

RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE

I wish to express my support and admiration to Hugh Massengill of the Eugene Human Rights Commission and Eugene City Councilor Bonnie Bettman for their unpopular and courageous stance in opposition to the appearance of the Rev. Walter Fauntroy as keynote speaker for this city's celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Their willingness to object to this near-unanimous choice speaks volumes to their character and commitment to upholding the civil rights of all human beings.

I find myself confused when I read statements published in *The Register-Guard* attributed to Betty Snowden and Greg Evans of the MLK Jr. Celebration Committee, and Carmen Urbina of the Eugene Human Rights Commission, in which they praise Fauntroy for his "extensive résumé, background and history in the civil rights movement"; state that "We brought him here because his résumé in civil rights is so remarkable"; and "it is in the best interest of all involved" to invite and support him.

How can these statements not be in conflict with the spirit and dream that King shared with us during his short and powerful lifetime? Are not gay rights civil rights?

Are individuals who seek the right to marry whomever they choose not also human beings, and shall they not be afforded the same rights as all human beings? The word "civil" applies to all civilians, just as the word "human" applies to all human beings, no matter the color of skin or sexual preference.

During King's historic speech at the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963, he stated "When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

To say that "We didn't bring Rev. Fauntroy here to talk about gay marriage" avoids the issue that he champions laws which would forbid a certain population of human beings their constitutional rights. By bringing him here we are silently condoning his stance, and silence is the voice of complicity.

*Michael Connelly
Eugene*

BACKSTAGE WORK

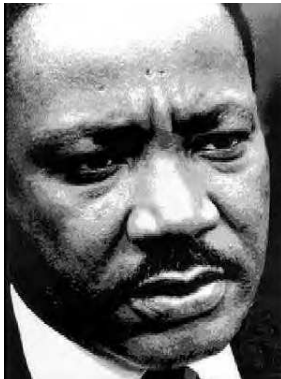
This letter is in response to Carol Horne's letter to the editor (1/11) about the stage hands union, IATSE. Thank you so much, Carol and *EW*, for running that article. I am a local stage manager and props designer/stage hand and have worked with IATSE several times in the past few years. It's really rewarding when an audience member tells you the show was great and they are glad to see people supporting the shows backstage. I have worked in several theaters in Eugene and Portland. Give props to those who work hard backstage and onstage. They work as a team to provide excellent entertainment wherever you go.

*Brian M. Peterson
Eugene*

NOT SO WACKO

In response to (letters 1/4) "Wacko Enviros" (written by a pro-timber delegate from the Lane Republicans Organization), Cascadia Forest Defenders and the UO's Forest Action stand behind their decision to hold a reading of the eco-conscious *Essene Gospels of Peace* outside the gated mansion of Seneca Jones Lumber CEO Aaron Jones. So long as Jones continues to log native forests in the McKenzie River watershed — Eugene's source of drinking water — CFD and allies will be making this event a holiday tradition.

Greedy timber barons like Jones have for too long hidden behind their fortresses of corporate power. It is past time that those who plunder natural ecosystems to fatten their



own wallets be publicly condemned. As Utah Phillips said: "The Earth is not dying — she is being killed. And those who are killing her have names and addresses."

CFD was also practicing the age-old tradition of caroling, singing our own version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with new verses, such as: "On the first day of Christmas Aaron Jones gave to me / a clearcut in the old trees."

Surprisingly, the author does make one accurate statement when she accuses CFD of having "nothing better to do" during the holidays. True: Instead of participating in a mindless orgy of consumption, CFD chose to bring concerned community members together to voice their opinions about issues that affect us all.

CFD believes that a fundamental part of any religion should be honoring Creation and acknowledging that humanity cannot exist without a planetary life-support system.

*Janet Wrege
Cascadia Forest Defenders*

TRANSIT ACCOUNTABILITY

Sen. Bill Morrisette asks for an elected LTD Board and I agree! I don't believe the public is receiving the public transportation it needs now and for the future when oil is in short supply. An elected board would have to provide services for its constituents.

