

BY SAMANTHA CHIRILLO, SHANNON WILSON AND JOSH SCHLOSSBERG

A Response to Failure

Enviros need a change in tactics

Latently, we've been hearing a lot about eco-sabotage and the absurdity of calling these acts "terrorism." Yet the question remains: What led once law-abiding citizen activists to take such desperate measures in the name of the Earth?

For at least part of the answer, we need look no further than the failure of the mainstream environmental movement to achieve genuine and lasting protections for the planet. Now, more than ever before, we must breathe new life into true grassroots activism by addressing root problems instead of just symptoms. Only then will we be able to keep people from giving up hope.

Yet today there is an epidemic of environmental groups abandoning strong stances for a "seat at the table" of politicians. Instead of picking a stance and fighting like hell for it, the tactics of many greens have devolved to scrambling for any crumbs brushed off the bargaining table and then crying "Victory!"

Not only have these tactics not influenced government, they have failed to send a clear message to the public. In fact, many greens have essentially cut the public out of their operations, expected nothing beyond yearly dues or a token email.

Further examples of missed opportunities abound in each of the various "rights" movements - environmental, animal, human/civil, labor - which have chosen to pursue their own isolated missions rather than confront the common enemy: corporate power and rule. As corporations have gained more power, the environmental movement, especially, has abandoned its original grassroots momentum.

While the climate crisis makes national news, strangely absent from the debate is how logging the world's forests causes one third of human-made carbon emissions. With all the life-sustaining benefits that forests provide, such as air, water and soil, when will we see the headline: "Clearcuts Cause Climate Change"?

Disengaged from the citizenry, shunning other movements and capitulating at every turn, the environmental movement has failed to connect human civilization, a healthy environment and consumer power in the national psyche. The following are just a few of the resulting assaults on forests, our global cooling factories:

- BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revisions: a backroom sweetheart settlement with timber barons to axe old-growth protections from 2.5 million acres of public forests;
- Fish and Wildlife's latest Spotted Owl Extinction Plan;
- Logging under the guise of "fire prevention";
- Forest biomass extraction;
- Bogus "restoration" on public lands, exploiting Latino immigrants.

What we propose is not the whole solution, only a missing part of the solution: being radical *inside* the system.

Now is the time to seize the mounting concern over climate change. Now is the time to add more uncompromising voices truly advocating for the people and the forest. Now is the time to stop just playing defense and start scoring some points. With public opinion overwhelmingly on our side, why are a handful of timber barons calling the shots?

One under-utilized tactic to protect our forests is targeting the pocket-books of the individuals directly responsible for ecosystem destruction: the timber barons. The boycott of Umpqua Bank, or StUmpqua (whose board of directors are the most notorious clearcutters and pesticide sprayers in Oregon), has already cost the bank tens of millions of dollars.

Instead of burning down buildings, why not educate customers of eco-conscious businesses, like Market of Choice, to encourage the company to take its \$100 million account away from Umpqua and do its banking elsewhere? You'd have to burn down *hundreds* of buildings to even come *close* to those numbers!

Some insist that working inside the system can never work as our problems lie at the very root of civilization. A growing number of these individuals truly are removing themselves from the culture of overconsumption.

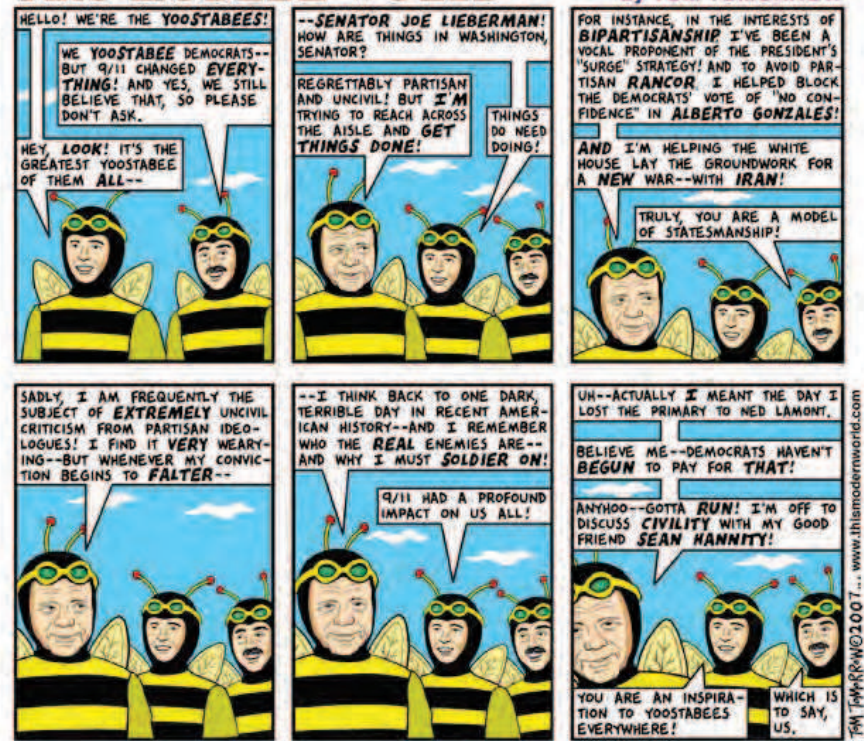
However, while permaculture and bicycling must become commonplace, they alone will not stop the timber beast from clearcutting valley and mountain, poisoning and drying up your drinking water, smothering salmon and exacerbating global warming. We don't have the luxury of looking the other way and pretending Earth-death isn't happening. The only choice is to confront these issues head-on.

