

BENEFITS OF EMX

I am surprised to see that some of the so-called "progressives" are unhappy with the new LTD EmX route. I ride the bus every day, and it is obvious to me that the forward-thinking folks at LTD and Peter DeFazio got this one right.

Some mock the six minutes of time saved on the route or say there isn't enough traffic to justify the EmX. Hello! Ever hear about planning ahead?

The rights-of-way now in use for EmX will save more time as traffic increases and may very well become the light rail corridor decades from now.

It doesn't take a genius to see that acquiring the rights-of-way now is a sound investment.

As for the notion that the EmX lanes have ruined Franklin Boulevard, please don't make me laugh. I have lived off of Franklin for 30 years, and the EmX lanes, stations and adjacent work are a major improvement. Kudos to LTD for including the grassy areas in the lanes, the art work on the railings and the attractive stations.

I can't help but wonder if some in our community, including Bill Morrisette, are still stinging over the LTD strike last year and are unable to get past that.

Congratulations to all involved for bringing the EmX to our community. Mass transit is an important component of reducing our dependence on oil and reducing pollution which causes global warming. The EmX is a natural and forward-looking extension of our mass transit system.

Randy Kolb
Eugene

RECRUITER SHOWDOWN

When three young Army recruiting officers approached our Counter Military Recruiting table at LCC, I noticed my heart race, my breath constrict.

I volunteer in educating potential recruits on military service alternatives and disadvantages. My shirt read "Thinking About Military Service? Get All the Facts."

Time seemed to slow. Adrenaline flooded my bloodstream, and I reflexively scanned them for weapons. Then, I took a

deep breath, and my rehearsals for such an occasion began to pay off. I began to see these two men and a woman, with their uniforms and medals, as humans rather than as enemies.

"We hear you've been telling lies about us!" I saw the officer's chin jut out, eyes narrow. I took a deep breath and said, "I'm guessing you're irritated because you want to be sure accurate information is given out?"

Reflecting my empathy for him, I guessed what he might be feeling and what his human needs might be. The dialogue that followed was a great lesson for me in the effectiveness of maintaining curiosity and openness to others. I found out his needs for safety, justice and service. By distinguishing common needs we have from possibly conflicting strategies, we choose to fulfill these needs. I succeeded in focusing my attention upon understanding this young officer. I listened to him.

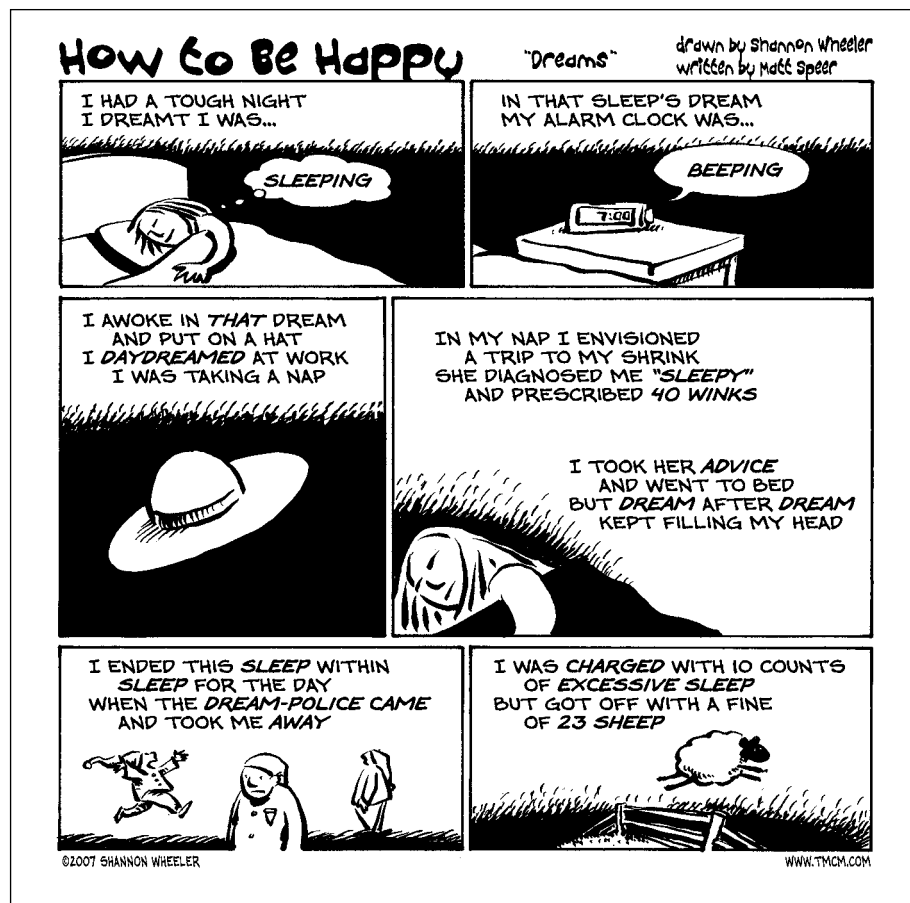
When we parted 20 minutes later, we had a date to continue our conversation. He had been able to hear how we had common desire for accuracy of information and safety for people. I'm convinced he might have agreed to join our volunteer table if his desire for job security were not an issue!

