

Tip from a Waitress

An admonition to ask better questions

Late last month, a study conducted by the Project on Excellence in Journalism proved what anybody with access to the American press already knows: Running for president is about getting the press to focus on *how* you run for president. The study found that 60 percent of stories were on the political and tactical aspects of the race. Recently, the press got what it had coming, even if it won't make any difference. A waitress in Iowa called the media "nuts" for spending airtime and column inches on whether or not Hillary's campaign left her a tip. "There's kids dying in the war, the price of oil right now – there's better things in this world to be thinking about than who served Hillary Clinton at Maid-Rite and who got a tip." Snap!



Also this month, two of the political machine's most distinguished components appeared to actually agree with this widely held sentiment. Lee Hamilton, the former congressman and co-chair of the 9/11 Commission, and John Bolton, former ambassador for the Bush administration to the U.N., took the stage at Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland for the 25th annual Tom McCall Forum. The liberal, played

'Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror.'

– George Wald

by Hamilton, and the conservative, as rendered by Bolton, agreed on two important points: 1) We should be demanding that candidates for the presidency provide a comprehensive foreign policy agenda before anyone gets elected; and 2) nuclear proliferation should be at the top of the page no matter who ends up in the oval of-

fice. But they didn't agree on what the next president should do about it.

Hamilton held to the wisdom of diplomacy, treaties and surveillance of fissile materials as the way to insure that our kids could plan for a long life, a fat mortgage and the future of *their* children. Bolton told us that the only way to avoid a return to the bejesus fright that was the Cold War is to vote for somebody in 2008 who understands the necessity of pre-emptive war when dealing with nations we're not willing to let into the nuclear club.

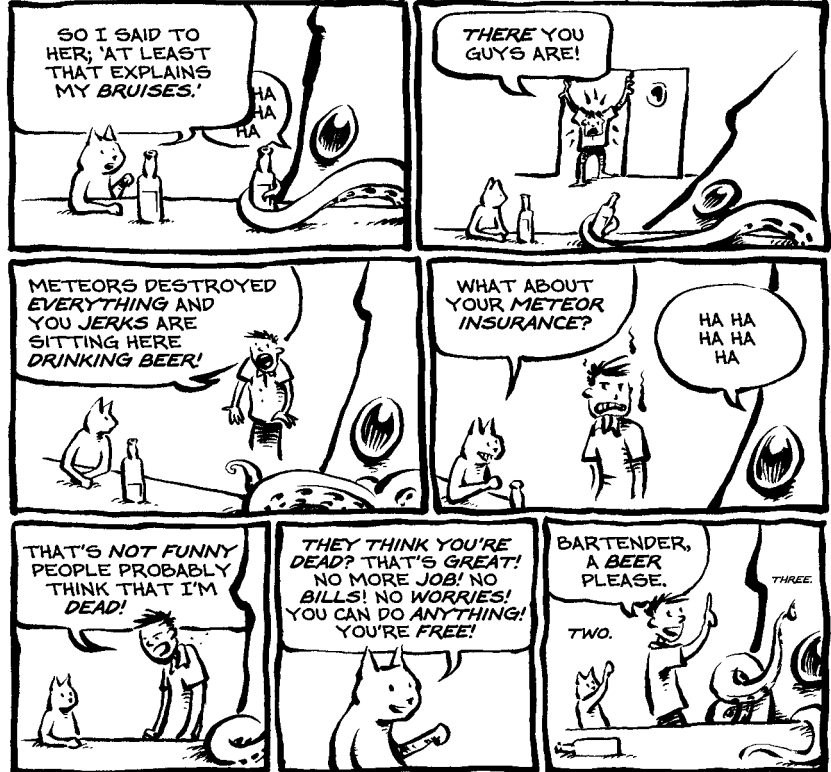
After the debate, I cracked open a copy of journalist and media critic Norman Solomon's new book, *Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America's Warfare State*. Given what I had just heard, a harrowing line jumped out, "I think that what we are up against is a generation that is by no means sure that it has a future." It comes from George Wald, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist. Wald's is a frightening idea because it touches uncomfortable truths. It's easier never to speak the names of global conditions that render parents helpless, and children, not yet fools, hardened and dark. Having just heard radically different visions of what should be done about the insidious expansion of nuclear weapons, I found the line an appropriate caption to either. Given that Wald was speaking in 1969, it's hard not to wonder if the horse race reporting on presidential politics, this practiced ignorance of how the candidates see the future, is the evolution of nearly two generations who accept that they won't have one.

