

HOMES IN THE WAY

Regarding Tom Schneider's Viewpoint Dec. 3 supporting the Amazon option for the West Eugene EmX routing:

I agree with Schneider about inviting folks out of their cars to ride the EmX. Peak oil is upon us; greenhouse gases must be addressed, and total vehicle miles traveled need to be reduced. In fact, our household does not own a car or truck; we travel via LTD. We travel so much via LTD that it is apparent to us that getting folks out of their cars does not require an attractive route — Franklin Boulevard isn't much to look at, but the EmX along it is heavily used.

Schneider also omitted a key fact in his idyllic vision of the Amazon routing. As currently designed, the bike path is not just rerouted; it is rerouted through eight single-family homes — one of those homes is ours. The city of Eugene promotes nodal development, encourages people to walk to services and then proposes to raze eight nodally located homes to make the man-made Amazon channel more riparian. How ironic.

We are huge supporters of LTD and the West Eugene EmX project. However, the EmX routing will be a huge economic benefit to the commercial property owners along its route (ref. to the Portland Max system). It makes much more sense to bring that plus to the commercial routes than to gut a residential neighborhood and bulldoze peoples' homes, as the current plan requires. Put the EmX where it belongs: along West 11th where the people need to travel!

Wendy Butler-Boyesen &
Martin G. Boyesen
Eugene

A BETTER ROUTE

Following are some of the reasons for Residents for Responsible Rapid Transit (3RT) support of the 6th and 7th Avenues/7th Place route (locally preferred alternate) for the proposed West Eugene EmX Project with a non-dedicated lane in mixed traffic.

1) This route would require the least amount of property and easement acquisition, thereby costing much less. The federal government does not have a blank check for all 61 miles of the proposed EmX buildout. The 6th and 7th option would easily facilitate a future spur on North Highway 99 and the Barger area, Eugene's fastest growing population center, as well as the airport, which has no bus service. A future link to River Road is also easily connected to 6th and 7th.

2) A non-dedicated lane would be less disruptive to businesses and residences, due to less construction. Some signaled intersections would have the bus stops.

3) In our 3RT survey of residential addresses in the 6th and 7th corridor, there were 197 residential units on 6th and 7th from Olive to Garfield, 274 residential units on cross streets within one block of 6th and 7th and 212 motel units on the aforementioned route.

4) LTD's goal of spurring economic development along BRT routes and Eugene's MUPTE ordinance coincide, as in the recent request for the MUPTE standards to be applied to a proposed one

room apartments with common kitchens and bathrooms project on Madison St. between 5th and 6th Avenues.

5) In a 2003 Whiteaker Community Council survey, the Whiteaker neighborhood has a high ratio of "transportation disadvantaged persons" residing there. This is a federal transportation term defining people who are low income, disabled, seniors, mass transit dependent or too young to drive. A BRT system would benefit them the most!

Pauline Hutson &
Jozef Siekiel-Zdzienicki
Eugene

SQUIRREL STEW

I often wondered what they served at the Road Kill Grill that was west of Drain on Route 38. It took an economic downturn before I tried one critter they may have offered, the western gray squirrel or *Sciurus griseus*, Oregon's largest tree dwelling rodent.

I live in the forested hills of south Eugene where marauding pick-ups and quiet hybrids hammer squirrels all year though it's illegal to hunt with a vehicle in Oregon.

This native is considered a game species, so most assaults are hit and run.

I'm sure Eugene Skinner roasted many of them. They scurry about the Butte foraging for nuts, cones, fruit and fungi. It's said Davy Crockett wouldn't have made it from Tennessee to Texas if it weren't for the squirrel. So when one fell in the morning rush, I grabbed it.

I asked the butcher at Long's Meat Market if he sold them. He said no and was surprised to hear they fetch a good price in England. Find a recent casualty and bone up on cleaning. The best recipes are from the South. A butcher from the Market of Choice said they're big as jackrabbits down there and wished me the best.

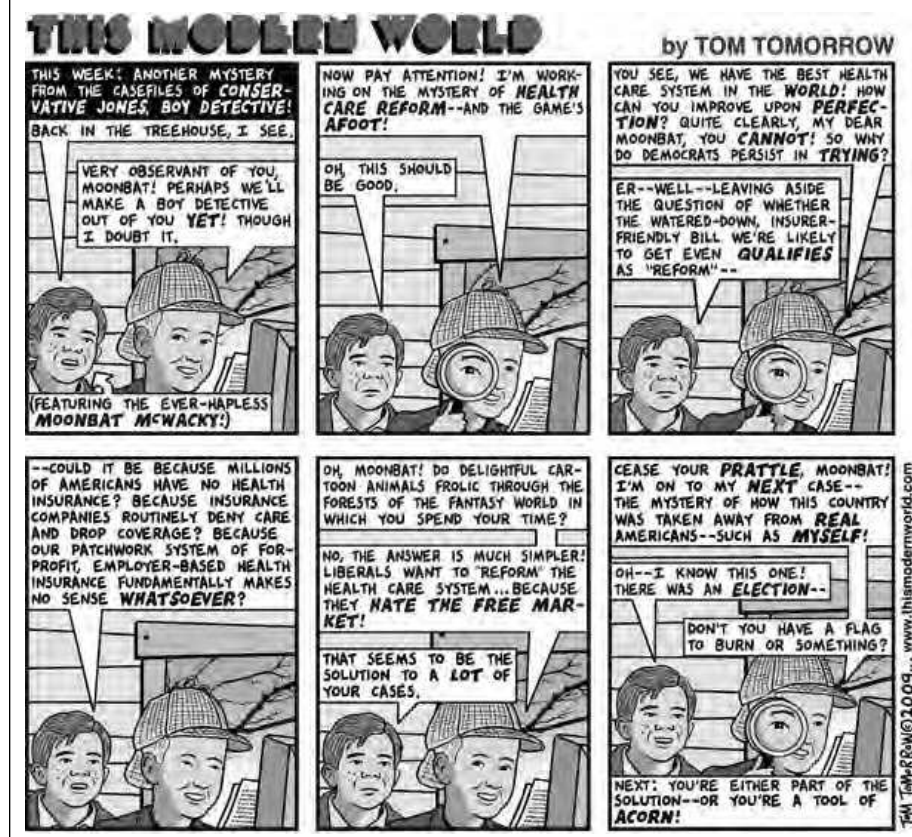
Ryan Twohey, an athlete and Eagle Scout from the UO, joined me for dinner. I couldn't find a local willing to take a bite. I suggest you stew it instead of roast it, until you're more familiar with the gamy taste.

