

HAIL TO THE QUEEN

Like many things in life and art, what one person finds boring, many others find fun and interesting. I completely enjoyed the Professor Doctor's talent show portion in the SLUG Queen Coronation, and the people around me seemed to as well.

Last year, she and her minions did a wonderful bit about optics and how different fluids bend light, and this year, they had two separate experiments happening side by side around fire and ice. The engaging show focused on young women having fun with science, to a danceable soundtrack, all within the 3-minute time limit imposed by the judges.

I salute our new queen and her efforts to make science enjoyable and accessible and am proud to live in a city that finds that worthy of recognition and celebration. And while song parodies and lip syncing/flash mobs are also entertaining, after attending the last 13 coronations, I loved this new take on showmanship for the event. Maybe if more people found science (and math, engineering and technology!) exciting, we wouldn't be facing a national shortage of people entering those fields of study — especially girls/women and other underrepresented groups.

I say rock on, Professor Doctor, and keep bringing us more science awesomeness for the year of your rain and beyond! Keep it SPICEy!

All hail the queen!

Jennifer Wyld
Eugene

RESPONSIVE FELLOW HUMANS

Thank you, Brenton Gicker, for your enlightenment on the attitude of White Bird Clinic and CAHOOTS toward the behavior of your most recalcitrant clients [Viewpoint, 8/15]. It is too easy to dismiss and deny some of those with the most unfortunate backgrounds in life, to resort to the utmost dismissive catchphrase, "They've made their own bed; let them lie in it." I've long abhorred that attitude yet cannot boast I've never turned to it when put to the test.

Having relied solely on bus transportation in Los Angeles for many years, I had to fend off the well-meaning who insisted on picking me up in their cars so I wouldn't have to (ugh!) ride those smelly buses with all the crazies. Yes, there were seemingly demented passengers, often seated next to me, and I could not help wondering, why are they mumbling or telling me about nighttime evil ones killing horses at the racetrack under a full moon? It was something of a surprise to discover that if, instead of ignoring them, I replied respectfully, before long they began to talk rationally and with unexpected intelligence, clearly longing for just a few moments with a responsive fellow human.

Mr. Gicker reminds me what I should not forget.

Jim Wood
Eugene

RE: IT'S A CRUDE WORLD

LOL!

Beverley Mowery
Eugene

TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

I admire the radical concept of kindness offered by Brenton Gicker in his Viewpoint [8/15] "Rooting for the Underdog." His perspective on the lives of the "problem clients" he encounters in working with the CAHOOTS program displays unusual insight. I believe that, while judgment without understanding is a dead end, compassion applied skillfully, even sometimes fiercely, has transformative potential for the giver, the receiver and the rest of us. I appreciate his bravery and tenacity on behalf of our community.

Mia Coltrane
Eugene

EXPOSING THE TRUTH

Eugene Weekly and Camilla Mortensen: You rock!

Last Saturday I was driving south on Highway 99 after dropping my daughter off in Monmouth. As I neared the Eugene airport, I was struck with an intense smell of bleach/chlorine! Very strange! Now I understand, per your article "Train Wreck" [8/15] — it was in all likelihood chlorine leakage from a train car!

I've taken CREDO's "Pledge of Resistance" (nokxl.org) to protect our beloved and beautiful West Coast natural

resources. Let's not become the latest fossil fuel corridor where profits trump public health and safety. We can stop this if we know what big energy has planned and we *all* pull together!

Thanks for exposing the truth!

Deb McGee
Eugene

A SINGLE OBJECTIVE

Thanks for the "Small Farms vs. GMO and Canola" [8/15] story on the Local Food System Ordinance of Lane County. The article correctly states that the Lane County Circuit Court is currently reviewing the county clerk's determination that the initiative did not comply with the single-subject requirement. However, the four "subjects" or issues identified in the article are the grounds stated by the clerk to support her determination of noncompliance, and not the stated subject of the initiative.

The initiative's single subject is the protection of our local food system. As such, all of the four issues cited clearly address the initiative's single subject as required by the Oregon Constitution. First, healthy natural communities are essential to a farmer's ability to grow and harvest nutritious food. They are defined by the initiative as part of a local food system, and therefore must be protected. Second, the right of self-government is the authority under which the Lane County community can assert its right to pass this initiative into law, and therefore is basic

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

My Lesbian
Résumé

LOVING OUR BODIES, AND EACH OTHER

Every lesbian has a story. Not just the very few of us like Ellen and Wanda who have risen to actual stardom, but every one of us regular lesbos who has come out, bucked the patriarchy by being herself and continued to thrive in this male-dominated, misogynist world. We are so totally AWESOME!

In case anyone ever starts inducting us everyday dykes into some future Lesbian Hall of Fame, I want to get my application in.

When I first started calling myself a dyke in the early 1970s, I was in college and women were rising. Feminism lifted us up, encouraged our autonomy and urged us to love our bodies, ourselves and, as I understood it, each other. I cut my hair — with my own Swiss Army knife scissors — dumped my birth control, joined a softball team and fell in love with our coach.

As a campus lezzie, I did what I could to spread the good news. I spoke on countless gay panels, talked to other students about liberation from gender stereotypes and the importance of loving our bodies, ourselves and, naturally, each other. I took assertiveness training, studied martial arts and fell in love with our kung fu teacher.

In the 1980s I subscribed to *Lesbian Connection*, ventured off to women's music and comedy festivals, celebrated solstices on womyn's land, took my car to a lesbian mechanic, surrendered my backaches to a lesbian chiropractor and shopped at a feminist bookstore. I bought Meg Christian, Alix Dobkin and Ferron albums, tuned in to the local *Women's Music* radio show and fell in love with the DJ.

When the plague hit I took a job with the local AIDS Project, visited boyfriends

in hospice and made panels for the Names Project Quilt. I learned all about condoms and dental dams, took — and led — safe-sex workshops, explored the S&M scene and saw my one attempt at writing porn published in *On Our Backs*. I wrote and performed *The Sound of Lesbians*, a musical comedy parody (eventually banned by Rogers and Hammerstein's copyright attorneys) about the VonTramp Family and their lesbian sex therapist. I contributed a monthly advice column to Eugene's *Lavender Network* newsmagazine called "Ask Big Sister," promoting the myriad ways to love our bodies, ourselves and each other.

During the 1990s, three other dykes, including aforementioned DJ, and I started an improv troupe we dubbed WYMPROV!, and we continue performing and raising both lesbian visibility and money for good works to this day. I canvassed, phone-banked and fundraised to fight the homophobes and the anti-abortion terrorists. I went to work for the Feminist Women's Health Center, gave presentations on women's health options, reproductive rights and self-exams, and promoted the freedom to love our bodies, ourselves and each other.

In 1998 I married the *Women's Music* DJ in a nice Jewish wedding. We built a life based on loving our bodies, ourselves and each other.

The next year I wrote my first *Living Out* column and was hired to teach in the women's studies department at Portland State University, helping at least some of the next generation learn about women's and queer people's struggles for the freedom to love our bodies, ourselves and each other. I'm still teaching women's and queer studies courses at PSU and still writing this column.

And I'm still married to the DJ.

Award-winning Eugene writer Sally Sheklow has been telling her lesbian story in EW since 1999.

