

partly due to these disappearing urban trees. Where once these trees reigned supreme and majestic, now they fall one after another, removing with them homes for critters, cooling-off shade and life-sustaining oxygen. Shame on you, city of Eugene.

Shen Steiner
Eugene

VEGETABLES DON'T FART

Last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with hundreds of scientists from 113 countries, determined conclusively that man-made greenhouse gases are responsible for global warming. They predicted devastating droughts and hurricanes and extensive flooding of coastal areas, displacing millions.

A report released by the U.N. in November blamed animal agriculture for 18 percent of these emissions — more than automobiles. Carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas, is emitted by burning forests to create animal pastures and by combustion of fossil fuels to operate farm machinery, trucks, refrigeration equipment, factory farms and slaughterhouses. The much more damaging methane and nitrous oxide are released from the digestive tracts of cattle and from animal waste cesspools, respectively.

We don't have to wait for Earth Day to help save our planet. We can start with the next trip to the supermarket. Meanwhile, we can check out the details at www.veggies-forecology.org

Elijah Hennison
Eugene

ARE YOU A GENIUS, TOO?

Here is a puzzle that was on a Mensa test I took recently. See if you can calculate the correct answer like I did.

Natural wetlands alone emit roughly 160 million tons of methane gas annually into our atmosphere. Methane gas in Earth's atmosphere traps 20 times more heat than does CO₂. Motor vehicles, including SUVs, but not including transit buses, emit a total of roughly one billion tons of CO₂ annually into our atmosphere.

Which one of the following contributes roughly three times more to global warming

than all the others combined? A) wetlands, B) automobiles, C) SUVs, D) transit buses.

Don Richey
Eugene

GARDEN OF EVIL

Biblical scholars agree on two points: Site references locate the Garden of Eden in Iraq. When Adam and Eve were expelled, the Serpent never left.

Lori Kasprzak
Eugene

ENOUGH, ALREADY

VISTA will stumble out of the Gates and pull itself up, but really it will prove to have the Microsoft drawbacks of "overmanaging" the user and placing constraints convenient for Microsoft on the experience. That won't change.

And, because Microsoft is 93 percent of the OS market, it will remain the chief target of every budding teenaged and Mafia hacker and remain virus- and Trojan horse-ridden. That won't change.

And it still leads in the chief sin of operating systems (one that the Mac OS, which I use and love, also shares to a great degree), and that is playing the milk the market game of constantly selling us new hardware which needs us to buy new software to run new applications which demand new hardware, on and on ad-infinitum.

In other words, text-processing and image-manipulation and business applications, which comprise 80 percent of the need for a computer and which were just fine 10 years ago, are dragged along by ever more fabulous games and "online," "real time" multimedia activities which can entertain us more photorealistically yet not really add to design and content. That won't change.

Our needs are not enough for their greed. They tell us what to want and then teach us to consider our wants are needs. That won't change.

And we will follow until the petroleum bubble is burst and we have to turn back to each other for both our wants and our needs. In reality we need only each other, and that won't change.

Leo Rivers
Eugene

The Call

Make your voice heard



It is possible to read the history of this country as one long struggle to extend the liberties established in our Constitution to everyone in America. — Molly Ivins, 1944-2007

Hey. I know you. You've got that lesbian aunt. The gay uncle. A bisexual cousin. You're the one with the butch sister, the sissy brother, transsexual dad, transgender mom, genderqueer son/daughter. Even you, yourself. You've at least experimented, wondered, desired something out there beyond the bulge of the normal curve.

You certainly know enough about human nature, about yourself and everyone in your family, to know that Colorado megachurch founder the Rev. Ted Haggard's three-week reprogramming miracle cure couldn't have totally erased from his genetic code his orientation as a sanctimonious, lying, cheating, meth-snorting butt monkey.

People are who they are.

It's unfair that good people you know and love are legally discriminated against — fired, evicted, refused service — for not being normal enough. They can't go to the courthouse and get a license to protect their partner, their kids and themselves. They don't have equal access to the emergency room, the PTA or, in the end, the mortuary.

I know you. This grates against your sense of decency. You believe in fairness and equality. You've pledged your allegiance to liberty and justice for all. Right?

Now's your chance to step up. Our state government, happily dominated this session by a fair-minded democratic majority, is considering legislation that would ban discrimination in Oregon and open the option of civil unions to all couples. And this time there's no Evil Queen Minnis presiding over the House of Representatives to prevent a vote.

Those lawmakers. They tend to represent the people they hear from. Right now they're hearing from a mobilized and motivated cadre of uptight, narrow-minded, anti-equality voters who don't give a rip about your aunt, uncle, dad, mom, brother, sister, cousin or son/daughter.

Your state senators and representatives need to hear from you! Call, write letters, send email, make your voice heard. Tell them you want everyone in your family — and all families — protected from discrimination. If you don't know your legislators or how to reach them, find all that detail online at www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/home.htm. Urge them to pass the non-discrimination and civil union bill.

Too shy or too busy or too government-phobic to make that call? At least send some money to Basic Rights Oregon at www.basicrights.org so they can keep working on your behalf.

If you can wrangle a day off, join me and hundreds of Oregonians making the pilgrimage to Salem for the Basic Rights Day of Action, Wednesday, March 7. We'll be at the state Capitol all day learning how to lobby and visiting our legislators. We'll pack the Capitol steps from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm in a huge rally to show our state government it's time to do the right thing. Register online at www.basicrights.org and you'll get the lowdown on the plan for the day, how to carpool, when to be where. It's easy. It's fun. It's necessary. And you'll be in great company.

I know you. You'll do this.

"Living Out" columnist Sally Sheklow is the winner of the Best of Eugene and Lone Star Press writing awards.

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