Chris Piche-Cvitkovic
Eugene

EWEB'S NARROW VIEW

Thanks, EW, for "What's All The Dam Fuss?" addressing efforts to restore the Willamette River flow regime. Mimicking flooding is a critical half of restoring aquatic systems, but must include reestablishing the physical form of complex floodplains. The Ecosystem Research Consortium found 70 to 80 percent of islands and side channels, 40 percent of alcoves and 20 percent of primary channels have been eliminated. EWEB's riverfront illustrates these riverine losses to development.

A 1910 topographical map shows the Willamette bankline at EWEB gradually rose 15 feet across 500 feet, whereas the current bankline is abrupt with fill armored by rip-rap revetment. The historical map shows the Millrace top of banks averaged 400 feet wide through the EWEB site with an alcove of surface water 300 feet wide at the river confluence, but now drains through a culvert pipe in-fill. An 1850 GLO survey of presettlement vegetation



confirms the 27 acre property was covered by riparian bottomland forest.

EWEB is not meeting its vision statement for redevelopment of this public property to link "our community's social, ecological, economic and sustainable concerns" or the city's downtown plan to "provide appropriate setbacks where environmental or habitat issues are critical." The planning team is limited to an architecture firm excelling in new urbanist design, supported by a Community Advisory Team representing real estate and business interests, yet the city and EWEB voice the importance of this site is more than its market value. A multidisciplinary team is missing, including professionals in ecological restoration with natural resource management experience.

This letter does not seek to prevent development, rather to fully integrate aquatic restoration with a thriving new civic, commercial and residential district. Not only is this site EWEB's real estate investment, but a public property of very real and significant ecological impacts perpetuated into the future by the recently proposed options for redevelopment.

Justin Simms
Eugene

CHECK HIS FACTS

I felt a strange resonance while reading the Weisman opinion piece (12/3) attacking solar electric panels. I had seen an almost identical article in *Forbes*. I'm not claiming that Weisman is part of a conservative conspiracy bent on attacking anything that sounds environmentally friendly like solar electric. I'm just saying check his numbers with the actual data for solar energy availability for Eugene at the UO solar radiation monitoring lab website.

His other alarmist claims sounded like Sens. Inhofe's and Coburn's claims that global warming is really a vast scientific conspiracy perpetrated on the U.S. by subversive foreign agents. He also says that solar electric is only "toys for the affluent." I say, great! Let the rich pay to subsidize solar development so it becomes

cheap for the rest of us. Overall — on the "mythbuster" scale I would say Weisman's opinion piece is "implausible."

Mark Barbour
Eugene

SOLAR NOT TRIVIAL

I was struck by the factual errors in Warren Weisman's Viewpoint "Facing the Facts" on photovoltaic panels Dec. 3. Regarding his claim that they can only produce energy for trivial tasks, let's do the math. If I can get 38 watts per square foot of solar panel in Tucson or 15 watts in London (perhaps 20 in Eugene) and I can cover a 10 x 40 foot area on my rooftop with a panel, that adds up to 8 kW in Eugene, twice as much in Tucson, which is not a trivial amount.

That's enough to run an air conditioner or heater, cook dinner and run a refrigerator, probably all of my electrical demands. When I'm not using the power, it can be pumped back into the power grid to help my neighbors without suffering the loss of half of the power between the generators and our home. Perhaps I can get more energy out of the roof by a solar hot water heater, but we only need so much hot water.

The article was completely mistaken in claiming that the low voltage from the arrays is not sufficient to drive electric motors. Choosing the DC voltage is all a matter of how the individual cells are connected. Today it is also easy to convert the power to a different voltage or to invert it to AC at high efficiency. This energy will go even further if we have efficient homes, appliances and electric cars, all of which I heartily support.

The author then goes on to mention the risk of toxic releases, citing Chinese solar panel manufacturers. But the same risk happens no matter what they manufacture. If they produce metal there is coal; if it is painted or plated there can be heavy metals. Solar cells manufacture uses exotic and toxic substances, but so does any other semiconductor. It comes down to the business, buyer and host country exercising stewardship for their actions.