

**BUS PROGRAM CUT**

I read with dismay that Oregon lawmakers recently decided to stop funding LTD's Student Transit Bus Program. Since 2005, this program has encouraged middle and high school students in the Eugene-Springfield area to take advantage of mass transit by providing them with free bus passes. According to Lisa Van Winkle, director of the program, student boardings on LTD have increased 42 percent over the past four years. With a cost of only \$1.2 million per year, this program would seem to be a bargain compared to many other energy conservation programs.

At a time when energy conservation would seem at least as important as development of alternative fuels, why did the state legislature decide to eliminate this highly successful program? The funding for the Student Transit Bus Program came from the Oregon Department of Energy's Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC). For those of you who have been paying attention to the Seneca biomass debate, the BETC should ring a bell. Seneca used these tax credits to cover half of the \$20 million cost of the biomass facility. With additional federal stimulus funds and a guarantee from EWEB to purchase energy from the facility, Aaron Jones and company will be doing quite well for themselves. Our schoolchildren? Not so much.

*Michael L. Quillin  
Eugene*

**CREATIVE SOLUTION?**

The state recently informed LTD they were cutting the \$1.1 million grant that funded the student transit pass program. LTD's comment was that they have no hopes of finding a new funding source. This is typical of their new think-within-the-box attitude. "There's nothing right now to suggest that there's new funding available," and "It's just a tough economic time," an LTD spokesperson said.

Before LTD became obsessed with EmX they pioneered this program. Creative thinking plus creative financing produced a successful program.

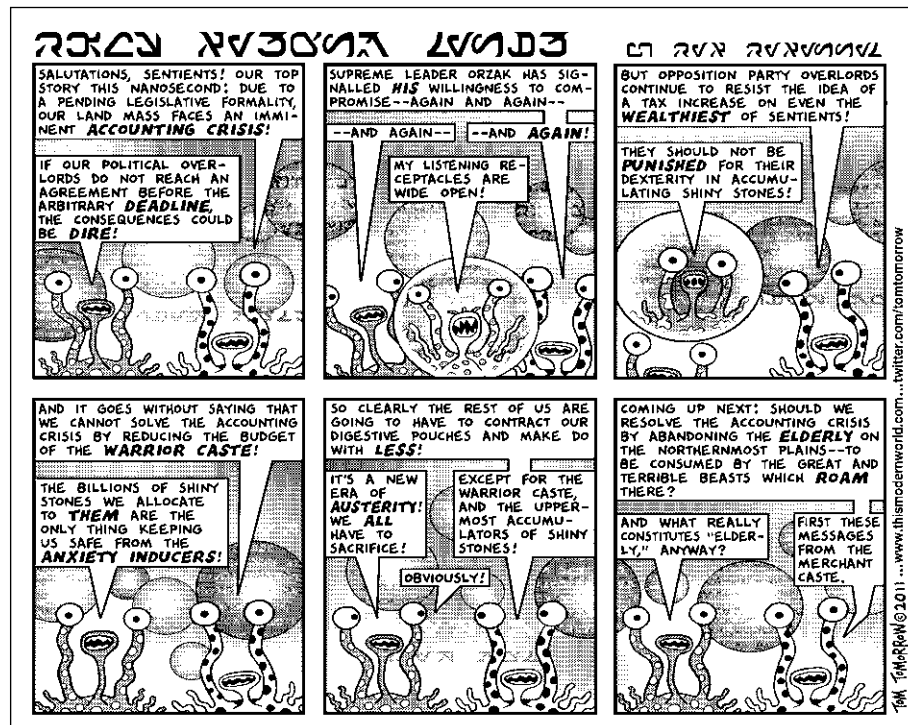
The ability of our children to conveniently get to school is a vital part of their getting an education. It appears that a majority of the 7000 daily student boardings were on regularly scheduled bus routes, and that on very rare occasions, busses were added to meet additional anticipated capacity requirements.

I suggest LTD continue the program, or a modified version, using the existing scheduled routes. Let's see what happens. We know there are empty seats on the buses.

LTD's mission is to enhance the community with responsive progressive transportation leadership.

Shame on you, LTD! You continue to fight for the unsustainable, oversized, unnecessary, overpriced EmX, but you roll over for the students.

*Robert Rubin  
Waldport*



**PERCEPTIVE REVIEW**

I taught college and university drama courses for more than 40 years and have attended countless plays of all kinds from grade school to Broadway productions. I read local and national drama reviews frequently. I found Rick Levin's review (6/16) of the Cottage Theatre's production of *The Boys Next Door* straightforward, clear, perceptive, insightful and thought-provoking.

