

PREVENTING TRAGEDIES

About eight hours before Ryan Salisbury was shot and killed by Eugene Police in a violent confrontation at his home early on Nov. 14, I was present when three Lane County sheriff's deputies — Levi Yandell, Bill Hollis and Sgt. Rene Stone — took into custody a 30-ish woman who was psychotic, dangerous to herself and needed to be hospitalized against her will. Though she was not armed with a weapon, she was angry, abusive, screaming and confrontational, delusional, fearful and paranoid and put much energy into trying to kick, strike and otherwise hurt the officers. These deputies showed great concern, skill, compassion and professionalism in how they restrained a woman who was bent on hurting them. She was taken into custody and transported to a hospital for treatment without being injured. But you don't read about incidents like this, which happen all the time, in newspapers.

I have worked in publicly funded community mental health programs for more than 25 years in all parts of Oregon. I have on numerous occasions personally witnessed police officers and sheriff's deputies in rural and suburban locales as diverse as Eugene and Klamath Falls go out of their way to take violent, out-of-control people into custody without injury. This experience for me has been the rule, the norm, not the exception.

Recent *EW* writers and opinion expressed in *Slant* suggest the police officers should behave like cowboys and shoot violent attackers with weapons in the legs. Ryan was between officers and family members trapped inside the house who were frightened and whose lives had been threatened by the armed Ryan. Suppose officers confronting Ryan Salisbury had shot him in the leg, but, despite being injured, he was able to retreat back to the house and harm hostages? The police would then be criticized for not being more aggressive. Or suppose, once shot in the leg and retreating back to the house where he would have been a dangerous threat, it became instantly clear that the only way to stop him, because the leg shot failed, would be to shoot him in the back? That would have gone over real well, don't you think?!

It's always appropriate to review deadly force policies and further train officers in dealing with mentally ill persons. But the bigger problem here is crumbling public mental health systems that, on their best days, verge on collapse for lack of resources. Ryan won't be the last mentally ill person killed by police, and the next one won't be the last. Incidents like this will continue to happen as long as people tolerate leaders whose priorities are tax cuts for the wealthy and more and bigger guns and bombs rather than support for vulnerable people.

Gary Cornelius
Eugene

REASON FOR THE SEASON

For all the great efforts made by all the great many people driving store to store before dawn and after dinner for four frenzied weeks every year in search of more ways to spend money to save money, something much more valuable has been lost.

For all the bluster and all the bellyaching over boycotting stores wishing their customers a happy holidays in place of a merry Christmas, as if stores and their corporate boards who pray only to the almighty dollar were the faltering standard bearers of the meaning of Christmas, something much more important has been overlooked.

For all the tax cuts for the rich and all the budget cuts for the poor delivered by Santa Congress just in time for Christmas recess and just in time for our born-again representatives to fly home aboard corporate sleighs to make it to the church just in time to be seen and photographed singing praises to the Lord on the occasion of his humble birth for the Sunday papers, something deeply unjust is being ignored.

And for all the children orphaned by drugs into foster care and all the growing millions of working poor without health care; for all the hungry, the homeless, the helpless; for all the least, the last, and the lost, somebody has got to start speaking out.

Is there no one this season with a message more valuable than gifts, more important than greetings and more compassionate than we are?

Todd Huffman
Eugene

CABAL NOIR

I saw my first EmX articulated bus today at twilight pulling out of the Eugene LTD Station on a trial run. It made Eugene look like some kinda noir Gotham City, a fitting tribute (literally) to Carolyn Chambers and her cabal.

At enormous cost, these behemoths eke out a one-third time saving on their route. Half of this can be accounted for by the elimination of several stops. The construction boondoggle has been disrupting (slowing) traffic on Franklin Boulevard and in downtown Eugene for almost two years. The construction companies, sand and gravel companies and the banks all have made out like bandits.

Ms. Chambers is currently offering us tap-dancing Santas in a holiday show at the Hult for a hefty ticket price. The price we'll pay for her pet projects is also a steep one. This capital project sucked up funds that could otherwise have gone to expanding services.



How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



Both routes and frequency of service have been cut back several times since the EmX project started.

The vision of the future is embodied in the EmX project, the still undead West Eugene Parkway and other outscale conceptions of a Californicated south Willamette Valley, which a distinct majority of us do not want, but is little by little displacing our beautiful environment.

Paul Prenskey
Eugene

FINAL FOUR WORDS

Kera Abraham took on an ambitious project with her serialized recounting of local eco-radical history. Reform and revolution are an all-encompassing and very human enterprise. Lives will be altered, hurt and lost. Social reaction and punishments will not be fair or just. Feelings will continue to run high for many years, as evidenced by the various letters to *EW*, weighing in on Abraham's pieces thus far.

Chris Calef ends his letter (11/22) with a call to action, having given a list of "life and death issues that must be confronted and resolved, by whatever means possible." It's those final four words that leave me wondering if anybody's learned anything yet from all this. Try as I might, I just can't fathom what's

so hard to get about Gandhi's observation that the means and the end are inextricable. Even the early computer geeks had it figured with GIGO: garbage in, garbage out.

As numerous social visionaries before and after Gandhi have demonstrated (which is why, by the way, those mass gatherings came to be called "demonstrations"), it is entirely possible — no one ever said easy — to shift things big time while remaining personally consistent with the values one is espousing for the larger picture. In other words, don't burn stuff if cleaner air is one of your con-

cerns. If you hate the devious and often-anonymous violence perpetrated by huge corporations, don't think you are making things better by resisting in a devious, anonymous and/or violent manner.

The more vituperative voices in the green anarchy movement have often ridiculed what they regard as "fatal naïveté" when it comes to the chosen means, timelines and social humility demonstrated by truly nonviolent activists. I wish I could say it once and for all: Nobody's naïve here. We all have the ability to perceive the monster. We all know how to read Chomsky or Derrick Jensen et. al., to take in various analyses and see the immensity and scariness of what life on Earth is up against. But some of us seem to prioritize evolution rather than repetition and reaction when it comes to designing strategies for change. Why not stand on the willing shoulders of those great nonviolent revolutionaries who sacrificed so much instead of ignorantly and pridefully reinventing the revolution wheel?

Vip Short
Eugene

THE NEXT STEP

I believe the Wayne Morse Courthouse has inspired many to look for the next step to create a beautiful entrance to our city. With the river's natural beauty preserved, we can have (architects) Poticha, Diethelm and Gillem design the access to the river with buildings that can make us all thrilled to live in a beautiful Eugene. I do hope the river will be the centerpiece and not hidden or infringed upon with overwhelming structures and roads.

When I look at the proposed changes for Franklin, I'm worried that the noise and traffic planned is not designed for the importance of the Willamette River. No one will be able to enjoy walking or sitting between the river and a busy highway. Please be careful.

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

STILL NOT BURIED

At its most recent monthly meeting, the Oregon Transportation Commission re-