



DISGUST VS. LOVE

In response to Julie Bonaduce (letters, 8/18) who has lived here a month and is disappointed in the Whit: Coming to live in the Whiteaker and complaining about the free spirits here is like going to a nudist colony and complaining about naked people. The Whiteaker Block Party was just that, a party. And that's what people do at events like that. Would you move across from a stadium and complain about the traffic, parking and bright lights?

We are artists, and we are not from L.A., we're from Tennessee, and we left there because of all the uptight folks. The Whit is like the Island of Misfit Toys — if you don't like it, fine, there are plenty of other places for "nice" folks like you to go, but for the

rest of us, it is one place where we can belong (why shouldn't we be able to have that?). Here we take the good with the bad, and some of us even believe in treating "junkies and alcoholics" with love instead of disgust.

A. W. Bradley
Eugene

CRUEL INDUSTRY

The warm and fuzzy "Milky Way" cover story Aug. 18 ignored the deepest, darkest secrets of milk production. Whether raised organically or not, all "dairy cows" must give birth in order to produce milk, so are artificially impregnated every year while still lactating from their previous birthing session. This is physically taxing on their bodies, and there is a huge emotional toll.

Most calves are torn away from their mothers shortly after birth, and the milk meant for them is instead stolen for human consumption. It is a pitiful scene as mothers and calves — who long to bond with each other — are forcibly separated. Male calves, considered economically "useless" to the dairy industry, are typically raised for veal and killed at approximately four months of age, or confined to feedlots and slaughtered for "beef" at about 14 months. Some are slaughtered at only a few days old, becoming "bob veal."

The female calves are either killed for meat, or destined to replace the worn-out cows no longer worth keeping alive economically after ceasing milk production following endless cycles of impregnation, giving birth and relentless milkings. The slaughtered bodies of these "spent" cows are typically churned into lower grade forms of meat such as hamburger and processed meats.

The bodily fluids of cows are designed to nourish their own babies, not human beings. With so many tasty, healthy alternative non-animal-derived milk products on the market, there is no need or excuse to support the cruelty inherent within the dairy industry.

Barb Lomow
Eugene

THE OTHER TSA

I've spent the past year or two quietly advocating food, water, human and environmental rights in my city, state and country — but soon I'll take my activism to the next level.

Next week, I will join, risking arrest, with more than 2,000 people at the White House in a massive act of civil

disobedience, dubbed the Tar Sands Action, opposing the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline that'll flow from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. TSA is aimed at President Obama, who has the final say on the pipeline's approval.

Canada's mining operation has already destroyed large swaths of boreal forest, destroyed local ecosystems and poisoned community waterways; additionally, the full exploitation of this difficult-to-extract oil source would be "essentially game over for the climate," says renowned NASA climatologist Jim Hansen. A "leak" in the pipeline would spill up to 6.9 million gallons of crude oil into the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, as well as the surrounding water tables.

Environmental author and activist Bill McKibben — who's leading the charge, by the way — says TSA "will be the largest collective act of civil disobedience in the history of the climate movement." I'm proud to be joining him, and thousands of other concerned citizens, in this action — and I hope you will follow our journey and spread the word. For though not everyone can travel to D.C., everyone can play a part, however small or large, in protecting our environment and all who inhabit it.

Monica Christoffels
Eugene

ANIMAL-FREE CIRCUSES

In June 2011, British lawmakers from all the major parties in Britain voted unanimously for a complete ban on the use of wild animals in circuses. Peru and Bolivia have also ended the abusive practice. Entire countries are banning the use of circus animals, yet Eugene will

viewpoint BY BILL TANNER

The Untold Story

EPUD's record of exceptional service



Readers of *Eugene Weekly* have every right to shake their heads at the contentious issues reported by Nils Holst (8/11 and 8/18) regarding the Emerald People's Utility District (EPUD) Board of Directors, the general manager and unfounded allegations made by disgruntled former employees. I

found his article incomplete however, as it omitted any recognition of the exceptional work being done by current EPUD employees on behalf of EPUD's customer-owners.

While I don't have the room to address every accusation leveled against the utility, I can relate that amidst the challenges facing the board and general manager, EPUD's hard-working employees continue to earn high marks, and continue to improve quality and reliability of service to customers.

In a 2011 Customer Satisfaction survey, 93 percent of customer-owners rate EPUD's overall performance as good or excellent. In 2011, average EPUD residential rates were 22.4 percent lower than those of Pacific Power; 2010 yields at EPUD-operated Short Mountain Methane Power Plant were 23 percent higher than 2009 and are on track to beat that in 2011; Customer Service now answers 80

percent of all calls within 30 seconds. EPUD awarded \$55,000 in Energy Assistance funds in 2011 to help low-income customers.

In 2010, the Operations Department improved 2,000 span of line; EPUD clears all 1,920 miles of line in the district every three years with in-house tree crews; EPUD substations are now protected by anti-theft fencing and all substations have redundant feeds for reliability. We have also added loop feeds between substations for additional back-up during outages. This has all happened within the past 12 years.

It's also important to note that through all the various conflicts, we members of the board share the unwavering commitment to service by performing our roles as responsible fiscal managers. In the past 10 years, EPUD has increased available cash by \$4.7 million and decreased long-term debt by \$12.4 million. EPUD's green power program ranks consistently as one of the most affordable in the nation and our energy conservation programs have helped customers conserve more than 50 million kilowatt hours since 1985.

These are just a few examples of the good things EPUD employees and the board do every day to serve the district. In the mire of "he said, she said" and newspaper reporting, it's easy for readers, customer-owners, and the public to lose site of what the entire EPUD organization does, and how well it does it.

That's not to say there is no room for improvement. Relationships are key. As a group, the board has

worked with various consultants to help bridge the communications issues between all parties. I know I speak for the entire board when I say we will continue to work hard to cooperate in the best interest of our customer-owners.

Since EPUD was founded 28 years ago, many wonderful people have come to work for the utility. Our average length of current employee tenure is 14 years of service. Many of the employees who have been with the district since the beginning have retired or will soon retire.

In regard to the allegations of low employee morale and toxic work environment, I simply do not see that. Employee survey results are mostly positive with some areas for improvement. While it's impossible to make everyone happy, EPUD makes every effort to support its team in support of our customer-owners.

As with any business, employees retire, move on to other jobs, or are terminated for a variety of reasons as a last resort. While we cannot discuss why one individual has left employment with the district, it is important to know that during the current general manager's tenure, EPUD has never been sued for wrongful termination or been accused of violating hiring policies set by the board of directors.

I hope this "other" snapshot of EPUD provides some balance to *EW's* and other media stories about controversies in the district. Day-to-day, EPUD employees and board members are successfully working together to fulfill our mission to provide affordable power to our customer-owners. That, in and of itself, should have *EW* readers and others nodding their heads as well.

Bill Tanner has served on the EPUD board for the past 12 years, representing Subdistrict 3.