloves flew off.

There was significant injury done to the community by both the anarchists and the heroin/meth epidemic during this time. Whiteaker, like the Balkans, has been a crossroads and a dumping ground for other jurisdictions' social problems and political failures. A very high percentage of all social services for the region are located in Whiteaker, as are the cheapest high-density apartments, the state's parolees and the 400-bed Mission just next to the railyard. People get tired of a stacked deck, and eventually there is a social disaster and a public reaction. Complicate this scenario with an unresponsive city government and a new influx of angry outsiders with their own agenda, and a lot of hostility can be generated.

In our case the citizens eventually won but paid a high price, and I suppose I shouldn't mind being called names over it even at this late date, as long as there is some appreciation for the historical reality that if no one ever has the courage to stand up and shout bullshit to fascist posturing, even while the choir sings a different tune, mayhem and malevolence in the guise of liberty and justice will again take the stage. We deserve a happier script.

Dennis Ramsey
Eugene

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Kudos to Kera Abraham for her brave attempt to cover the eco-radical movement in Eugene! It's a tough issue to write about, and she's giving it a heck of a good shot.

I do feel the need to clarify my quote in the second article ("Flames of Dissent II," 11/9): "If it's violence and mayhem [that bring attention to the issues], then fuck it". The context of that was that the mainstream media seem unable to report on anything *but* violence and mayhem. To penetrate the wall of corporate propaganda, people who have something to say often have to go to the streets in order to say it.

Something else that could have been stressed more in the article is the political context in which these protests occurred. In 1999 we didn't have the Bushes to blame for the state of the world, and we did not have the hope of electing a Democrat who would make things better. We had a Democrat in power, and what did we get from it? We got the Salvage Rider, outlawing *any* form of legal challenge to many old growth timber sales. We had the president's unmitigated support for neoliberal trade policies that were effectively enslaving and even *killing* farmers and workers, from Nigeria to Korea to the maquiladoras in Mexico. Even with a Democrat in power, our country still refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol or take active steps toward nuclear disarmament.

These are not abstract issues that a rational, responsible person can simply ignore or timidly debate. They were, and still are, *life and death issues* that must be confronted and resolved, by whatever means possible.

Chris Calef
Eugene

FIGHT THE POWER

Michael "Ike" Terrance (11/16) is "extremely appalled" by Kera Abraham's "history of eco-terrorism in Eugene." His letter is patronizing, self-righteous and all too typical. So many know-nothing know-it-all liberals feel the need to denounce ELF at every opportunity, declaring their loyalty to "law and order" and the status quo instead of the community and the natural world.

Memo to Ike: Social change is made by people willing to get their hands dirty. Power concedes nothing without a fight, never has, never will. No amount of tofu eating and ass kissing by the likes of you will change this historical fact. Expecting big business and government to do anything other than carry on trashing the planet, invading countries, looting resources and exploiting people is fatally naïve.

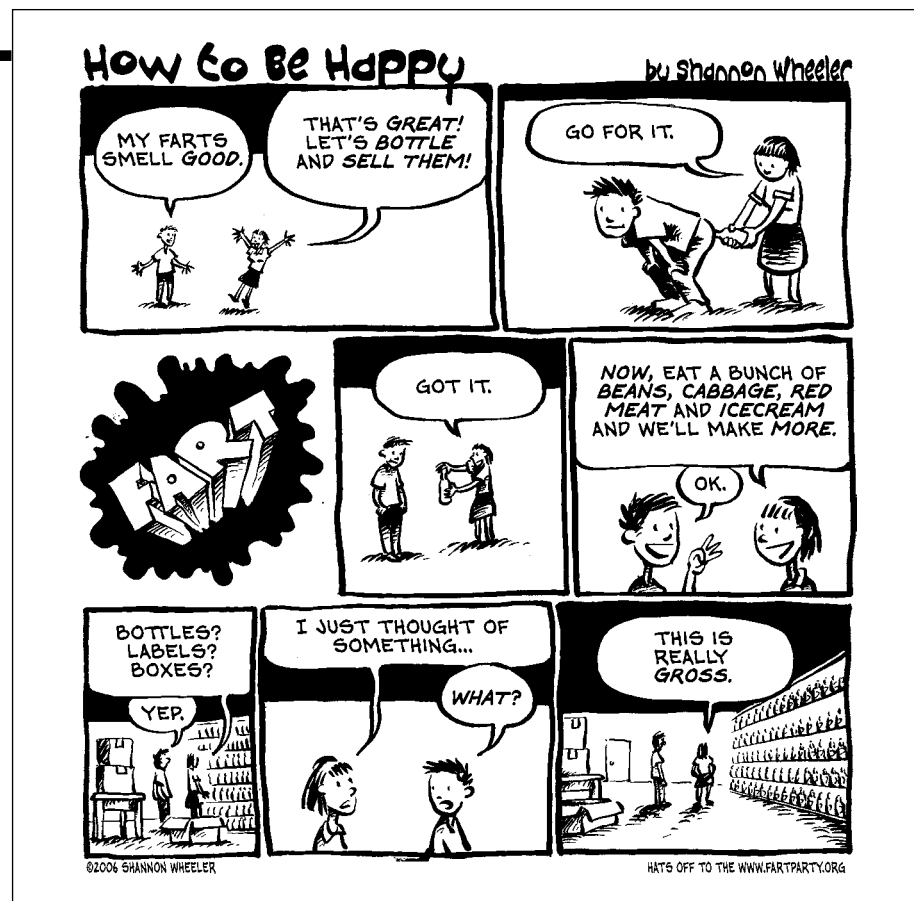
That does not make the ELF beyond criticism. Their tactics are often flawed, and illegal clandestine groups are no substitute for a social/environmental mass movement. But comparing these people to al-Qaeda and giving their captives harsher punishment than right-wing vigilantes who target minorities or sexual predators who target children is inexcusable.

