

of Democratic politicians in Oregon, in both the house and Senate, would support anti-activist/pro-timber initiatives pushed through by timber and ALEC funded interests, but it is a little surprising to me just how overwhelming their support was.

When I do work in the community or in the woods as an environmental activist I often get massive public support and thank-yous and the like from people all over this state, but people need to stop thanking us for doing the work and get active themselves. When all non-Portland based Dems voted in support of HB 2596, further bolstering the timber industry's grip on Oregon's forests, they did so because they had the confidence that y'all would still vote for them, because you are scared of the other guy.

Now, this isn't to say that literally everyone reading this makes such poor choices, but the majority of you do, and you know it — hell, you may even feel bad about it. It's time to stop thinking that your Democratic vote can save this dying Earth, folks. Every single one of us must chose a side here, and join the fight, no more "lesser of two evils."

It is time to stop letting these lunatics destroy these ecosystems with false cries of "jobs, schools, sheriffs, oh my!" Timber extremists and their paid-for politicians have got to go, and they will not leave just because a handful of Cascadia Forest Defenders asked them to. For more info, go to www.forestdefensenow.com.

Jason Gonzales
Walton

ILLUSION OF DEMOCRACY

I learned two new words yesterday. You see, all this time I thought I was living in a democracy. Then I learned a new word and I realized, I/we are living in a plutocracy.

Lovely word, plutocracy. It combines nicely with kleptocracy. And this seems to be the type of government we have today.

This is sad, folks.

Philip Dietz
Springfield

INADEQUATE CONTRACT

Education and economy go together. How can teachers agree to a new contract with such a small increase in salary, more teacher layoffs, large classes and fewer days to educate our kids? This is bad for teachers and bad for our kids. Our legislators and school district leaders need to work for a new progressive source of funding. Our state has had a large increase in wealth but I don't see our kids and the general public benefitting. Other countries are making education their first priority. When will we turn this around?

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

MAGNET FOR THE NEEDY

While Terry McDonald, St. Vincent de Paul's director, is a terrifically nice guy and widely respected, I have to call bullshit on his so-called "debunking" of the myth about social services not attracting "outsiders," which the *EW* printed in Slant [6/13].

Those of us who do live in west Eugene and do actually talk to people we meet know the actual facts. Eugene is a magnet for the needy because the rulers here have stacked our city with so many and so much that it is quite well-known among the needy in several other states: You go to Eugene, not Portland, not Ashland, not Los Angeles. This is neurotic proactivism with no regard for the wider impacts. It short-circuits the positive social process of communities elsewhere recognizing they have social service needs they should meet. Instead, people pack off to Eugene where we bear the expense of the ever-increasing need.

Zurich's experiment with heroin control provides a lesson: In the 1980s Zurich designated the public park next to the main train station as a heroin free-zone, meaning that you could legally go there to buy, sell or use heroin, and get safe needle exchange all in one spot. This kept heroin and HIV from spreading to other parts of the city, and appeared to be a great idea. What they hadn't foreseen was that because it was the only free-zone of its kind in Europe, an enormous number of junkies and dealers from the rest of the continent eventually descended on the park, and it became a total nightmare.

This is not an argument against social services, but in support of the intelligent and responsible management of social services, and sharing these responsibilities fairly. The city should definitely *not* have located Opportunity Village at its North Garfield property, which is within a stone's throw of the Eugene Mission. Why not

locate it in south Eugene near the homes of Terry McDonald and Pearl Wolfe?

Den Ramsey
Eugene

DON'T TAX CREDIT UNIONS

Congress is looking for creative ways to dig themselves out of a hole that they dug through their own volition. Topics include eliminating the mortgage interest tax incentive and taxing not-for-profit credit union income.

As a credit union member, I enjoy lower fees, higher rates, a voice and voting power at my financial institution. If Congress decides to tax credit unions, they're really deciding to tax me and my choice to support local not-for-profit cooperatives, rather than the big bank corporate model. But even worse, if Congress taxes CUs, they're really taxing everyone — credit union members or not — because credit union rates help create a competitive marketplace and force banks to keep their rates down.

Big banks have the ability to raise capital and rates whenever they want, with little to no customer accountability — remember 2008 or when Bank of America decided to start charging for debit card use? Credit unions don't work that way; credit union members are exactly that, members! CU members have voting power and a voice in how their financial institutions behave!

Beyond low fees and higher interest rates, credit unions are well-known for giving back to their communities. For example,

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Queersville News Buzz!

SOMEDAY THIS DRAMA WILL BE UN-NEWSWORTHY

Homo headlines are popping. On the global scene, marriage equality now reigns in 14 countries. This spring New Zealand amended its Marriage Act, Brazil gave the green light to same-sex marriage, and France passed marriage equality, including equal adoption rights. The first to marry under France's new law, Vincent and Bruno, exchanged vows and rings last week. Let's hear it for *liberté, égalité, fraternité!* (*Et sororité, for un peu more égalité.*)

Back on this side of *la mer*, Rhode Island became the 10th marriage equality state. Delaware's new law goes into effect on July 1. Minnesota's and Rhode Island's kick in on Aug. 1. Illinois and Nevada are moving toward marriage equality and lawsuits against marriage discrimination in New Mexico are pending. New measures were proposed in the Michigan state senate last week. And Oregon's campaign for the freedom to marry will have a measure on the ballot in 2014. A new Pew Research Center poll shows 72 percent of Americans think legal recognition of same-sex marriage is "inevitable." Ya think?

As I write this, 53 U.S. senators have come out for marriage equality, and more will no-doubt *evolve* by the time you read these words. Meanwhile, speculation continues to whiz across the blogosphere about how the U.S. Supreme Court will rule on California's anti-gay Prop 8 and the federal Defense of Marriage Act. If the carved words on the front arch of their building are any indication, seems to me they'd side with "Equal Justice Under the Law." We won't know for sure till the

Supremes issue their ruling by the end of June. (You can't hurry love.)

In other news, the Boy Scouts of America lifted the ban against out gay youth in scouting. They didn't drop their anti-gay bias all together, but the BSA's continued rejection of gays and lesbians over 18 is raising a lot of big-time hackles. I'm staying tuned for more progress from this bastion of homophobia.

From our nation's capital: the Employment Non-Discrimination Act was introduced in the House and Senate. The bill would end discrimination in the workplace by making it illegal to fire, refuse to hire or refuse to promote an employee based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Hooray for Oregon's junior senator Jeff Merkeley, championing passage of this bill.

And now, to sports. Jason Collins dominated the refreshingly positive news coverage for making his fast break through pro basketball's closet door. Collins follows Brittney Griner's courageous, if less ballyhooed, example. As the first out-and-proud athlete to be drafted into the WNBA, she promptly signed a sweet endorsement deal with Nike, and made an *It Gets Better* video. Who knows how many LGBT athletes Jason and Brittney will inspire to come out?

Mainstream sports journalists were a-dither over the NFL draft *not* picking kicker Alan Gendreau, a move that would have made him the first totally out pro football player. It's not clear whether he was passed over out of homophobia, or because kickers were not in demand. He's still in training, so maybe next year. That leaves sportscasters predicting who *will* be the first gay athlete in the NFL to go public. You might already know. It's happening that fast.

Hurry! Soak up the news blitz quick before all us lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people become totally legal, visible, and un-newsworthy.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has been sharing the news and other stories with EW readers since 1999.

