

DISGUSTED BY PRUDERY

I was disturbed to see several letters in the Feb. 8 *EW* against Dan Savage's column and advertising for sadomasochistic adult activities, and I wanted to join the ranks of readers who are more disgusted by litigious sexual prudery than alternative sexuality.

The *EW* is not a publication for children, and I do hope that disturbed readers will ask their children to refrain from reading it. The newspaper itself doesn't have a responsibility to sanitize its content for everyone who may find it objectionable or inappropriate. It serves a particular audience, and in the case of the *EW*, that audience is adults interested in "alternative" aspects of society, whether they are political, social or sexual.

There is absolutely no reason to remove an informational column from an alternative weekly that serves its chosen audience well. Dan Savage's witty syndicated column, which appears in alternative weeklies throughout the country, discusses sexual topics that can be easily discovered on Internet search engines. The difference is that Savage has built his reputation on disseminating truthful information about aspects of safety and health instead of merely exploiting sensational images.

Likewise, with the BDSM (bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism) community advertising, the websites and venues seek to connect a group of adults who seek safe and entertaining ways to explore responsibly a part of their sexuality that society deems dangerous or pathological. The language of fantasy ("electrotorture," "corporal punishment," etc.) is employed in BDSM ads to create a mood, not to suggest that if you decide to go to fetish night or send an email for more information about hemp rope, you will be kidnapped and "forced into sex slavery," as Deb Huntley's (2/8) letter suggests.

Huntley's letter aptly demonstrates the paranoia and fear generated when there is a lack of reliable information about alternative sexual practices such as BDSM. The letter uses hyperbolic rhetoric to make a false link between real torture and consenting behavior between adults. Worse yet, the BDSM community is portrayed as being a menace to the whole city — somehow threatening to replace the community's "imagination" and "compassion" with "detachment and delusion." Oddly, the solution advocated is censorship and enforcing a concept of "normal" sexuality, neither of which, in my opinion, stimulate imagination or compassion.

Unlike Huntley, I think it's great that BDSM and fetish practitioners have a visible presence in Eugene. In my research on alternative sexuality, I have read many accounts of unhappy people who repress their sadomasochistic desires or succumb to abusive relationships as a substitute. I have also read of and spoken to people who have been transformed by a sadomasochistic experience, using phrases that suggest a spiritual awakening or catharsis. Others just seem happy to give or receive such a nice deep-tissue massage.

BDSM activities range from mild to intense and can be lighthearted and extremely creative on both ends of the spectrum. Individuals who are involved in organized BDSM communities stress negotiation and safety for any activity between new partners.

Perhaps the community-at-large would benefit from *more* sexual education in the pages of the *EW*.

Jennifer Levin
Eugene

HEINOUS M37

Bob Emmons' viewpoint "Forces of Destruction" (2/22) on the "clear cut" corruption of officials at local, state and federal levels regarding near nonexistent regulation of land use legislation and blatant illegitimate logging and clear-cutting operations was both distressing and sobering.

What recourse do local residents have when even videotape of months of such atrocities remains ignored? The idea that developers are manipulating Measure 37 to greedily swallow up enormous tracts of land, to clear-cut and subdivide Oregon's once-pristine wilderness out of existence — with "wink wink" compliance by government agencies and officials — is heinous. What legal system do we look to when a DSL field representative steps up to view the site and ongoing damage and issues a stop-work order but is then pulled off the case?

Oregonians must expose such corruption, and those complicit with it. I salute the neighbors who have continued struggling to get legitimate action taken while living with the agony of what they are enduring daily. Zoning and enforcement protections *must* be properly implemented.

I further salute LandWatch Lane County and the Goal One Coalition for, as Emmons says, continually "challenging the everyday applications to rezone productive farms and forests to marginal lands; to build in riparian zones and floodplains; and to illegally adjust property lines for template dwellings on resource lands."

The importance of these agencies in struggling to expose the truth, and protect these lands, cannot be overstated. Their constant diligence is deeply appreciated and to be commended.

Sita Stulberg
Eugene

EVOLVING TOWARD WHAT?

From *EW*'s slant column (3/1): "Who has more impact when it comes to saving the environment? A hundred saboteurs with torches and monkey wrenches or Al Gore with his wonkish traveling slide show?" Nice framing.

Is "saving the environment" like saving one's soul? One's view of the environment (or of one's soul) depends on one's view of its degree of degradation. The possible range of solutions: cosmetic corporate/government fixes, a few minor individual sacrifices, a few major individual sacrifices, major sacrifices on everyone's part (as long as the corporate bottom line is unharmed), major sacrifices on everyone's part, or, we're screwed — it's too late to save the environment. Where does Al Gore fit into this? Mr. NAFTA will do whatever he can to maximize corporate profits (i.e., megafarming for biofuels) while appearing genuinely concerned on his road show (2008 presidential campaign).

