

CRIMINALIZING SURVIVAL

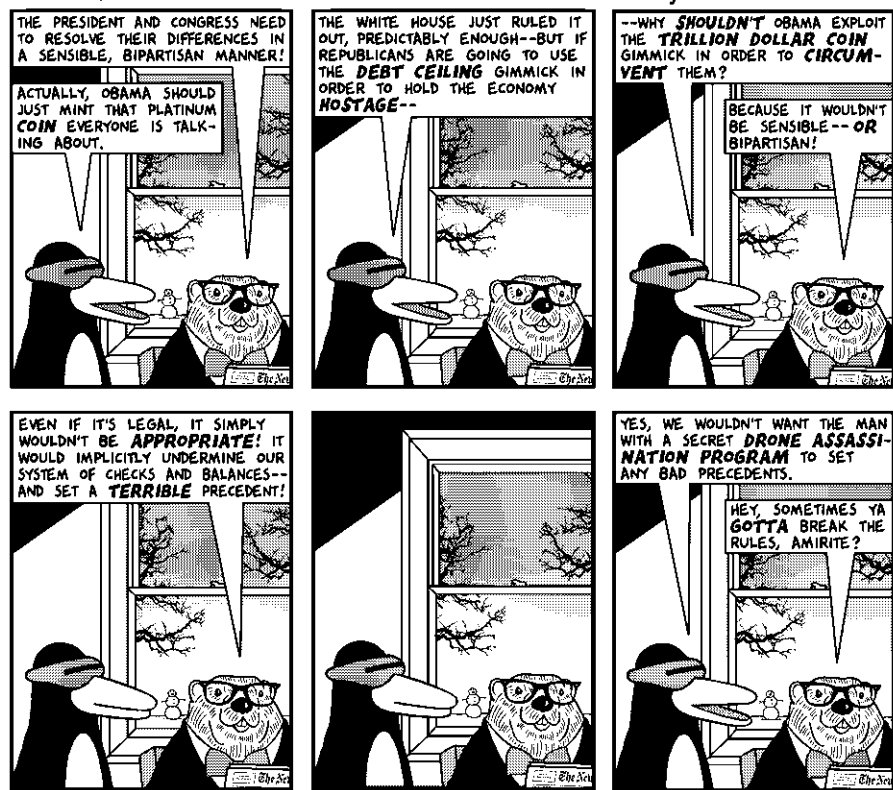
As I write this I am looking at a ticket a friend, who happens to be homeless, received for using a heating vent in one of our many alleys here to warm his hands. His charge? Criminal trespass 2, which carries a \$280 fine. It appears that in the minds of the EPD, homeless people who have died from exposure are much preferable to the sight of one warming his hands in an alley.

My question to the EPD, Chief Kerns and our ineffective City Council would be this: When did it become a crime to survive, and when does the city end its war against the homeless? As a city who feels appearance is more important than human necessity, and prefers the homeless go hide away from the sight of “normal” citizens, Eugene has shown itself to be a city of vanishing moral and ethical reasoning and should cast off all pretense of being concerned with human rights, dignity and sense of humanity.

It's time the city and its leaders wake up to the fact that the homeless are not going away. They will not suddenly vanish into thin air. Homelessness will persist and perhaps even worsen. Avoidance of the issue is not the solution. It is time that *real* effort gets put into dealing with the core issues: mental illness, addiction, an economy only seen as good by the rich, and most of all a lack of concern for other human beings. A system of assistance that also stresses accountability is possible and is a must if we are ever going to begin to correct the situations that create the homeless.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Until then the EPD will continue to punish and ticket those who are doing nothing more than trying to survive. Shame on you Chief Kerns, shame on you City Council and shame on all of you who would demonize and cast out the homeless. You have all made calling Eugene “a human rights city” a laughable matter.

Eugene Wanderer
(Jeremy Lawrence)
Eugene

TRACY AND TRAVIS

I am writing this letter to tell people about another homeless person's death. I met Tracy at the Egan Warming Center with her Labrador puppy Travis. Through the course of that season I learned some things about her. I learned that at one time she owned a German shepherd and one day while walking by the river some people startled her and the dog bit someone. The police took the dog, and she was unable to do what they asked to get the dog back, and

it was deemed dangerous and killed.

She was scared that the same thing might happen to Travis because he was a puppy and had puppy traits like jumping up and nipping people. I offered to help her train Travis and we spent five or six sessions together trying different collars and techniques. She was dedicated to her dog and she turned him into a well-trained companion dog that gave her a lot of comfort and a feeling of security while living on the street.

