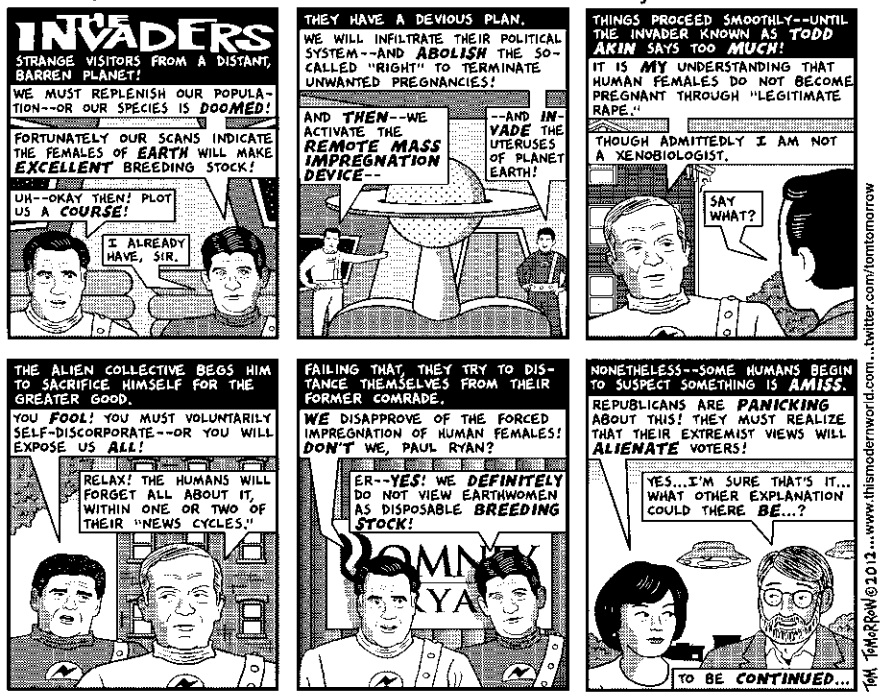


THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



THE CARETAKERS

Several Occupy Eugene committees are collaborating on caretaking an empty downtown house which is involved in foreclosure. We have been at 1191 Lawrence for three weeks now, with the cooperation and support of the neighbors and the owner, who lives out of state.

We learned that the owner was misled by Bank of America, who told her they were about to take possession of her house after refusing to work with her on a loan modification or other options for resolving the situation. She handed in her keys in 2009 and the house still stands empty today. It had become a public safety and health hazard before the present Occupation hauled off the garbage and posted a 24/7 watch.

Here's a shout out to sisters and brothers who support our work for economic fairness and housing as a human right. We're painting the fence down at 1191 Lawrence on Labor Day Monday, Sept. 3, starting around 10 am. Come on down and paint yourself a picket or two, maybe meet the neighbors. You can also visit us during the First Friday Art Walk for an exhibit of Art of the Occupation on Sept. 7.

Fergus Mclean
Occupy Housing-Foreclosure Action
Committee

LEARN FROM CORVALLIS

Eugene is still struggling to re-energize our downtown, although there have been some positive improvements in recent months. Perhaps our city leaders should have a discussion with their counterparts in Corvallis.

I visited Corvallis recently and was amazed at how vibrant its downtown core is: plenty of independent shops and restaurants that appeared to be doing well, tons of free street parking and a bustling farmers market that nonetheless didn't feel crowded and overwhelming (as ours often does). They shut down the entire street for it, rather than forcing it onto narrower sidewalks. I don't know what they're doing (other than prioritizing small businesses and the Saturday Market), but they're doing something right!

Maybe we could learn from their success and apply it to our own city. A good start would be shutting down two blocks of 8th Avenue on Saturdays to car traffic so our wonderful market can expand and be a more pleasant experience for shoppers. And perhaps instead of spending so much energy trying to rid ourselves of "undesirables" downtown, we could focus on making it a more appealing and inviting place for everyone to relax, shop, eat, play and enjoy.

Kate Winter
Eugene

SOURCES WERE WRONG

EW inaccurately wrote on Aug. 16 [Slant] that Juan Carlos Valle [reportedly] resigned as chair of the Police Commission because members were dissatisfied with his leadership. I am a member of the commission and that was not the case. Juan Carlos is an important and active member of the Police Commission. He was an effective committee leader and the commission voted him to be its chairperson. Two dissatisfied "credible sources" were wrong if they made statements that Juan Carlos would be voted out of leadership.

Jesse Lohrke
Eugene

INTEGRITY & HONOR

I was surprised to read the piece in the Aug. 16 issue of the Weekly regarding a reported move to force out Juan Carlos Valle as chair of the Police Commission. I work with Juan Carlos and he was an effective, dedicated and energetic chair who has served the city and Police Commission with integrity and honor. He has a full time job, a family, serves on a nonprofit board, volunteers as a Rotarian and at other venues, and is running for a seat on the City Council — he is a busy guy! I look forward to continuing to serve with him on the Police Commission.

Bob Walker
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Police Commission is made up of 12 members nominated by the mayor and appointed by the City Council.

A NEW PLOY

On Aug. 1, we attended the public hearing for a permit application that would allow 47 housing lots to be developed in Eugene's Amazon headwaters (end of West Amazon and Martin). This is the fourth time the owners of this property have proposed building in this fragile, natural area. All past applications were denied. Now, a revised strategy presents the project under new, locally untested criteria for "needed housing."

Oregon's statewide planning Goals and Guidelines say that "needed housing" plans must consider the carrying capacity of land, air and water resources; should not exceed that capacity; and must consider environmental consequences and "the optimal use of existing urban land."

The headwaters area is popular with

hikers and runners for natural beauty, great trails and unique geology which shields out urban noise. Trees and vegetation stem the flow of water downstream. Slopes are steep — in places exceeding established limits for new building. Neighbors have testified that drainage is already a huge problem for this area.

From our perspective, "optimal uses" of this urban land are for truly needed soil stability, water quality, safe drainage, recreation and wildlife.

Lots for housing can be developed on land that is not so unique and important to the livability of our city. "Needed housing" is an inappropriate pretext for developing this ecologically sensitive watershed that has been recommended for protected status by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Elaine Weiss,
Emily Fox & Lora Byxbe
Eugene

MENDING FENCES?

Regarding "County Funds Killing Coyotes and Bears" in News Briefs Aug. 9: The fences mentioned at the Rattlesnake dump are repeatedly destroyed by another kind of predator, not bears but desperate meth-users stealing metal. Camilla Mortensen's article indicates that the county budget for wildlife control is being thrown away at Rattlesnake and other dump sites, while in reality most of the money is spent at Short Mountain keeping birds out of airplane engines. Our compostable food waste is mixed with recyclable materials and turned into the disaster we call landfills, attracting hungry wildlife. Meth-using fence cutters are victims of failed drug policies and a lack of social services.

The humane professionals in Wildlife Services should not be characterized as "against wildlife" — they are dealing with a situation that we all create. The examples from California cited in the article (use of cyanide, etc.) have nothing to do with my experience of what is happening in Lane County.

I answered Mortensen's question: "What sort of predator problems do people in Lane County have?" Our sheep, though well-fenced-in and in an area that has been safe, have been attacked and killed by coyotes. But that was the wrong question. The implication in her article is that Lane County funds the killing of predators for livestock producers, something that doesn't happen here, for small farmers like us anyway.

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