

WE WILL KEEP DRIVING

I'd like to thank all of the elected officials on the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) who voted in favor of the Regional Transportation Plan including the expenditure of funds to expand and improve our vital highway system (cover story, 12/6). This is the kind of forward thinking that we should expect of elected officials. The TransPlan aligns with the views of the vast majority of citizens in the Eugene/Springfield area.

Cars are an important part of our lives, and are they aren't going away. The notion that if we do not improve our road system everyone will start taking the bus or towing a Burley cart behind their bike is silly. Over time, what fuels our cars will change (and reduce or eliminate the global warming emissions) but the car is going to be the key component of transportation for a long time to come. Get used to it.

And spare me the whining about "sprawl." All of the road improvements will serve areas within the urban growth boundary. The Gateway area is not sprawl. It is a major economic/health/service center for our urban area. It happened. Get over it.

And as for Alan Pittman complaining about the lack of "public input," please don't make me laugh. The only input that he and the other so-called "progressives" care about is from folks who agree with them. If the public got to vote — the ultimate participation — the TransPlan would pass overwhelmingly. Of course, if what you mean by public input is the usual set of vocal "progressive" activists, then that would be a different matter.

*Randy Kolb
Eugene*

A STEP BACKWARD

The staff of *EW* has had a wonderful opportunity to really *listen* to the voices of Latinos and others who are doing important work in this community around justice for immigrants and people of color. If you had opened your ears and your hearts, you would have realized that your decision to run the "Ask a Mexican!" column — however well intentioned its author claims to be — is a mistake. You would have listened to the people in this community who have been working the longest and hardest to turn back the rising tide of hatred toward immigrant workers and families, particularly Latino immigrants, that is threatening to engulf this nation. You would have trusted their experience when they told you this column is a step backwards, away from the "progressive" ideals you claim to embrace, and you would have dropped it from your paper.

Not only did you close your ears to respected voices, but you devoted two and a half pages (that might be the most space you've ever devoted to Latinos in a single issue!) to tell us, through the words of the author, how misguided we all are. There must be something wrong with us if we don't respond positively to the sophisticated approach to satire. We should just get over it and get used to it.

Well, I'm sorry, I can't get used to it. Every time I see that racist caricature I feel like I'm looking at a Disney cartoon from the 1950s and it's sickening. And it's not just the caricature; there seems to be a heart missing from Gustavo Arellano's answers. An example from the most recent column: A young woman is concerned about how her tattoos will be perceived by her husband's family in

Mexico. When Arellano approvingly responds that she's "sensitive enough toward backward Mexicans" that she doesn't want to offend them, he appears to be the one saying those Mexicans are "backward," since she didn't use that word, or even appear to characterize them as such. A small point perhaps, but an indicator of a point of view which I don't think is helpful in the political climate we're faced with.

In this coming election year, the immigration issue will be the wedge used to divide us. The wedge issues of the past — abortion, law and order, homosexual rights, the war — don't seem to have the "legs" for the fear mongers to run with. But the specter of millions of brown people flooding across our border ("illegal aliens"!) to take our jobs — now, *that's* an issue to get the good citizens on edge! If *EW* is attempting to speak to this concern, that's good — and there are many local voices who could do it — but using "Ask a Mexican!" for that purpose is truly "backward."

*Will Doolittle
Eugene*

MEXICAN-STYLE FEMINISM

Since there seems to be a sharp bifurcation between how a male Latino thinks and how a Latina thinks, I feel that *EW* should add a Latina column to balance the sometimes over-the-top cutting wit of the Arellano Mexican column.

I think Arellano is doing great and needed work for Eugene to make us more informed and more real about the Mexicans among us who are helping us much more than hurting us. But balance demands a Latina column also.

It's feminism Mexican style.

