

POWER BILLS COMING

Last week, we experienced the lowest temperatures in 40 years. We also used more electricity than anytime during the last decade. At one point, Eugene was consuming 557 megawatts to stay warm. Overall energy consumption was 30 percent to 50 percent above a typical December day as many residents hunkered down at home and kept the heat turned up.

While crews were out responding to bursting water pipes, Eugene Water & Electric Board's management was thinking about the bill shock we'll likely experience around Christmas. The reason is simple: The more you consume, the higher your bill. Most of us can absorb this one-time hit to our pocketbooks. But for thousands of low-income customers, it imposes a true hardship.

EWEB is a community-owned utility, not a private corporation. When there's a positive balance at year-end, we can re-invest it in projects and programs that you care about. Normally, EWEB makes \$1.7 million available annually to its low-income Customer Care program. General Manager Roger Gray added \$660,000 more to cushion the impact of last week's cold snap. Nearly 3,400 low-income customers will receive automatic \$200 credits to their accounts. Other eligible ratepayers not currently enrolled in the program can also apply for bill assistance.

Last week, many of us privately gave thanks for a warm house and wondered how others were fairing. Due to Eugene's concern for those less fortunate, EWEB's managers invested in one of our long-held community values. Thanks for keeping our spirits warm.

Steve Mital
EWEB Commissioner

THE LOYAL JERKA

I'm sorry for the belated letter regarding this subject, yet when has the invasion of Afghanistan become past tense? [Regarding "The Loya Jirga" column by Jake Klonoski 11/21, writing from Afghanistan.]

Jake Klonoski is the \$4-trillion dollar man, and worth every drone strike for his efforts as a hack apologist for the militarist, multi-national corporatocracy he (Exxon) "Mobil"-ized for. Under the (dis) guise(s) of "economic development" and bringing "stability," he writes this piece of garbage propaganda posing as virtue.

I wonder if Klonoski has read Malalai Joya's book, *A Woman Among Warlords*? If not, he might have a better understanding as to the enmity his presence creates, and answer why we fund all sides of the violence: the Taliban, the warlords, Karzai, opium dealers, etc. — and destruction of that country and its culture.

I'd like to quote an excellent example of the corruption behind Klonoski's blinded virtuousness and arrogance. It is from the book *Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi:

It is a common fate of many human institutions to begin as a response to some universal problem until, after many generations, the problems peculiar to the institutions themselves will take precedence over the original goal. Modern nations create armed forces as a defense against enemies. Soon, however, an army develops its own needs, its own politics, to the point that the most successful soldier is not necessarily the one who defends the country best, but the one who obtains the most money for the army.

There, Klonoski, I hope you're satisfied. You've been a successful soldier, spending all our money to create chaos, death and destruction. There's your virtue. Now get the fuck out of Afghanistan and leave those poorest people in the world alone!

Sean Doyle
Corvallis

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jake Klonoski is actually a sailor, not a soldier.

