

# Salad Bar of Rights

We don't get to pick and choose

**R**ick Levin's cover story commentary, "Bang Bang, Shoot Shoot" (12/4), perpetuates a common flaw in anti-gun rhetoric that somehow the Second Amendment is about hunting rights. The

Second Amendment and the Oregon Constitution do not say that there is a "right to keep and bear sporting goods." The primary purpose of these constitutional provisions is to protect citizens from tyranny — not to preserve a right to shoot deer.

Levin neglects to even point out that the Oregon Constitution affords its citizens broader protections than the Second Amendment and specifically covers self-defense.

Levin is also quick to point out that there are more than 30,000 people shot to death each year in this country. He neglects to point out how many of those deaths were in self defense or by criminals against an unarmed victim. Additionally, this statistic does not take into account how many crimes are deterred and deaths prevented by citizens with a firearms.

Furthermore, Levin fails to point out that in the last 100 years, governments have murdered millions more people than were killed by common criminals. More importantly, those government-sponsored murders were preceded by gun control laws making the citizenry easier to control and kill when they were unable to resist.

It is amazing how quickly we forget the gun control laws of the Soviet Union, Nationalist China, Nazi Germany, Communist China and the Khmer Rouge that preceded their killing of more than 60 million people. And that still leaves us to ponder the gun control legislation that preceded the death of the one million Armenians at the hands of Ottoman Turkey, or the indigenous peoples and other political enemies killed at the hands of Guatemala or genocide at the hands of government in Rwanda and Uganda. Our Founding Fathers knew the threat of a government to its people, hence the Second Amendment. History has unfortunately reaffirmed this lesson again and again.

We do not get to pick and choose which constitutionally guaranteed rights we will support like we are at a salad bar of rights. It is disingenuous to complain about the neo-cons stepping on our civil liberties (First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments) — by their dispersing lawful assemblies, illegal wiretaps, deprivation of the right to counsel, torture, etc. — but completely ignore what the Framers found so important of a right that they listed it #2. We should protect all of our civil rights, including the right to keep and bear arms.

Of course, kudos to Levin for visiting the Baron's Den for target practice. However, that one experience does not adequately hide his contempt for firearms and those that use them. His contempt was obvious in demeaningly comparing gun range patrons to the "Wild Bunch after a spume of unregenerate violence" and to "children sparking cherry bombs."

Truth be told, gun ownership isn't all about having hee-hawing good redneck fun. Actually, most firearm owners see target practice as a necessary responsibility. Anecdotes about isolated experiences at the gun range only work to perpetuate a stereotype and do nothing to further the journalistic standards that we expect out of the *EW*.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THANKS, BONNY

For the past five years I have been spending at least half of my waking hours as a part of efforts to create what I believe to be positive change in the world. Sadly, over the years, my trust in the position of the "elected official" at almost every level of government has steadily eroded. I now realize it would be delusional for me to keep pretending that most elected officials value or even consider input from ordinary members of the public. I have come to see the futility of expecting any but a few politicians to actually listen to what members of the public have to say.

But a few shining lights in the gloom have kept me personally from giving up on grassroots advocacy as a way to encourage elected officials to create change. One of these lights has been Councilor Bonny Bettman. Not only has Bettman been a stalwart defender of human rights and environmental justice, but she's been proactive by going on the offense to push forward positive change rather than just fighting off the next bad proposal.

I'm sure I'm speaking for many others in this city when I say: Thanks, Councilor Bettman, for having the heart to honestly listen to what people have to say, for having the guts to speak out against what's wrong, for having the backbone to stand up for what's right and for having the vision to move forward what is necessary.

Josh Schlossberg  
Eugene

### GO FIRE YOURSELVES

Words are nearly inadequate for my feelings at this moment. LTD, my local public transit company, is proposing to eliminate the Breeze, my transportation to UO, LCC (at least part way) and other parts downtown. To be replaced by what? Some overcrowded (undoubtedly), derelict (most likely) tin can that comes every half hour (vs. the current 15 minutes) during the periods when I need it most. Thanks for nothing, LTD! Meanwhile, the "green elephant," aka the EMX, has zero changes. LTD, why not just do what you'd

really like to do and drop everything but EMX service? Fuel prices are collapsing, and you're cutting service. Makes one think maybe you want everyone to go back to using cars. Well, fine, I may just do that, once my school ends in June (or sooner if my lowly expectations for your "replacement" service are realized). You've just lost yourself a faithful customer for life if you implement this "plan," if you can call it that. Not that I think you really care, because if you did, I wouldn't be writing this. Too bad you don't have the cajones to do what is really needed to save money, and that is fire yourselves (management) and bring in people who have the citizens' interests at heart.

Jeff Innis  
Eugene

### HEAT PUMP THOUGHTS

In response to Shannon Wilson ("Bottomless Pockets," letters, 11/26), EWEB wanted very much to install a ground source (earth coupled) heat pump at its new Roosevelt Operation Center currently under construction in west Eugene. This system was studied in detail before the decision was made to install a high efficiency gas-fired condensing boiler. Analysis showed the ground source heat pump system would cost at least \$500,000 more than the condensing boiler. As important, there were also concerns about long-term viability of the local aquifer that raised additional cost and operating questions given the significant volumes of circulation water the heat pump system would require.

The condensing boiler system will provide heating and cooling for the new facility, is expected to operate with an efficiency level between 94 and 98 percent and is an important part of EWEB's overall goal of developing a highly sustainable and energy efficient facility while staying within a firm budget established by the EWEB Board and community. To that end, the Roosevelt project is on track to achieve a Gold certification from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

With respect to carbon impact, EWEB's

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