*Bob Saxton
Eugene*

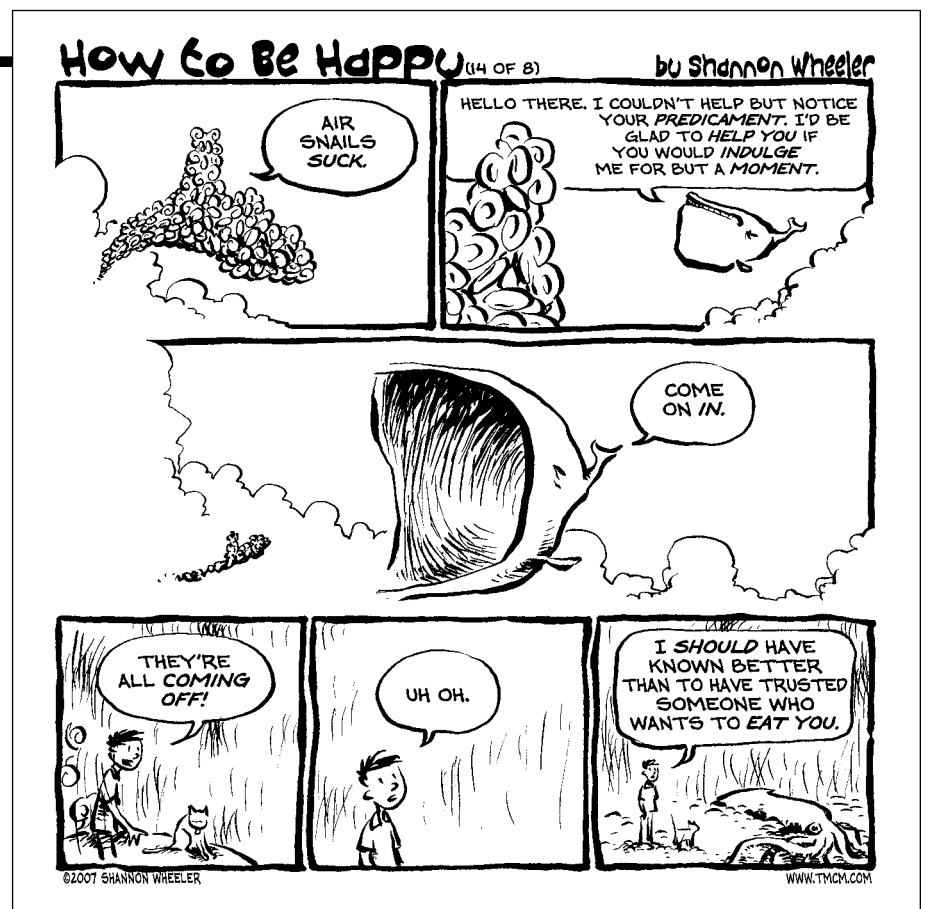
DISMISSIVE ATTITUDE

I am writing to say that your tabloid newspaper has lost a longtime reader.

My mother was born to American-born, Mexican migrant workers in the 1940s. She, her brothers and her parents moved to San Antonio, Texas, and lived on the West Side — an area comparable to East L.A. — in public housing, otherwise known as "The Courts." They were poor. My mother eventually got out of that area and moved to a more affluent, white area. However, she never forgot where she came from — the racism, discrimination and economic destitution that plagued her and her family growing up. Keeping her past in personal perspective enables her to still connect to her people when she visits the West Side to visit family. Additionally, it allows her to do so without putting herself or her race down — as the apologist author of "Ask a Mexican!" does do.

However, given you and your publication's attitude to dismiss readers who, including myself, are disgusted by seeing the continued publication of "Ask a Mexican," I'm sure that losing a reader of Mexican American descent is of little, if any, concern to you. Your dismissal and egging on of Mexicans, those of Latino descent and other individuals who understand where we are coming from — which is blatantly apparent from the number of letters your newspaper continues to print and your refusal to do anything about it — shows that this is true.

It is an incredible disservice to this community that reads *EW* to continue to publish



this column in two ways: First, it is a disservice to me, Mexicans, those of Latino descent and others who understand where we are coming from. It is blatantly obvious that the column does not accurately reflect Mexicans. Had you had any experience around Mexicans — other than reading "Ask a Mexican!" — you would understand this. Secondly, continuing to run the column is a disservice to the community members who have little, if any, direct and regular contact with Mexicans. Perpetuating misrepresentation does not improve the lives of those already being targeted in this country with racism, discrimination and an increasing rate of hate crime — particularly in an area where Mexicans are such a minor population percentage. Again, continuing to run this column shows you don't understand.

It seems that letters to the editor over the past weeks haven't done anything to have this column removed. If targeting your advertisers is the only way your tabloid newspaper will listen and have it removed, so be it.

*Jonathan O. Bowers
Eugene*

JUST CHILL OUT

I must admit to being bemused at all the hate mail for "Ask a Mexican!" I don't get it. "Savage Love" plays on stereotypes as strongly as "Ask a Mexican!" and yet no protests there. I guess we are conditioned to gay stereotypes so it's OK. Anyway, I have learned some things about Latino culture from the column, and it seems like the dialogue it has created is at least healthy. So I hope you keep it on.

Hard to believe that here in Eugene we want to actually censor a voice. Everyone should just chill out and move on.

*Janice Sunseri
Eugene*

POINTLESS DEATH

Since the tragic, needless death of Lucy Lahr, I have read many reports about the mishap and tributes to Lucy. However, no one seems to be talking about how to prevent such deaths. I am reminded to question why we tolerate a transportation system which causes the death of nearly 50,000 people a

year in the U.S. Our system is not only destructive to life and property, but it also excludes the poor, the young, the elderly and the physically or mentally limited.

Would a general strike against our current system (quit driving cars) increase ridership in public transit and increase service to benefit the excluded? What effect would giving the 50 cents a mile we expend on self-transport to collective transport systems have? Activists, get active with transport choices!

*Ed Gunderson
Creswell*

OUTSOURCE IT

With Angel Jones declining to seek the city manager position on a permanent basis, I think the next step for Eugene is fairly obvious. We can save much time and effort by directly contacting human resources at Hynix and asking them to go ahead and hire for the position. With our perpetually uncertain and compromised tax base, this type of outsourcing will only make more and more sense as time goes on.

*Gordon Kenyon
Eugene*

SPORTSPORK FOR NIKE

EW often contains articles referring to itself as "watchdog" journalism, and proudly features news about recent awards. That's great. With that in mind, would you please drop your endless global whining junk science hysteria reporting and take a long, detailed, focused look at the largest, porkiest sports arms race project(s) currently spiraling out of control?

If your writers aren't ready or able, then hire some who are better or more motivated. These days it really seems *EW* stands for "Enablers Weekly" as you ignore annexation by Nike Corporation of land and properties in Eugene.

Meanwhile in Salem, Frohnmayer and Nike are spare-changing the governor and Legislature for a \$200 million loan to prop up this Trojan Horse "smart growth" project.

EW, stop drinking Nike's green and yellow Kool-Aid and get to work.

*Zachary Vishanoff
Eugene*