

of the new hour to “Wal-Mart Saving Time.” I mean, go all the way if you’re gonna go at all.

*Glenn Leonard
Eugene*

PAINFUL REALITY

It is a big job to raise a child these days, even more so as we try to combat the onslaught of hazardous items that come our way. The scandals of lead-tainted toys and toxic baby bottles shocked many of us. Camilla Mortensen’s Feb. 28 cover story, “Small Town, Big Clearcut,” brought another painful reality to light: Our children are exposed to harmful pesticides.

Two billion pounds of pesticides are used each year in the U.S. That includes pesticides used by homeowners; it includes pesticides sprayed around schools and parks; and it includes pesticides sprayed on our food. Pesticides do not stay where they are applied. They find their way into our air, our water and even our bodies.

A recent study of Seattle-area children found that eating organic food protects children from harmful pesticides. Researchers consistently found signs of insecticides in the urine of children who ate conventional food. When those same children switched to a mostly organic diet, the researchers could not detect the presence of the chemicals.

While concerned parents are acting wisely to rid pesticides outside school buildings, the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives (NCAP) to Pesticides is also working to eliminate pesticides inside the school cafeteria. By serving organic food, schools will reduce children’s exposure to pesticides, provide students with more nutritious food and help create a sustainable world for the future. It is time to recognize the hazards of pesticides and do what we can to support alternatives. Eating organic is part of that effort.

*Aimee Code
NCAP, Eugene*

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

In a recent letter to the *R-G* (3/3), Senator Bill Morrisette praises the Springfield practice of having councilors voted on by the whole city, rather than being elected by ward, as is the case in fumbling, incompetent Eugene. None of that pesky minority representation of the far side of I-5. What a great idea!

But he doesn’t go far enough. Why not have Lane Commissioners selected by the entire county? That way we wouldn’t be bothered by all those rural concerns; those voters only make up about a third of the population anyway.

And what about in at the state level? Much better to have senators and representatives for all, not just for local districts. Of course, Morrisette may have a harder time getting elected then, but what the heck? Gotta have that Portland-area majority check on minority input.

Matter of fact, let’s extend this to the whole country! Wouldn’t you love to have

your “local” rep chosen in large part by folks from California, New York and Texas? Call it “getting the nation’s act together.”

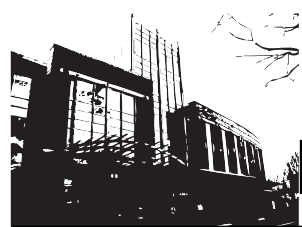
Sarcasm aside, it’s members like Bill Morrisette who have helped push me away from the Democrat Party. But I’m sure the Chamber of Commerce still loves him. That little group always seems to be well-represented.

*Bill Smee
Springfield*

WINTER OLYMPICS

Mark Robinowitz (2/28) is as frustrated as I am with mainstream antiwar groups. We’re in Year Eight of the Bush dictatorship, and American delusionaries are still using minimal effort and useless routines to stop the march of The Empire’s global conquest. Perhaps these people are living in a state of denial over the real reasons behind 9/11. Perhaps they’re fearful of arrest.

Delusionaries are probably stressed out trying to decide which corporate-



DESIGNMATTERS
BY JERRY DIETHELM



Of Time and the Riverfront

Some seasoned ideas on EWEB site planning

Fourteen years ago I pointed out that it made no sense to have an EWEB maintenance yard squatting on the city’s most promising point of connection to its downtown riverfront. I’m talking about the area that extends south from the EWEB headquarters building to the old Art Deco steam plant.

This was a very unwelcome observation at the time. EWEB had just concluded a yearlong master planning process and had concluded that it would be best to consolidate their operations on this riverfront site for the foreseeable future. Exceptions to their hard-won conclusions proved awkward at best.

Ah, the foreseeable future. I guess it depends on who’s doing the foreseeing.

At the time, I was the city’s lead planning and urban design consultant for the Ferry Street Bridge Corridor project, examining the transformative potential of the south and north banks of the river that might accompany a replacement of the 1949 bridge.

I foresaw, for example, that a new Ferry Street Bridge could be designed to touch land a little farther north than the present one does along Club Road, allowing a wide green strip of Alton Baker Park and a new south-facing esplanade to extend beneath the bridge landing and create a new north shore.

A rebuilt and realigned viaduct could create a significantly wider and more accessible EWEB site instead of crowding the old quonset hut storage building as it now does. Careful engineering studies at the time proved, much to my personal disappointment, that it wouldn’t be feasible to eliminate the viaduct altogether and dive beneath the railroad tracks because of the long distance it takes to ramp down and then to get back up. Plus there was the additional problem in this area of the need for constant tunnel dewatering due to the high water table of a river terrace.

I asked EWEB steam plant managers if they foresaw the phasing out of their hogged fuel pile, the small mountain of leftover forest waste that they fed into their furnaces to produce steam. Not in the foreseeable future, they responded. But the university was already phasing their pile out, and it seemed clear – at least to some – that there would likely be another transitional site of opportunity on the EWEB riverfront.

Dorothy Anderson, then an EWEB board member, thought the sawdust mountain site might make an excellent Millrace confluence park and the steam plant a fine museum. We should probably ask our authentic local visionaries to all wear red

socks – or some kind of distinguishing mark – so that there’s a better way to tell when one’s around.

We voted not to replace the old bridge, but in the process learned valuable planning lessons about the potential reuse of the EWEB site whenever we returned to returning to the river.

Time passed. And it still made no sense to have a maintenance yard as our downtown riverfront connection, not even to EWEB, who began to look for a new location.

Anticipating a move, a city-hired California consultant recommended an ambitious plan for mixed-use riverfront development, which included the extension of 6th and 7th Avenues along the railroad corridor. I pointed out the impact of such a wide barrier, over 200 feet, that this would create.

Did it make any sense that in a time when other cities were tearing down their riverfront barriers that we were about to build our own? Did anyone realize that if we ever wanted to get people, cars and perhaps the Millrace under that barrier – two state highway right-of-ways and a 60-foot railroad right-of-way – that it would be like traveling under the length of a Portland city block? I called it the rat-hole to the river. Wisely, the city dropped relocating 7th Avenue, a third of the barrier, from the mix.

Next came the potential location of McKenzie-Willamette-Triad Hospital on the EWEB site. It provided an additional dislodging nudge to EWEB and re-raised the critical issue of site access. It would take \$12.5 million to adequately provide for hospital access on the riverfront. Why? Because of the railroad and the addition of 6th Avenue that blocked the connection.

The transportation consultant’s solution was to extend Patterson north from Broadway and tunnel under the highway and the tracks. We’re quite fortunate the hospital finally jumped site because this wouldn’t have worked either. This misplaced underpass was to resurface in the narrow space in front of the steam plant where there was no room to climb out of a 20’ hole gracefully. I named this scheme, “Return to the river in trenches.”

Today, a new group is being formed to plan the future of the EWEB site. With the benefit of 20-20 hindsight, I’ll offer the following free advice:

1. Don’t underestimate the problem of riverfront access. Access and land use are flip sides of the same coin.
2. Two up and one down. That is, keep the two existing RR crossings, the one at 5th and the one at Hilyard (no matter what UP wants), and add a significant new portal in the middle, east of the new courthouse. Hint: You’ll need the city-owned triangle of land east of the U.S. Courthouse to make this work.
3. Follow the Millrace back to the river.

Jerry Diethelm is a Eugene architect, landscape architect, and planning and urban design consultant.