Audible Directions

We all benefit from the high-tech pedestrian signals

Shocked is putting it mildly, "outraged" and "offended" are words heard around the table at last week's (10/8) City of Eugene Accessibility Committing meeting. These sentiments were prompted by Dan Pagoda's Sept. 27 cartoon about the accessible pedestrian signals in the *Weekly* entitled "So Eug!"

Unbeknownst to many residents of our area, there is an incredible force at work on our behalf — the city's Human Rights Program. Under that heading, the Human Rights Commission, along with its committees: Education & Outreach, Advocate Response Team, and Accessibility, work to make our community more just, equitable, and accessible. For the past two years, Accessible Pedestrian Signals, or APSs, have been on the work plan of the Accessibility Committee. Thanks to the dedication of community members, Human Rights Program staff, a few committed members of the Accessibility Committee, and city of Eugene Public Works staff, we now have APS installed at 32 intersections throughout the city and a plan to yearly equip six to 10 more intersections in the future.

Rather than criticizing the addition of these signals to our community, it seems like we'd be lauding the city for making Eugene an even better place to live, walk, roll and bike.

These APSs are a state-of-the-art technology that assist many of us in more safely maneuvering intersections as pedestrians. Not only do the signals give clear information about when to cross a street, but many also broadcast the name of which street it's safe to cross, as well as a countdown of the time left before the light changes. There are variations of the these signals in communities around the country from Corvallis (where a chirping sound is the only indication that it is safe to cross), to Washington, D.C. (where some of the signals give a series of beeps when it's safe to cross, in combination with a lighted countdown display of the seconds left to cross — useful information, but available only to the sighted).

It is hard to imagine that the *Weekly* would print a racist or homophobic cartoon in this section, but evidently an abilist perspective is still acceptable. The cartoon was offensive in its bumbling representation of the presumably blind or visually impaired individual in the cartoon ("as a person of – um – lack of sight"); additionally, the very community being represented in the cartoon did not have a way to see, read, or know about the cartoon. Blind and visually impaired folks who access the *Weekly* in its electronic form only learned about the cartoon from us sighted folks who saw it in your paper.

The beauty of the APS is not only its lifesaving potential for visually impaired pedestrians, but also, because these devices provide additional safety cues, to the rest of us. For some these devices mean safety and the ability to move more freely and autonomously in the world. From children and those who experience cognitive disabilities, to the distracted and multi-tasking street crosser, we all benefit from their audible directions.

As a member of the Human Rights Commission, it is clear to me that the city of Eugene cares about our safety and comfort. If you believe that an APS (or any other traffic signal, for that matter) isn't working properly or is turned up so loudly that it's more disruptive than helpful, call Public Works Maintenance staff 682-4800 and share your concern. If you know of an intersection where people would benefit from having an APS, call Human Rights Program staff at 682-5177 to make your interest known. If you are curious about the Human Rights Program, you can learn more about the work being done and ways to be involved by visiting the city of Eugene website, (eugene-or.gov) and typing "Human Rights Program" in the search box. Additionally, if you are interested in attending an Accessibility Committee meeting (all of our meetings are open to the public and we'd be glad to have you), we typically meet from 11:30 am to 1 pm on the second Monday of the month at the Atrium, in the Saul Room (99 W 10th Ave., third floor).

I was surprised and disappointed by the publication of Pagoda's insulting cartoon. The *Weekly* has generally been a supporter of accessibility concerns. Rather than criticizing the addition of these signals to our community, it seems like we'd be lauding the city for making Eugene an even better place to live, walk, roll and bike.

Annette Leonard of Eugene writes on behalf of the Accessibility Committee.

BETTER CHOICES

I strongly support revitalizing our downtown. I favor an approach that is fiscally responsible, reflects local values and helps make our downtown unique to Eugene.

Over the past 40 years Eugene's downtown has suffered other attempts at urban renewal. If, instead, the old buildings had been retained and adapted to accommodate local merchants and eateries and if urban renewal money had been spent to help bring high density affordable housing to downtown, we wouldn't be attempting to use the same ill-fated approach that got us into the current mess to try to get us out of it. Yet, once again, we are being told that we can only compete with malls by turning a central part of our downtown into one.

Downtowns in places like Ashland and Corvallis are successful largely because they did not go through urban renewal. Their charming older buildings accommodate humanly scaled storefronts, allowing a variety of distinctive shops, eateries and entertainment venues to take root and flourish. Towns such as these are popular with locals and tourists because they are special places, not because they have the same corporate chain stores and formula restaurants found everywhere else.

We already have three large, prosperous malls in the Eugene area. We only have one downtown. Let's revitalize it by helping to reclaim its local authenticity. This will bring more people and more business to downtown much more effectively and at a much lower cost than the radical and costly approach before us now.