Which brings me to "We have more sophisticated tools now for organizing and educating the public." By "sophisticated tools," do you mean voting, signing petitions, annual marches against full-spectrum dominance and emailing our corporate representatives in government? Obstacles to "organizing and educating the public" need to be removed first. These include corporate TV and video games, chemicals and antibiotics in our food and water, the hundreds of billions of pills we are persuaded to consume annually for our health and the great organized religions of the

How to Be Happy "my meeting with me" drawn by Shannon Wheeler written by Matt Speer

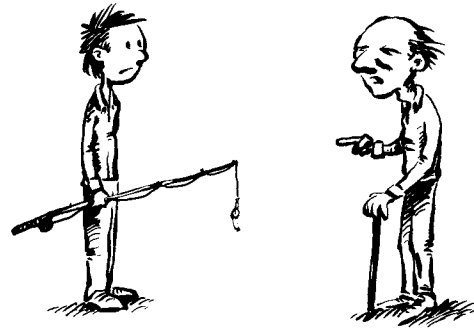
THE PRESENT IS BORING. THE PAST IS DONE SEEMS ALL OF MY TOYS ARE NO LONGER FUN I'LL FISH IN TIME, USING MY WATCH AS BAIT THE FUTURE, ONCE CAUGHT, WILL NO LONGER BE LATE

THE TOYS OF TOMORROW SOON WILL BE MINE I'M FEELING A TUG ON MY FISHING LINE! BUT THINGS DO NOT GO ACCORDING TO PLAN I CATCH, NOT TOYS, BUT AN ELDERLY MAN

PERHAPS I'VE CAUGHT A LEPRECHAUN WITH GOLD. HE COUGHS; "CAN'T YOU SEE? I'M YOU THAT IS OLD." "BUT YOU'RE WRINKLED AND GRAY. YOU LOOK LIKE CRAP." THE FUTURE-ME SIGHS AND SAYS "YOU'RE A BRAT!"

I SAY TO MYSELF "TELL ME ABOUT ME! WILL I HAVE A MANSION CLOSE TO THE SEA? WILL I GET TOYS THAT ARE SUPER ADVANCED?" "YOU'LL GET," HE CHORTLES, "A KICK IN THE PANTS"

"YOU'LL HATE EVERY GAME AND TOY THAT YOU FIND IF YOU DON'T GO WORK TO SHARPEN YOUR MIND. BE HAPPY WITH NOW OR END UP LIKE ME; CRANKY AND BORED AT AGE 83."



©2007 SHANNON WHEELER

WWW.TMCM.COM

world, working hand-in-hand with corrupt governments for our imagined well-being and supplication.

Yes, "we are evolving as a species," but in which direction are we headed?

Robert Simms
Corvallis

NO GOV?

It is excellent that U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold will introduce legislation "prohibiting the use of funds to continue the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq." If Congressman Peter DeFazio does not help initiate similar legislation in the House, then we the people will have to dump DeFazio in 2008 in favor of someone who is truly for peace and decency. The same reasoning applies to Speaker Nancy Pelosi. If we cannot have a peaceful and decent government, then it is better to have no government at all.

Bob Saxton
Eugene

GREEN TRACK

Is Eugene environmentally "greener" than it was 20 years ago?

We definitely burn more petrol than we did 20 years ago. We didn't have the mega big box stores like Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Target 20 years ago, all of which are completely dependent on the earth-killing trucking industry.

The bicycle lane and river path system hasn't been upgraded or expanded for at least 15 years. Many bike lanes are dangerous to ride, such as the broken and chuck-holed bike lane on West 18th Avenue.

We didn't have Hyundai/Hynix dumping diluted toxins in our river or the world's largest RV industry (Monaco, Marathon, etc.) producing 8 MPG vehicles polluting our planet.

Eugene could get back on track.

For starters, EWEB could place \$90 million into a precedent-setting solar energy/conservation incentives program instead of building some new administrative palace on west Eugene wetlands.

The RV industry could start building hybrid diesel buses for public use. Market of Choice, Eugene's most successful food mar-

kets, could stop supporting clear-cutting and herbicide spraying by withdrawing their multimillion-dollar accounts from Umpqua Bank, which is owned by three of Oregon's timber barons.

Eugene should create a real Farmers' Market Place that is covered and maintained for year around use to support local farms and communities. Eugene should create an urban growth greenway park that the city cannot grow beyond to protect wetlands for wildlife and recreation.

I've learned when the people lead the "leaders" will follow.

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

SAVAGE DRUG?

A recent letter compared Dan Savage's column to McDonald's food. Sometimes I think that's an insult to McDonald's, and maybe meth would be a better comparison. I'm as progressive as anyone on talking about sex, as long as it's about expressions of love rather than about adolescent hangups verging on violence and how to limit our love. I feel the only abuse in my childhood was not being able to talk meaningfully about certain important subjects with people who had been there, done that, so I had to basically figure it out for myself. And I'm still working on that, as I hope most of us are.

For instance, why does the word "fuck" today seem to imply anger and violence more often than love? There's a lot on the back pages of *EW* that isn't about expressions of love. I don't feel it's the place for what we find there. But I wouldn't mind having a separate publication for it.

Dan Robinson
Eugene

SAVAGE 4EVER

I swore I wouldn't weigh in on this, but the "Save the Children" campaign has finally gotten to me. I have been reading "Savage Love" since I was first introduced to it at the age of 17. It did not corrupt me; it did on occasion shock me, but more than anything, it reassured me. No matter what I was dealing with in my relationships someone else out there undoubtedly had it worse.