I had not seen her around town lately and wondered why. Her friend Larry told me about her death last week. She died Oct. 13 from viral meningitis. I hope she got the care she needed at the hospital. Goodbye and I will miss you, Tracy. Thank you to the rest of the un-housed, the churches, the City Council and mayor, the Occupy homeless coalition, and SLEEPS for continuing to work on solving the un-housed problem.

Joann Ernst
Eugene

BEYOND THE 'STREET'

Upper Willamette Street between 29th and 24th perhaps should be visualized not as a through street but to facilitate shopping. Amazon Parkway is the logical thoroughway for traffic into town down (revising the transition with Pearl of course).

By creating a “parking avenue,” merging private frontage parking with circulation eliminating curbs and driveways, auto, bus, pedestrian and bicycle access could be coordinated and planned into the design

VIEWPOINT BY KIM GOODWIN

Canola Questions

WHY DO SEED FARMERS FEAR CANOLA IN THE VALLEY?

I keep hearing the question, “Why are farmers so worried about canola?” For the last seven months I've studied the topic, spoken with diverse farmers, read books on seed-saving and vegetable development, and researched canola. Here's what I've learned and what you should know before the Oregon Department of Agriculture holds its hearing in Salem on Jan. 23:

Growing high-quality seed is a LOT of work. With brassica seed (like cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower) it is extremely difficult to keep the genetic quality pure. A gardener and seed-saver myself, I was really surprised by this fact. In his book, *Gardening When It Counts: Growing Food in Hard Times*, Territorial Seeds founder Steve Solomon explains the extreme difficulties of growing brassica seed. For example, cabbage requires a minimum of 200 plants in order to save high-quality seed with varietal purity. Varietal purity is what keeps your cabbage displaying the characteristics of that specific cabbage, rather than devolving into a wilder, less palatable plant. Seed growers may plant twice the amount of needed cabbages, and then cull out less tasty, less uniform, less desirable plants. The remaining plants must be cared for until they bloom and develop seed — a huge investment in labor, water and space, aka, *money*. This is not a venture for your average home gardener or amateur seed-saver.

Seed purity is a very big deal to food growers.

Commercial seed growers cannot settle for anything less than purity. “Satisfactory” results seriously harm their business and reputation. Producers of high-quality vegetable seed sell their product to market farmers who grow food for the public. Market farmers are called a “critical trade” because the seed they buy must be absolutely consistent and reliable. Each vegetable must grow uniformly and, of course, taste great.

When a cross-pollinator like canola is planted nearby, *en masse*, a brassica grower's ability to keep seed purity is lost. Because of this fact, regions across the world that now produce canola no longer have noteworthy brassica seed production — as our Willamette Valley farmers have been repeatedly warned.

Canola is harmful whether it is genetically engineered (GE), or not. Cross-pollination and seed contamination issues come with both GE canola and traditional canola. International seed buyers, as well as organic seed buyers, cannot use seed that contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs), but the problem is bigger than cross-pollination. Contamination also occurs when canola seed is accidentally mixed into other seed, such as when “volunteer” canola plants are unintentionally harvested with the intended crop. This is a problem not only for brassica growers, but also beet seed, grass seed, clover and wheat growers — uniting an unprecedented group of farmers, conventional and organic, against canola.

Canola contamination will have widespread effects on economic and food security. Talking to many seed farmers this fall, I was impressed to learn that vegetable seed production provides some of the highest paid, living-wage jobs in agriculture. Unlike canola production (which requires only minimal amounts of low-paid labor), vegetable seed requires highly skilled, and consequently, well-paid workers. Plus it's a farming venture that works on small acreage, with high profit per acre. This means new generations of vegetable seed farmers can develop a profitable farm, pay fair wages, and support the economy and their families. This is an astounding rarity in agriculture today.

During OSU's investigation into the risks posed by canola, international seed buyers and growers expressed their deep concern. They testified about the worldwide importance of Oregon's vegetable seeds, and warned of other seed growing regions now lost to canola production.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture is poised to allow canola to be grown in the seed-producing regions of the Willamette Valley. We are at a crossroads. One way continues us down the path of local economic and food security. The other choice will end the hard-won gains farmers and food/farm organizations have cultivated for years. If you value these contributions, if you want to support our local economy and farmers, or if you eat food, please make your voice heard at the upcoming ODA hearing at 9 am Jan. 23 at the Salem Fairgrounds Cascade Hall. To read more about issue with canola or for directions to the hearing, please visit www.farmandfoodrights.org

Kim Goodwin is the executive director of Oregonians for Farm & Food Rights. To read a longer version of this piece with quotes from international seed buyers about the problems with canola, please see the full article at eugeneweekly.com