

In Search of the Beaver Sisters

Flagging Desire, Part II

I've been on a quest to become one of those DayGlo-vested women who stand along the highways directing traffic. Ya gotta have a dream!

I want into the traffic flagging profession. But it's not that easy. Turns out you have to be certified to even apply for work, and you need special training to get certified, and it's nearly impossible to find flagging trainers.

My years of networking for the LGBTQ cause have taught me to keep pushing and never give up. I called the local utility company who directed me to the Oregon Department of Transportation who suggested contacting the community college Road Safety Program who sent me to the offices of the County Workforce.

I showed up early and waited in line. I talked to an intake worker, filled out forms and took a computer assessment of my skills and experience (none very relevant to the traffic control field). Finally, someone handed me a purple sheet of paper listing local flagging trainers.

I dashed out the double glass doors, victorious as a contestant on *American Idol*. I wasn't going to Hollywood, but I was on my way to the next round in becoming a Road Warrior Goddess, aka traffic flagger.

Nobody was there to cheer me on. My domestic partner, for some odd reason, isn't enthusiastic about my intentions to work in speeding traffic with nothing to protect me but a vinyl vest and a hand-held STOP/SLOW sign. Go figure.

Not one to let the voice of reason slow me down, I took my purple paper and set about the task of getting trained and certified. The listed flagger training company I was most interested in – guess why – was Beaver Flagging. No lie. What dyke wouldn't want THAT on her resume?

Oregon is officially "The Beaver State" – only part of my motivation for moving here in the 1970s. Our OSU team is the Beavers – just one of OSU's many recruiting enticements. But I learned from Beaver Flagging's website that it's owned by two women who share a last name. The Beaver sisters. Sounded like lesbian code to me.

I got Beaver Flagging's voicemail and left a message that felt oddly like a "Why I Want to be Miss Universe" speech. No call back. I tried half a dozen times over the next few days, leaving earnest requests explaining my desire to be trained by – and maybe someday work with – the Beaver sisters. No call back. Those must be some busy Beavers!

I kept trying until my call was finally answered. In a weary voice the woman said, "You have the wrong number. There's no Beaver Flagging here." And she added, maybe to soften the letdown, or to ward off a bad joke, "I get these calls all the time."

I hope the Beaver babes haven't gone out of business or moved on to some even higher calling, if there is such a thing. Beaver Flagging – a name I'd be more than proud to wear on my reflective safety vest. If I ever get to wear one.

Stay tuned for the saga of award-winning writer Sally Sheklow's continuing pursuit of happiness.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

the new 400-450 student dormitory may be sited on top of the last large UO parking lot near the 1600 block of Moss Street.

The proposed dorm design includes an underground tunnel to the new Nike arena, which also raises questions about whether this dorm is being designed specifically for athletes like the opulent new "learning center" on Franklin Boulevard. Removal of the last large UO parking lot and encroachment into the Fairmount Neighborhood with the proposed Moss Street dorm site ensures that this project will exacerbate the increasing parking and livability problems in the area.

The Nike arena is already leading to significant impacts on the Fairmount Neighborhood. There are a growing number of poorly planned and unfunded projects in the UO development pipeline like a \$30 million to \$40 million dollar indoor track (site is unknown) and an additional expansion to Autzen Stadium. Careful scrutiny of this ambiguous and little known dorm proposal may lead to a more reasonable UO development agenda. For more information about problematic UO planning policy and related issues, see the videos at www.youtube.com/luddite333

*Zachary Vishanoff
Eugene*

SUSTAIN-A-BULLSHIT

Neal Spangler's critique (10/1) of my letter (9/17) opposing false dichotomies reinforced dualistic frameworks that distract from understanding our predicaments.

The fake debates between alleged opposites — Democrat/Republican, good cop/bad cop — are part of a psychological warfare against the public that ridicules examination of political collapse. Nothing the Republicans have done in recent decades could have happened without the collusion of the national Democratic party. The Democrats refused to impeach either George Bush. They helped cover up political assassinations (JFK, MLK, RFK), the 1980 October Surprise, Iran-Contra, 9/11 and the peak oil motive for invading Iraq. The Democratic Party died in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. See www.oilempire.us/fake-debate.html

The D's have nicer rhetoric than the R's, but neither political party has launched

any meaningful climate initiative, nor will they admit we are at peak oil.

The Clinton/Gore administration managed to shred as many environmental laws as Reagan/Bush, mostly because environmental groups are too partisan to object when "their side" does bad things. Most environmental groups are quiet about Eugfield Springene's billion dollar highway expansion plan, Gov. Kulongoski's \$18 billion highway expansion plan and Obama and DeFazio's \$500 billion transportation bill.

Torrey didn't start any sustainable initiatives, but Mayor Piercy claims "carbon credits" can make the city of Eugene carbon neutral, so there's no need to stop widening highways. It's sustain-a-bullshit.

If you were lost in an unpleasant place, would you want a map of Disneyland or a map that told you where you were?

*Mark Robinowitz
Eugene*

EARN EMPATHY

In reference to Dane Smith's letter, "The Giant Awakens" (9/24): Like Smith, "I took my education seriously. I applied myself seriously. I worked hard for my money, my home," and yet unlike Smith, I don't believe such effort gives me the right to turn my back on those less fortunate.

There's nothing special about hard work. Lots of people without health care work hard eight or more hours a day for minimum wage. When I was a child, my mother occasionally looked at a transient or some other ill-fated person and remarked, "There but for the grace of God go I."

Those are good words to remember and live by. Success is a gift, and at the end of our lives there aren't any pockets in a shroud!

*Don Healey
Eugene*

BLIND SPOTS

A SUV was parked several feet from the curb on the wrong side of the street, a ticketable offense in Oregon. Running to the passenger side door, a boy darted out from behind the car right into the middle of the street, directly into the path of a moving car. Thankfully the driver had time to swerve — just another close call because of someone parking the wrong way.

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