The view from the current generation is clearly rendered by another Wald quote: "Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror." Consider the teetering scales we now know. Bolton understands how much trickier things are nowadays. But the nature of his remarks throughout the debate suggested he was serving not the god of high analysis but the chances of victory for Republican X in the general election (he has, after all, gone back to work for the American Enterprise Institute). Frankly, I'm surprised he hasn't come up with logic that's a little less tortured. He describes a long list of bad actors, both sinister nation states and nonstate evildoers, which on his mind suggests a foreign policy of shoot first and threaten somebody else later. But he ignores that the Cold War's mutually assured destruction was, by comparison, a stable scenario. To be fair, he accepts retaining diplomacy and international agreements on the list of options. But he appears comfortable abandoning these less violent methods when their success is not quick and absolute.

This is why it is so important that we take the message of a waitress from Iowa and demand that the media cover presidential issues more important than the generosity of campaign staffs. It's also why we should take Bolton's advice to demand that a candidate's foreign policy is clearly understood before the primaries, let alone the general election. Because it is altogether possible that if we don't, the next president will be taking Bolton's advice on how to conduct that foreign policy.

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How to Be Happy (11 OF 8) by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NAYSAYERS HAD IT RIGHT

Contrary to Isabell Norman's Nov. 9 letter, defeating Measure 134 actually said "hello" to meaningful downtown development. I just returned from Ft. Collins, Colo., a town close in size to Eugene and home of Colorado State University. I found a vibrant and active downtown filled with locally owned restaurants, bars, boutiques, antique stores, etc. — all thriving without the aid of big-city developers and national chains. Ft. Collins did not require large-scale plans, motivated by huge tax breaks, to create an environment that appeals to their citizens.

Eugene has made numerous mistakes in the past, rushing to transform the downtown area into ... who knows what, to serve who knows what purposes. This city has all the creative resources necessary to develop our own downtown environment, suited to our own needs. What we need is good central coordination and tax incentives for "local" entrepreneurs that will provide support until people are drawn back into the center of the city for food, entertainment, shopping, etc.

That famous line, "If you build it, they will come," holds true here. Yes, it will take time, but slow development will not be as disruptive, will provide more local input and will allow more selective and healthy growth of our city.

Neal Miller
Eugene

GIVE US OUR LANE

On Saturday, Nov. 10, I was innocently biking on Willamette (going south between 24th and 29th) when I was accosted by a woman in a huge black SUV telling me to "get the fuck out of the road." I am so sick of this behavior. Before you verbally attack an innocent cyclist, why don't you educate yourself on the rules that you and your hideous gas-guzzling SUV are breaking.

When there is not a bike lane in Eugene, bikers are allowed a *full lane*. Not half of a

lane. Not a third of a lane. Not a teeny portion all the way to the right of a lane filled with potholes, twigs and rocks. A *full lane*. So give us our lane.

It's your fault I am stubbornly biking, anyway. I am trying to counteract the detrimental effects your vehicle has on my environment.

So how about you "get the fuck" out of your car and start making a difference.

Christelle Munnelly
Eugene

ADS DO THE JOB

It's not the cookies that made me fat, or the steaks that gave me a heart attack — it was my "lifestyle of eating." How idiotic does that sound? About as idiotic as saying it's not the meth that ruins people's teeth, it's the "lifestyle." Chris Fanshier's letter (11/8) concerned me: While on the way to said eateries, was this person walking, driving or biking with their eyes CLOSED? I see a lot of those scarred, decrepit women cowering in dark corners, all over town. Maybe they're easier to ignore in person than in print.

This month, I have been four years clean and sober. And I'll tell you, I don't give a rat's patoot if it was technically the "chemical makeup" of meth or the lifestyle that destroyed my teeth, neurons and part of my soul. I just know it's expensive, time-consuming and frightening trying to heal, to get them back.

If these ads are grossing people out, they're doing their job. Shine some light on those scratches, scabs, dying eyes and dark corners — maybe we can keep more folks out of them.

Thank you for running these ads, and I hope you continue them.

Sarah Stevens
Eugene

UNNATURAL GROWTH

As an ecologist with 15 years experience restoring forestlands, I find Tim Hermach's "one size fits all" views on