

tor back East a few years ago? Do you still believe eco and pro-life arsonists belong in the same cell?

I just wish nobody had to come up with any "last resort" solution leading to violence and arson, and we all have our wish list. For some, it's about getting richer, for others, it's just demanding respect for this awesome planet.

Thanks again for your feedback — I love Eugene for this reason: We can still agree to disagree.

*Alby Thoumsin
Springfield*

STOPPING TRAINS

Regarding the "Purity Test" letter (12/28) by Steve Bouton: I'm not sure how Bouton got a copy of my life history, but it must have been an abridged version. Steve says, "When Vip's crew gets together and stops a military supply train, wake me up." Well, it was a long time ago: While Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous were busy putting their despair-inducing posters on the telephone poles of Eugene in the early 1980s, a bunch of us followed up our federal trials for stopping business as usual at the Trident nuclear sub base by organizing what came to be called the "Tracks Campaign."

Norman Solomon and I nabbed the front line on the tracks in Portland at the first of several mass actions that stopped the so-called "White Train," which carried dozens of nuke warheads from Texas to the still abominably lethal Trident subs. We stood our ground over and over until they hauled our asses away. I'm told that a few cops quit the force after that day; something about what we did was persuasive.

It would be crass, macho and completely beside the point to get into a "Whose arrest record is longer?" contest; don't wanna go there. Activist résumés shouldn't be an issue. We've all walked our talk to varying degrees.

Like Steve, I dig Gandhi's militancy. I prefer the term "uncompromising forcefulness," though. (Why borrow jargon from the war machine?) The science of *satyagraha* can be chosen from all the forceful options available, and the purpose of my original letter was to once again point out that if you choose any kind of violent means, you're only gonna reap more violence. If that's what you're after, fine — it ain't what I'm after. Nonviolence or *satyagraha* requires quite a bit more attention and self-sacrifice, but it ultimately just works better ... if it's a better world you want.

I am sorry if I came off like I was dissing anybody. (And apologies also to Chris Calef, for singling out his words in my original letter.) Some of those incarcerated are my friends too.

On a social level, Steve and I are friendly. He's a fun guy and I like him. We just probably shouldn't try to build a movement together.

*Vip Short
Eugene*

EXCUSES FOR INACTION

The international traps we continue to dig and fall into are becoming deeper and deeper. In fact, there are no longer any easy methods of escape for us.

"Bring the troops home" is merely a nice-sounding, simple-minded slogan. We will need to go much further than that. With a comprehensive awareness, we may be able to avert the catastrophes looming before us in 2007.

India's nuclear weapons are facing Pakistan's nukes. The U.S. supplies both countries with weapons and technology. The Taliban are retaking Afghanistan. There is a civil war in Iraq. Lebanon is on the brink of civil war. Saudi Arabia supports the Sunnis in Iraq; Iran supports the Shiites; and Russia supports Iran. Hard-line Israeli leaders are determined to crush the Palestinians, and they continue to pressure the U.S. to assist them in aggression against Syria and Iran.

Meanwhile in America, the leaders of both major political parties are clueless about how to stop the bloodshed and prevent a full-blown war that will cascade throughout the region. For our president and Congress, there apparently is no turning back. More troops and more weapons are on the drawing boards for 2007.

But should we place the entire blame on our government? After all, we sustain its arrogance and stupidity by our own actions. For example, do we want our gasoline coming from the bountiful oil reserves of this foreign region, or would we feel better extracting our toxic fuel by way of oil rigs competing for space off the Oregon coast? The answer is essentially meaningless. To make this a better world, we need to go beyond this question, and all other questions.

In 2007, we must focus on ambitious, innovative shifts in our thinking. We can begin by effecting vital changes, and not merely cosmetic ones, within our local communities. There's never a shortage of good ideas, only excuses and a lack of willpower to put them into practice.

*Robert Simms
Corvallis*

THE FLIPPER PICKER

The way Bush (the bastard) will decide what to do with Iraq is: He will flip a coin and then pick which side he likes better.

*Jean Butler
Eugene*

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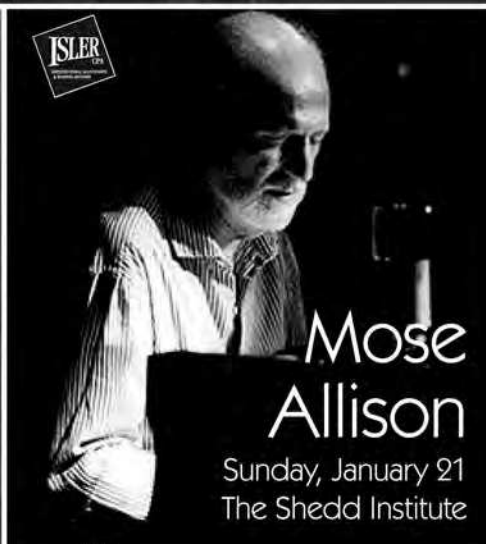
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