Few would deny that we need massive structural change in our government, in our society, in our culture. One approach is to pound our fists on the reinforced walls of the "system" from the outside. But how soon we forget that the most effective way to bring down any "system" has always been to knock out the supports from the inside.

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAX THE PETS

Personally I don't have a problem with euthanasia, but I do have a solution to the overwhelming pet problem. Tax all pet products just the same as liquor, cigarettes and gas. If you don't drive a car, then you don't pay a gas tax. If you have a pet, you pay a pet tax. The only reason we have so many abandoned pets is because of the irresponsibility of pet owners. Rather than lay the burden on those of us who don't want pets, pet owners should have to ante up for this responsibility. Tax all pet products: food, toys, litter boxes and litter, leashes, the pets themselves, all veterinary services and medicine, everything. This would easily raise enough money to take care of the overpopulation created by the very people who are responsible for the problem.

Then fine pet owners a substantial amount when their pets are picked up running loose. This amount would need to be high enough to pay for the personnel needed to pick up the wayward pets, and make the fine an ever increasing amount for each violation. Pet owners who abuse their animals need to visit the slammer, and the fine should be large enough to pay for the entire life of the pet.

Paul Gillespie
Creswell

COUGH IT UP

My grass allergies were so bad the other night that I was up until 2 am sneezing nonstop for five hours, to the point where I thought I had to go to the emergency room. All this despite being on a \$3 a day prescription allergy medicine. In Eugene, we have the highest grass seed pollen count in the world, thanks to Linn County ("Grass Seed Capital of the World") grass seed growers. While health hazards from grass field burning are finally in the public's (watering, bloodshot) eye, why are we not addressing the misery of allergy sufferers that comes from simply growing the grass seed in the first place?

I propose that grass seed growers be held accountable for covering the costs of every allergy sufferer in the Willamette Valley. I,



myself, will be sending copies of my allergy medicine receipts, along with a letter asking for financial reimbursement, to the industry lobby group: Oregon Grass Seed Council, 1193 Royvonne Ave. S., Suite 11, Salem 97302. I encourage all other allergy sufferers to do the same. Come to think of it, with all this recent talk of "sustainability," why are we still wasting water, fossil fuels and topsoil to grow hundreds of thousands of acres of grass seed for ornamental lawns instead of the crops we need to feed ourselves?

Michelle D'Amico
Eugene

YAY SAVAGE LOVE

I just wanted to contribute my support for Dan Savage and his column. I am so delighted that *EW* runs this refreshing and sometimes informative feature. I am a mother of six children and work in the sex education field and feel strongly that open communication about all sexuality should be respected and tolerated. America has the highest teen pregnancy and abortion rates in the industrialized world because here in the U.S. sex is treated in such an unhealthy manner and children are taught to fear their impulses and hide their curiosity. Nations (such as Germany) that have more honest and open exposure to sex have astoundingly lower teen pregnancy rates. Check out great resources such as www.theresnoplacelikehome.com and www.new3rs.info/home.php

Thanks again for continuing to publish my favorite feature in *EW*!

Alex Julian-Swift
Springfield

WALK IN MY SHOES

All my life I've had to bite my tongue when Oct. 12 came around because of the romantic delusions that a certain cross-section of the population has with Christopher Columbus. But the last few years have been very traumatic for me. Between 2002 and 2004 Lewis and Clark was the focus of celebration, despite the fact that event led to the mass murder of native people as well as environmental devastation. This year in Virginia