

**NOTHING TO CELEBRATE**

Why all the celebration for the passing of the Oregon civil unions bill? My partner of 22 years has worked for FedEx for 23 years, and when we get our civil union, I will not be covered by my partner's medical insurance because her employer only provides it to married couples. Neither will I be able to collect her Social Security benefits should she die, nor qualify for hundreds of federal regulations that cover married folks but not civil union folks.

Equality? Equal rights? Who do you think you're kidding?

Julia Wooten  
Eugene

**SILLY THREAT**

I will admit I had mixed feelings about the proposal to have Beam and KWG both chosen to breathe new life into our dead downtown core. Then I read that David Monk, Paul Nicholson and Mary O'Brien are all opposed to the union. That settled it for me. I am now fully behind the Beam/KWG partnership.

As for the silly threat of an initiative, I say go for it. Such a vote would put to rest the ridiculous notion that these three represent the majority of opinion in Eugene. The people of Eugene want the downtown to be transformed into a vital mix of stores and places to live. We are tired of no-growth groups killing opportunities by processing them to death. Your tactics are transparent to us now. We know that "public process" really means talk, talk, talk until the developers go away.

And finally, let's drop the myopic view that anything from outside of Eugene is no good. There is a reason why some national stores are so successful. *People like to shop at them.* I know — it's a mindblower.

And is anyone else noticing that Springfield has become the vital southern Willamette Valley community? First our hospital, then Symantec and other businesses and now they have the major Cinco de Mayo celebration with thousands of participants. They are even kicking our butts on diversity! Wait till they transform Glenwood. If our downtown isn't fixed by then, it will be too late.

I have worked downtown for 25 years. It has been going downhill the entire time. Our core city center is an eyesore and an embarrassment. It's time to stop talking. Hanging flower baskets, pretty sculptures and a hodge-podge of nonprofits aren't enough. We need viable businesses that people will actually shop at — and we need them soon.

Randy Kolb  
Eugene

**TAX ON HEADS**

For your information, Faye Stewart's initial public safety tax proposal of "\$150 per person in the county" is not a flat tax, as Alan Pittman mischaracterizes it (cover story, 5/10). It is a head tax, also known as a poll tax. In a head tax, the percentage paid is inversely proportional to income because it is a fixed sum of money. That means that the less income you have, the higher percentage of it you pay in tax.

With a flat tax, as was actually on the ballot, the percentage is irrespective of income. With a progressive tax, like the federal or Oregon income tax, the less income you have, the lower percentage you pay. Faye

Stewart's instinctive proposal of a head tax, which he peculiarly considered "more fair," is the worst of these possibilities in its impact on the folks who can least afford to pay taxes. It could only be worse by requiring people with lower incomes to pay a larger absolute amount than the wealthy, for instance, \$150 for me and \$50 for the blissfully ignorant Mr. Stewart.

It is unfortunate that Faye Stewart is in a position to create public policy, given his bent. One might also wish for greater precision in reporting public policy issues.

Larry Koenigsberg  
Eugene

**MENSTRUATE FOR PEACE!**

There is no denying the power of that celestial body that orbits nearest our planet. The moon controls the seas that cover three-quarters of our planet's surface and is a delicate but very real influence on the water that makes up over three-quarters of our bodies. As women, or more appropriately *we-moon*, we enjoy a deep bond with the moon. At no time is this bond stronger than during our own celestial cycle. It is at this time, then, that we as *we-moon* should pray, hope and dream for peace, so that the power of that beautiful celestial body may influence the hearts and minds of those responsible for this pointless and inhuman war.