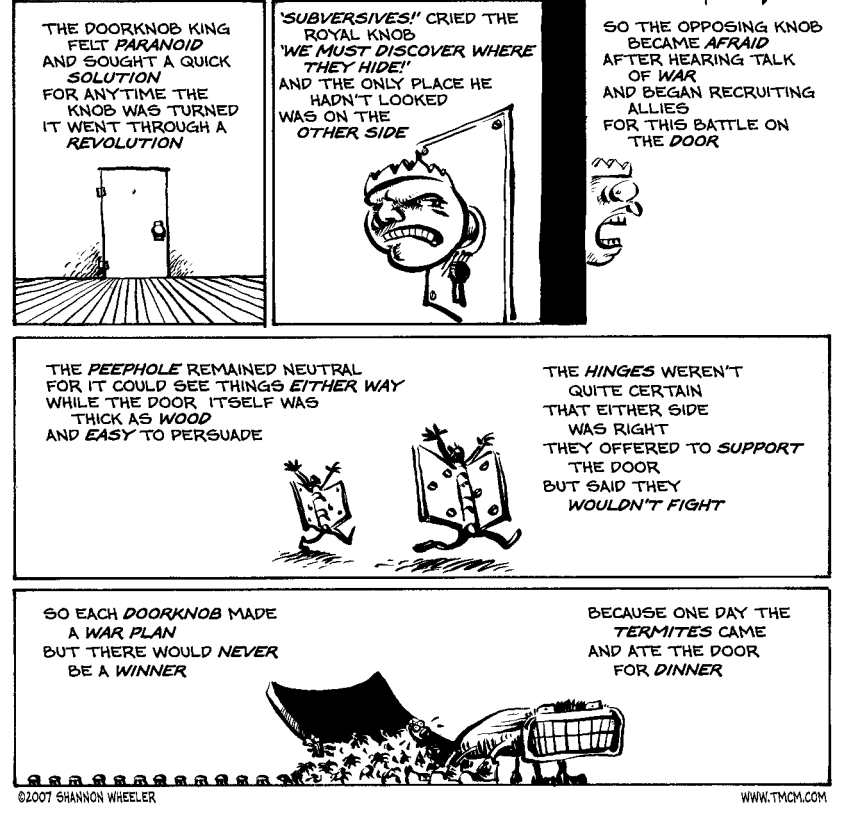
When I see the latest bus stop shelters, I have to ask what they were designed for — surely not bus riders standing in the cold and rainy weather. When I look on the schedule and see no night service and few buses on weekends, I realize this would end my weekend trips to movies and the Hult. When I view the \$25 million EmX with its infrequent stops as a model project, I know we need an elected LTD Board.

They also messed up Franklin Boulevard.
*Ruth Duemler
Eugene*

BOMB 'EM WITH GREASE

The new Bush strategy: If bombs don't work, how about trans-fats? A friend's daughter sent her this Burger King mug from where she is stationed in Iraq. Franchises spreading around the whole world are nothing new, but is making sure our troops have their Whoppers really a priority? Can't we be a little more creative when it comes to helping our troops? Perhaps by bringing them

How to Be Happy "War of the Door" drawn by Shannon Wheeler written by Matt Speer



home. It makes me proud that we are spreading the American way: freedom, democracy and heart disease.

*Allison Cardwell
Corvallis*

BIKING HAZARDS

Warning to all bicyclists: I had a bike accident in November that wrenched my back enough to send me to the chiropractor. In front of 671 E. 16th there is a slab that has sunk enough to make a long mini-cliff parallel to the direction of travel, much of which is more than an inch and a half deep. I was traveling in the dark after a rehearsal at Beall Hall and didn't see the defect till it was too late, and it sent my bike and me flying sideways.

I reported my accident to the city and made a claim through Risk Services. It was denied because no one had made a complaint about that spot before me and because it is not an official bike lane. They say "inspection and maintenance of streets is limited due to lack of available funding, and is discretionary in nature," and "the City must be proven to have been negligent in some way in order to assume financial responsibility." I was also told on the phone that the city is only required to keep the streets up to the safety requirements of cars, not of bicycles. In other words, if I had seen it and reported it I might have a claim. But of course if I had seen it, I would have known to avoid it; I only found the defect through my direct experience of it. A real catch-22.

So bicyclists, beware. Don't have an accident on any city street defects that you haven't reported. Crazy, eh? I'm just glad I wasn't hurt worse than I was, or that it wasn't someone more fragile than me who found the spot.

*Karen Stingle
Eugene*

ABILITY IS NOT INTENT

To others we appear a certain way. Most often we deal with them, we try to see them as we deal with them right or wrong. Case in point: When we frequent our favorite tavern, we try to be good customers and patronize that special time and place. Under normal circumstances they provide product and service, and they should be compensated for their efforts on your behalf. The result here is that you are treated with contempt if you are not able to tip. In addition when you are close to these waitstaff, it hurts that it comes down to the money. Customer service should come freely without any strings attached, without either party assuming the posture that their needs supersede the needs of the one.

I think the way we treat each other should be foremost to us all. Regardless of any preconceived notion, we are here to take care of each other. I also ask to have us to see each other as people who treat as family. Our time is finite and should not be wasted on who's right or wrong, good or bad. I think I was treated unfairly and I've moved on. The respect you show to others shows the respect you have for yourself. The object of business is to bring buyers and sellers together, not drive each other away. I firmly believe that we all can do better.

*George G. Brooks
Eugene*

UNFAIR FEES

An article in last Sunday's *Register-Guard* regarding a Washington State man challenging union fees reminded me of my recent experience as a part-time worker for Lane County Public Works. In 2005 I was hired as a "520 extra help" worker — 520 being the amount of hours a part-timer can work in a year. At my orientation, I was clearly told the position had no benefits at