I applaud Kera Abraham for her background series on anarchism and environmentalism in Eugene. Contrary to what Ike says, many people are interested in this piece of our history. There are many lessons to be drawn from the experience.

Steven Gider
Eugene

THINK GLOBALLY

Many have averted their eyes to the geno-



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

cide in Sudan. But many have cared. People have rallied: On April 30 Mayor Kitty Piercy issued a proclamation calling for action, and Women's Action for New Directions collected and sent hundreds of cards to the White House. Op-ed pieces have been written. A coalition formed at a community meeting in Temple Beth Israel, November 2005. Ordinary citizens pledged action at First Christian Church on April 5 this year. Volunteers spoke in schools, to community groups, on campus and at fairs.

Photos were displayed in the Eugene Public Library. Coalition members collected blankets (over 200) and led a campaign that made education kits for children in refugee camps (4,562 kits sent in October).

We must make the White House follow our lead and act. This will only happen when the phone lines are filled with our voices *demanding* action.

We are not asking. Every day means more women raped, more children killed, more survivors whose lives are forever deformed. Call every week until the slaughter ends.

Call President Bush, 202-456-1111; Sen. Smith, (202) 224-3753 (ask to talk with aide Dan Knezevic); Sen. Wyden, (202) 224-5244 (ask to talk with aide Ben Widness); Rep. DeFazio, (202) 225-6416 (ask to talk with aide Tom Vincent).

Cynthia Kokis
Eugene

NO CONTEST

To James Ready's letter ("It's Just Sports," 11/9): I'll go further than to question "lethal" as an appropriate billboard caption for a sports team. Competition *itself* is harmful and leads to violence. Our words *and* actions *are* important. Sensitivity *is* what we need. Our entertainment, education, politics, military and sports have all helped to condition us to value obedience and *enjoy* violence.

I study and help others learn Nonviolent Communication. I enjoy competitive sports less and less and value cooperation more. I'm concerned with being dismissed as crazy and thus invite you (all) to read *No Contest: The Case against Competition* by Alfie Kohn, and Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent*

Communication.

Please enjoy your sports, but let's also take responsibility for perpetuating our enjoyment of violence.

Mark Roberts
Eugene

OLDER & WISER

Walking through campus in the crisp air of autumn evokes thoughts of new beginnings. A stampede of students looking young and fit fills 13th Avenue.

Occasionally gray hair punctuates the group. These are not professors emeritus but retired people who have returned to the university. They are answering the question for themselves: "If not now, when?"

"It was time to fulfill a dream of going back to school and pursuing subjects just because I wanted to learn about them," says one student grandma. "My fear was that my mind wasn't working as well as it once had; what I didn't realize was that my body had 'left the building' without my noticing." She expresses how glad she is for her wheeled backpack. "It probably seems dorky rattling along pulling a pack but I am old enough where being a granny trumps dorky."

Does it sound easy to start over? No, it is not easy. "Anyone who tells you that getting old is all in your head — ain't old." Is it worth it the physical, mental and financial burden that school presents?

"Absolutely yes!" was the answer given by all. The benefits come from many unexpected directions. Being in classes with bright, articulate and idealistic students gives the elder scholars confidence that the world will be in good hands someday.

Kim Golden Bentley
Junction City

A BETTER IDEA

I have been following the push for a Lane County income tax. The odds of the public buying such a tax are not high. Even with the false advertising in the recent Voters Pamphlet, the proposed tax didn't fly.

I have a better idea! We can make millions simply by disbanding Lane County's Land