Janet Torres  
Eugene

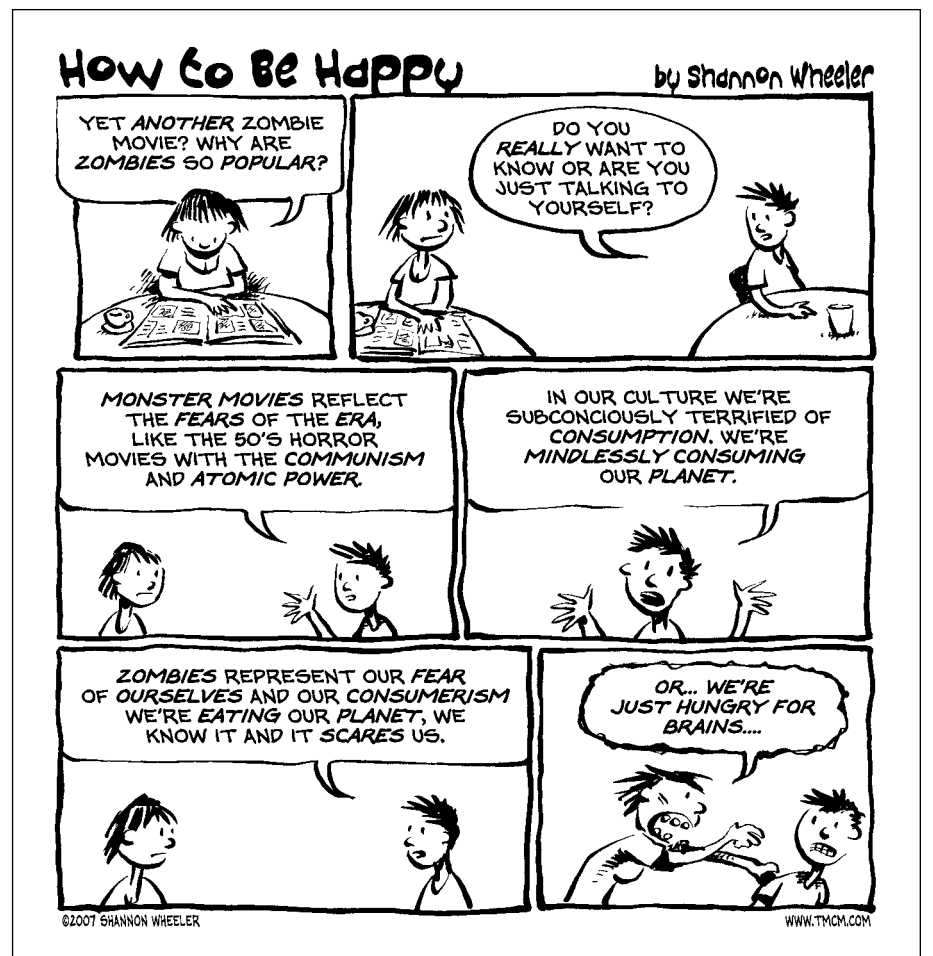
**EWEB'S FOLLY**

Well, EWEB is back in the news again, unveiling its plan to spend \$150,000 of ratepayers' money to come up with a new slogan. In a time when Lane County is struggling to get the funding to keep its basic services running, does it sound right to you, Eugeneans? I'm sure that EWEB would say such money is peanuts compared to the \$600 million overall budget. But \$150,000 here and \$150,000 there can add up really quickly. This is ratepayer money! Is such a thing really vital to the operation? Apparently the "Rely On Us" logo was developed by just one department, and that does not set well with the other departments. It took approximately one year with seven EWEB employees meeting on a regular basis to develop "Rely On Us." But that just won't do. I wonder how much the development of the current slogan cost us?

Last year's strike could have been avoided if EWEB would have spent very little more than \$150,000 to give its employees a better benefit health plan. The final cost to the ratepayer of EWEB for lost production and security guards and who knows what totaled \$200,000. It seems that EWEB has lost sight of its main purpose, which is to provide EWEB customers good service at the lowest possible rate.

When EWEB headquarters were still at Willamette Street, its rates were lower than anyone else in the area. Now its electric rates are almost double compared to the Springfield Utility Board, just across the river. If we take a closer look, I think the people of Eugene would be surprised. EWEB needs to refocus on doing what they are paid to do and forget about publicity-seeking programs. Please, just provide us with good service and good rates!

Sang Huynh  
Eugene



**A MODEST PROPOSAL**

Two weeks ago the UO student government rejected a modest proposal to address looming ecological collapse brought on by global warming.

In their great wisdom the student government decided with excess student funds that it is more important to expend \$100,000 on a game center, \$300,000 on a new affluent "multicultural" meeting room, \$100,000 on installing plusher seats in the Miller Theatre and \$100,000 on the newest video projectors rather than saving the biosphere and cultures all over the world from ecological catastrophe.

Where were the university's many so-called sustainability groups on lobbying these bright minds of the ASUO Senate? Were they unaware of this modest proposal to expend between \$100,000 and \$850,000 dollars of surplus student funds towards an array of solar panels or 10,000 compact fluorescent lights or to install solar water heating systems?

The UO could have been seen as a university on the forefront of the global warming emergency, perhaps like no other in the U.S. Now, the UO and Eugene will be seen as just another typical community stuck in the old paradigm.

We need to realize that most of the world's peoples who are slaves to our consumer gluttony will be the ones who suffer the most from our lack of enacting real solutions to global warming. It's time to act as if global heating is an emergency for us all and to lobby elected officials great and small to do what is right for our biosphere.

Shannon Wilson  
Eugene

**INVITATION TO ABUSE**

I take issue with the outdoor article "The Seven Natural Wonders of Lane County" (5/3). The author's list of some remote natural (think fragile) areas in the forests of Lane County appears to be enlisting the public to trample freely into these unique areas without a whisper of concern for the damages that will inevitably occur. I implore the natural resources staff of our national forests to

restrict access to such areas by closing and ripping out roads that lead to such areas.

Little does the author realize that many of these unique habitats are home to some rare and endangered flora and fauna that are literally clinging to life's edge due to human encroachment, fire suppression, road building and the associated logging practices. Your rock-climbing and cliff-hanging trash sensitive areas and leave behind scars. A good-hearted novice with all the right intentions will not realize the impact on the flora and especially fauna that they so eagerly desire to have a meaningful experience with. We will simply love it to death!

I speak from experience due to the many years that I conducted various wildlife and botanical surveys for several national forests. I am sworn to secrecy about the many rare sights.

Some research into the subject of off-trail blazing would reveal that the many seasoned biologists who work on the national forests are protective of the knowledge they have of such places, such as the so-called "Hell Hole." Please, next time visit your USFS office and inquire about such endeavors from our public employees (especially biologists), who work very hard to maintain that fragile connection of public trust.

Thomas William Baxter  
Dexter

**TREAT YOUTH BETTER**

Recently, during what was supposed to be a relaxing lunch at the Hilyard Allann Brothers Beanery, I overheard a local man complaining loudly and extensively about middle school kids who come into the establishment for lunch or a drink.

To the casual observer, one could see that the students who come in are generally well-behaved and are valid customers to the coffee shop.

The problem lies in the *adult* who devalues children so much that they are not seen as a vital part of our community and the future of our society. I believe that the intolerance of the adult to welcome the youth into the marketplace is a sign of poor judgment and an inability to recognize children as a