A week later we had coffee together, and I found myself desperately wanting to educate him on my opinions (my thinking and strategies) and their superiority to his. What I had learned the week before helped bring me back to inquiry, curiosity and openness to learn more about this young man and really make a connection.

I've been studying nonviolent communication for two years. Every week my friends and I gather to learn more about this effective way to focus our attention on where we are likely to get what we want.

I plan and work with empathy skills. I'd love to get your calls for and about empathy at 689-7798. You can search the CNVC website (www.cnvc.org/training_list.aspx) or www.orncc.net for local groups to help with the study and practice of peace through nonviolent communication.

Mark Roberts
Eugene



TESTIMONY TO POWER

I just read the article about Nuestro Lugar/Our Place Teen Center in last week's (1/18) EW. I was lucky enough to be able to work with LEAD during my last nine months in town, and I was fortunate to be able to watch the brilliance of the process that is the beginning of this much needed resource in downtown Eugene.

What LEAD and the Nuestro Lugar/Our Place Coordinating Committee have accomplished with the opening of this teen center is a testimony to the power of the youth voice. It is also a testimony to the power of adults who recognize that the youth voice is an important one to listen to. Eugene should be proud of this new addition to its downtown. Congratulations, LEAD, and thank you.

M. Brooke Robertshaw
Logan, Utah

SAVAGE LOVIN'

Savage Love is the first thing I read in EW. He's entertaining and informative.

There is an easy solution for the letter writer (1/11) who wants Savage to go "bye-bye." The letter writer just need not read Savage Love. Heck, the letter writer can easily just tear off the last page of the Weekly if the column is that bothersome to her or him. I, and many others, enjoy Savage Love.

Steve Brown
Eugene

IGNORANCE HELPS

Grass farmers and timber owners burn fields and plastic covered brush to deal with weeds and slash. It's supposedly cost effective. All you need is a drip torch and a meteorologist or forestry department OK. Ignorance and immunity from impacts of breathing toxic smoke helps.

Most farmers gave up the risks of field burning a decade ago. While Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA) cites individuals burning plastic, timber interests want regulators to allow them to burn plastic, increase slash burns near large towns and avoid responding to indi-

WHO IS THE REV. FAUNTROY?

Eugene is such an interesting place to be a gay activist. In some ways, it's so supportive of the LGBT community's right to certain freedoms and liberties; in other ways, insensitive and uncaring by not realizing that being supportive needs to translate into a person's daily life not just as a personal mission statement written on the walls of the heart and translated into intellectual ethical beliefs.

Tuesday morning while mother nature once again sprinkled Eugene with snow, I and a number of local community members sat down around a table and shared breakfast with the Rev. Dr. Fauntroy at LCC. I had agreed to this before the op-ed in *The Register-Guard* as a matter of integrity with the local African-American community. I was under no illusion that I was going to magically change Fauntroy's mind. Sometimes you do things that prove you are willing to listen even though they may not seem like shortest route to having your own needs heard.

There were thirteen people around that table, including our host Greg Evans and Fauntroy; only two of us were Caucasian. African-American members of the LGBT community were strong voices for our lives. An

LGBT member of the Latino community added his voice to theirs. Straight allies from the African-American community had our backs as well.

This was my personal experience of Fauntroy. Is he anti-gay? No. Is he opposed to gay marriage? Yes, though I do think his thoughts on that subject are evolving. Is he opposed to civil unions? No.

It is important to remember that justice is not a destination. It's a process. A process that requires dialogue, speaking from our hearts, listening with our hearts, as well as being open to new thoughts, ideas and understandings with our minds.

This is what Fauntroy had to say. Yes, he stood with those people and organizations. He also realized that the gay marriage debate was a wedge issue — an issue designed to unify conservative voters to put conservative legislators in Congress.

The first wedge issue, according to Fauntroy, was abortion. Eventually that stopped rallying the troops, so they needed a new one. It was gay rights. That lost its organizing power in time as well and they needed a new one. Gay marriage became that new wedge.

So what was the real agenda? Tax cuts for American

businesses. Trickle-down economics. Less money in the budget translates into less programming. The first people to be affected are always the disenfranchised and the poor.

As a result Fauntroy has distanced himself from those organizations. He was being used. He knows that now, and he came to that conclusion by himself, which gives me hope.

Do I consider him and ally in the fight for LGBT rights? No. Do I consider him an enemy of LGBT rights? No.

So who is he? He's a man who has walked a very long walk in his many years. He has much to teach. The real question is, are we willing to listen? Are we willing to speak? Are we willing to open our hearts in the spirit of true dialogue to work for change? The answers to those questions are also the answer to who Fauntroy is. As with all of us walking this Earth, he is an unfinished work. This is also true of the many people who are that are like him regardless of the color of their skin, their creed, and where they are in life.

Alan Brown
Eugene