IGNORING THE POSITIVE

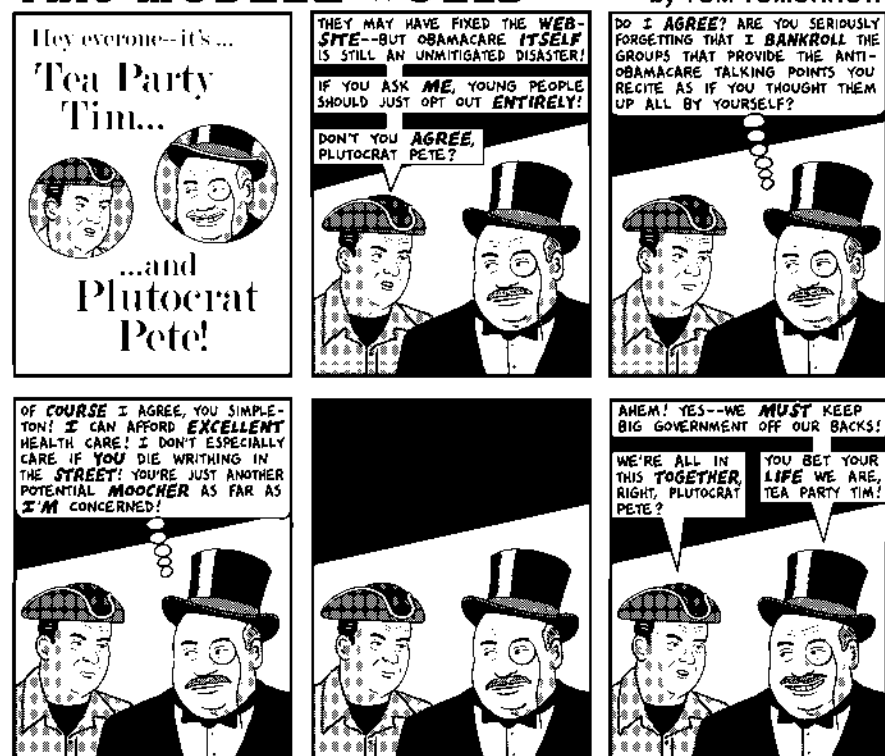
Adrian Black does a fine job of pointing out many very serious societal issues focused in downtown and midtown Eugene. I do, however, consider his piece to be far more of an editorial than investigative journalism. It is true that the city of Eugene has a large homeless population and there are simply not enough services to meet the needs of that group.

I would, however, like to point out that my experience with the Downtown Guides differs from Black's. I have seen the Guides work with homeless people to get them the services that they need. In my experience, they have done so with compassion and an acknowledgement that there simply is not enough help available.

In a time when our city cannot pay for enough emergency responders, I am grateful for the help that CAHOOTS and

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



the Downtown Guides are able to offer.

It would have been interesting to know how crime statistics in the areas mentioned in the article differ this year from last. With more businesses bringing more people downtown for positive reasons, it seems likely to me that there has been a change in those numbers. That information might have been too positive to be newsworthy.

Not for the first time, I am left wondering how both of the newspapers in our town are able to run enormous cover stories about some alarming things happening in downtown and not mention many positive things happening in the same area.

Reisa Maddex
Footwise
Eugene

needed them, I found them to be incredibly skillful at defusing some weird situations in ways that were very respectful to all parties.

I might suggest that instead of seeing the redcaps as "private muscle" or folks who "protect the retail environment at all costs," you could tone down the class warfare hyperbole and reframe them as a huge community resource that saves many, many phone calls to the police, de-escalates lots of potential problems, helps people who need help and allows us all to feel a little safer and sounder out on the streets.

They have a tough job and I value the work they do.

Jewel Murphy
Passionflower Design
Eugene

SAINTLY REDCAPS

I was shocked to see that you went after the Downtown Guides, or redcaps as they're sometimes known, in your recent cover story [12/5]. Are you kidding me? These guys might not be perfect, but in my book, they're one step shy of sainthood. They are a huge resource for everyone who lives, works and passes through our charming downtown. I've been doing business here almost 20 years and have not had too many occasions to call the Guides, but when I

RIPE FOR ABUSE

In response to J.C. Helmer's "Cuckoo's Nest Option" [Letters 12/12] regarding a system for filtering mentally ill homeless individuals: Helmer, I appreciate that you are trying to find a pragmatic solution to a complex problem and suspect that you care deeply about the issues of homelessness and mental illness, but I am frightened by your enthusiasm for filtering all Eugene's homeless mentally ill to Oregon State Hospital, where they will receive the

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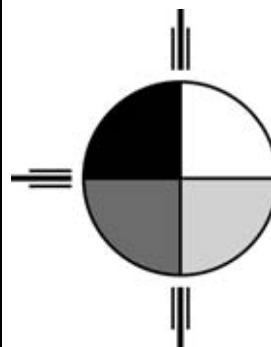


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