Gavin McComas
Eugene

PRETENTIOUS REVIEW

I must respond to the nature of *your* "Cornucopia of Crap and Gold" review in the latest "visual arts" story (10/18) by Chuck Adams, a mean, arrogant, demented description of the 15th Annual Springfield Mayor's Art Show.

I reviewed and observed from previous ramblings by Adams that he pretentiously pretends to judge whether or not art contains "humanity" or not. He looked at the show but didn't "see" it. Adams claims a lifeless photograph of a dead deer's head has more warmth and humanity than an award winning, beautiful painting of a child drawing dinosaurs. Further, he claims the children's work in the show has more creative energy than the adults'. Not much objectivity or insight for your readers.

Adams is obviously not an artist, falsely stating the Salon des Refusé is "free," for example, and he shows no respect or appreciation for the 252 pieces in the Springfield Mayor's Art Show. We at the Emerald Art Center honor and show all levels of work (emerging artists through professionals) in our gallery, turning 5th and Main in Springfield into "The Artists' Corner." I challenge the readers to see the exhibit for themselves and see whose "Cornucopia of Crap" lacks humanity.

Fan of the show,

Guy Weese
1st Vice President
Emerald Art Center

DOWNTOWN PEOPLE

I'm just curious. How many of you so opposed to revitalizing downtown actually work, live or play there on a regular basis? My husband and I live and play, and someday hope to work in downtown Eugene. We love Eugene. We especially love downtown Eugene. We've lived downtown going on five years now. We shop, play or eat in downtown as much as we possibly can. We love being less than a 5-minute walk from the river and numerous parks. We love being next to world-class restaurants and lovely shops. We love being able to buy organic produce and attend Saturday Market every weekend. We love not having to drive a car, but when we do drive, we love being able to park in the convenient city parking. We love the arts and cultural opportunities. We love being close to government and public services.

We also "love" watching the weeds grow in the pit next to the Centre Court building in the spring and the rainwater fill up the pit where the Sears building used to be in the winter. As we walk by the empty buildings we imagine the condos and apartments above

WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

EDITORIAL **Editor** Ted Taylor
News Editor Alan Pittman **Reporter** Camilla Mortensen
Arts & Music Editor Molly Templeton
Performing & Visual Arts/Copy Editor Suzi Steffen
Calendar Editor Chuck Adams
Contributing Editor Anita Johnson
Contributing Writers Bryan Andersen, Sara Brickner, Jason Blair, Joshua Blanchard, Amanda Burhop, Jes Burns, Brett Campbell, Rachael Carnes, Michael Cockram, David Constantin, John Dooley, Nicole Fancher, Rachel Foster, Phillip Getty, Anna Grace, James Johnston, Zach Klassen, Sarah Mazze, Sharleen Nelson, Mary O'Brien, Aaron Ragan-Fore, Vanessa Salvia, Steven Sawada, Sally Sheklow, Lance Sparks, Eva Sylwester, Adrienne van der Valk
Interns Katie Cornell, Deanna Uutela

ART DEPARTMENT
Art Director/Production Manager Kevin Dougherty
Graphic Artist/Webmaster James Bateman
Graphic Artists Shannon Browning, Barbara Cooper, Todd Cooper
Baby Samara Cooper
Contributing Photographers Kurt Jensen, Paul Neevel

ADVERTISING
National Sales Manager Mark Frisbee
Display Marketing Consultant John Allen, Jennifer Donohue, Rob Weiss
Classified Manager Geneva "the Goddess" Miller
Classified Marketing Consultant/Reception Jayme Fuller**BUSINESS**
Director of Sales and Marketing Bill Shreve
Circulation Manager Jen-Lin Hodgden **Controller** Paula Hoemann
Distributors Bob Becker, Kolia Guinsbourg, Ben Kraker, Susan and David Lawson, Pedalers Express, Quickdraw Tim Risch, Katy Tucker, Jacob Zapata
Printing Signature Graphics

HOW TO REACH US BY E-MAIL:
(letters): editor@eugeneweekly.com
(advertising): ads@eugeneweekly.com
(classifieds): classy@eugeneweekly.com
(personals): personals@eugeneweekly.com
(calendar): cal@eugeneweekly.com
(music/clubs/special shows): music@eugeneweekly.com
(art/openings/galleries): visualarts@eugeneweekly.com
(performance/theater): performance@eugeneweekly.com
(literary arts/readings): books@eugeneweekly.com
(movies/film screenings): movies@eugeneweekly.com
(circulation): distribution@eugeneweekly.com

CITYCLUB OF EUGENE
GODDESS OF GARBAGE
Size Does Matter
Julie Daniel
Director, BRING Recycling
FRIDAY, OCT. 26TH • 11:50 AM
DOWNTOWN ATHLETIC CLUB
$3 admission • Free to City Club Members
485-7433
www.cityclubofeugene.org