Reviews of local drama offerings usually tend, understandably so, to be overly generous and uncritical in their assessments. Levin's sharp-edged review presents an important, challenging, uncomfortable point for us to consider: this culture's invalid use of oversimplified, sentimentalized, stereotyped myths about the developmentally impaired or mentally ill that present them as guides to wisdom and salvation.

No doubt Levin had an attitude and his knickers were in a bit of a twist, having suffered through the rude, disruptive brayings of the middle-aged women sitting behind him. At any rate thank you for printing this review. To me it was drama reviewing at its best.

*Jerome Garger  
Yachats*

**MR. CITY ATTORNEY**

Behave does not mean get out of town, Mr. City Attorney!

There are times in heart and mind when something desperately needs to be said, yet we realize that only we know what that is, how to say it, or if we should, knowing if we don't, nobody else will.

The result is that others will continue to suffer needlessly, because no one challenges the devil's advocate, or his absurd, false accusations, whose use of Prohibited Camping Ordinance 4.815 violates the equal protection clause of the constitutions of the state of Oregon and the U.S.

When few legal options exist, campers are forced to choose the lesser evil as willful violators, and they are damned well justified in defending their freedom of travel, personal privacy and right to sleep! Choice of evils was already used to defend a camper in court; the city did in

fact dismiss charges and set a precedent against itself.

Attorney Glenn Klein: Citizens of Eugene — those stripped of citizenship rights, who are at risk of being stripped of all personal belongings — deserve to know in exact detail how they are expected to behave.

Before your homies make fools of themselves and hurt more innocent homeless homies as willful violators having no compelling state interest, the unconstitutional portions of the ordinance should be severed — not standing in court — because to the best of my knowledge, the amendment was illegally inserted in violation of law, which requires a 10-day public comment period that the citizens of Eugene were denied. Now who is the willful violator?

*Danielle R. Smith  
Eugene*

**SWING IS OUT**

The Eugene Swing Club hosts a weekly dance each Monday night that provides great times, clean fun, effective exercise, educational challenges that are available to all ages, affordability, and availability to mass transit in a drug-free and safe environment on campus! What is not to applaud? Yet the UO is eliminating this and all other community use of Agate Hall!

The Swing Dance Club has been using Agate Hall for 15 years. We pay rent annually and have an attendance of approximately 50 to 75 people weekly, bringing people from all over Lane County, Corvallis and Portland to dance West Coast Swing! We teach beginning dance to intermediate level. Each year our members travel the competition circuit in the U.S. to compete and bring home championships. They bring honor to our local dance community and to the UO, as most learned while being students.

The UO has arbitrarily decided that they do not want to rent out Agate Hall to any community groups with the exception of ROTC, the Law School and the School of Journalism. Agate Hall has been used by the Native Plant Society, the Russian Theater group, Lindy Hop and East Coast

Swing groups, and numerous others since being acquired by the UO from District 4J.

The ROTC is a priority of the president of the UO; it is a high priority according to letters sent to club members! Meeting the demand they have for space is more important than allowing the community to continue to use one of the few dance floors available to community members.

Does the UO really need this space each Monday night? Does the UO really need to alienate current students, alumni and community members in this way?

It seems to me the UO does very little community service that is not money-making. Come on Eugene, show some outrage!

Join us on Facebook at Eugene Swing Dance Club; write to the UO president with us.

*Linda Shaver  
Springfield*

**AGAINST THE WALL**

John Davis (Viewpoint, 7/7) writes well of the relationship between the public and private sectors. I have spent the last four years on the board of commissioners of a local utility district, most recently as vice chair. There's nothing like such service to give one an appreciation for all our public employees do.

We take for granted that when we turn on our faucets clean water will flow and when we flip a switch the lights will go on. But I believe few understand or fully appreciate the work and dedication of those who make these conveniences possible. Our district's public employees have made us feel very privileged to have them as part of our team.

That's why it has been so gut-wrenching trying to deal with financial realities, which Davis partly nailed down: "Union membership has steadily declined in the private sector, along with private sector wages, benefits and security." I will add to that the disastrous free trade agreements, gross malfeasance by the financial sector and those charged with its oversight, crushing regulations, a totally irresponsible, inept and bought-off Congress and other factors that have body slammed the U.S. private sector, especially the working class.

All of these factors have cost millions of private sector jobs — jobs that aren't coming back anytime soon if at all. The result is that the ability of the private sector to fund the public sector has deteriorated badly and is likely to continue on a downward spiral.

The Left wants to "tax the rich" (more) to fix this problem, but with tax code loopholes big enough to sail a supertanker through, how effective would that be?

I wish we could continue giving COLAs, full or nearly full medical coverage, sick leaves and other benefits that are increasingly rare in the private sector. But we're up against a wall, as are the boards of most small utilities. Unfortunately, I don't see a light at the end of this tunnel.

*Jerry Ritter  
Springfield*