

4J'S DOUBLE STANDARD

The recent news about 4J's superintendent leaving his post early and the ongoing negotiations between teachers and the district have brought in focus issues that have undermined the morale of Eugene teachers in recent years.

The failure of the school board to hold the superintendent accountable for his performance last year and next year is in sharp contrast with the push for accountability for teachers. This glaring double standard is especially troubling since both the teachers and many in the community have loudly complained about Sheldon Berman's performance. While teachers are being evaluated regularly, "things got really busy" this year for the school board to evaluate the superintendent, and now, according to the Board Chair Mary Walston, evaluating Berman would be a "moot" point.

The contrast in the way the district values and deals with its administrators and its teachers is clearly illustrated in the recent negotiations between the teachers and the district. Since the 2008-09 school year, the district has cut 19 percent of licensed teachers and specialists but only 7 percent of administrators. Teachers have been taking pay cuts and subsidizing the Eugene schools for several years. Berman, on the other hand, the highest paid school superintendent in the state, received a 5 percent pay increase this past year and another 5 percent next year. All this without evaluation of his performance. In current negotiations the district is offering no increase in base pay for teachers next year, .5 percent second year and 1 percent in the third year. Why?

Pete Mandrapa
Eugene

FARR CARES DEEPLY?

I wasn't surprised that Lane County Commissioners Jay Bozievich and Sid Leiken oppose Eugene's paid sick days proposal. Both have a long history of being against the needs and interests of working people. But I expect more from Pat Farr, the commissioner elected to represent me and other North Eugene residents. He should do what he can to promote and protect economic stability — especially for his lower-wage constituents. They work hard to provide and care for their families — often for employers whose workplace policies make that difficult.

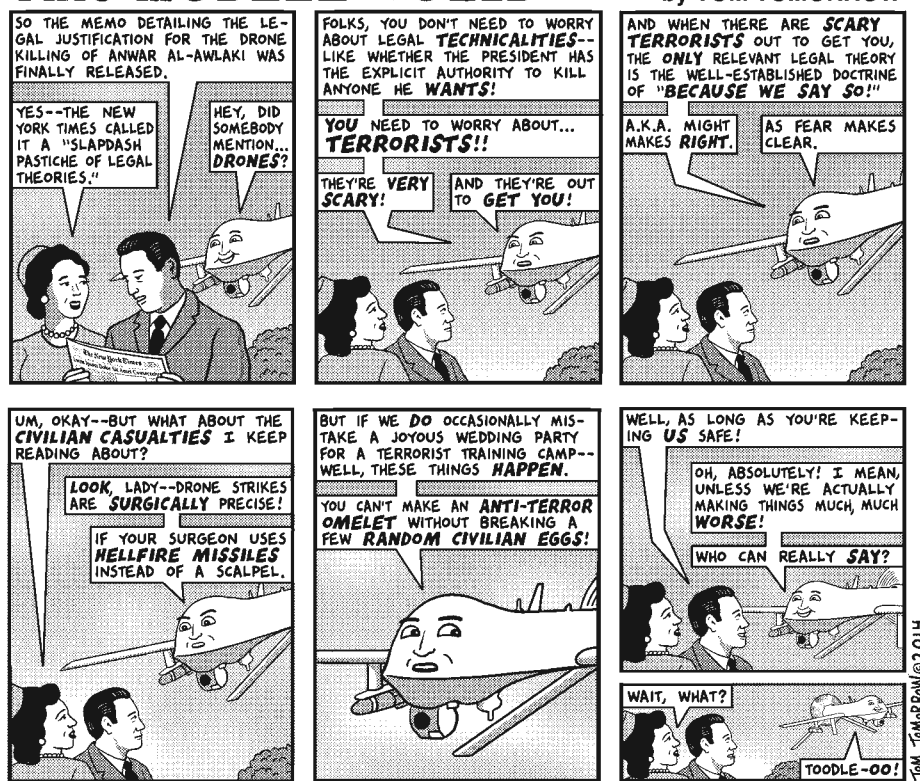
Farr has claimed publicly many times to care deeply about children in poverty, and I have believed him. How does he reconcile this stance with his opposition to Eugene's moderate paid sick time proposal, an important step toward the kind of successful community we want where families are economically stable?

We all get sick sometimes. When employees are able to stay home from work to recover or see a doctor or care for an ill child, we all do better. Parents don't lose needed income (or their jobs). Kids don't go to school sick, spread illness and recover slower, and older kids aren't forced to miss school to care for a sick younger sibling.

This kind of common-sense proposal ought to be championed, not criticized, by

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Farr, who claims to care about his youngest constituents living in poverty.

Stefan Ostrach
State committee member,
Oregon Working Families Party

FIX THE MEN FIRST

Disgraced senator Bob Packwood, decades ago: “I just didn’t get it.”

Having considered the advice proffered by Annie Kayner in last week's letters ("Aggressive Males"), I am now wondering if I've had it wrong all along. As a man who has already lived what Kayner terms those "sex-soaked years" of ages 15 to 40, I just don't remember fearsome impulses that automatically caused my helpless organism to commit selfish and violent sexual assault on females — because I didn't.

Of course I agree that roided-up, alcohol-fueled reservoirs of testosterone — in combination with a cultivated sense of bulletproof athletic privilege — is a potentially explosive scenario best avoided by any sensible person. So, good advice. But casting the responsibility of avoidance onto the would-be assaultee is bullshit! It's just one more example of the victim-blaming/shaming culture that we need to address as primary.

Men can keep it in their pants if they prioritize this as right and ethical behavior. I know this because I and all the other decent men I have known have always managed to do such. It's not that hard even if it's hard, contrary to stupid myths like "blue balls" and "need for release." I frankly don't care how "available" anyone (appears to) make themselves seem: Those basketball players made a choice, and exercised authority and pressure to carry out that choice. The decision was outrageously harmful and it's called *assault*.

Lecturing women to curtail themselves in public, lest something bad happen, is actually an argument for the disgusting fact that we live in a society that oppresses women. I was the only boy in a family of girls, and went on to full involvement in raising two daughters. Since age 18 I

have seen that our culture is basically a paternalistic macho battlefield, when it comes to gender dynamics and everything else. Any time a woman is courageous enough to come forward with an account of sexual assault, I will take it seriously because I have seen how it works. We are confronted with an epidemic of sexual and gun violence, and we obviously need to fix the men first.

Vip Short
Eugene

BEE DEATH DETAILS

A couple of things I think are being overlooked in the bee death spraying at the apartment complex in north Eugene.

1) I think this is supported county housing. Why did the county IVM (integrated pest management) coordinator not direct this work, if so?

2) Linden trees, to my knowledge, are *not* subject to the type of aphid infestations that are the reason behind the spraying. If the trees that had the aphids were not lindens, then the spraying of the insecticide on the linden trees is not only a violation of the labeled instructions on the insecticide, but also a careless and willful misuse of the product.

Anyone who hires a licensed pesticide applicator expects them to take great care to minimize unintended harm. It is clear as glass that Glass Tree Care takes no such cautions.

Mike Koivula
Springfield

SELLING OFF THE ELLIOTT

Imagine a future where old-growth forests on state public lands in Oregon are disposed of to the highest bidder, and suddenly slopes across the Coast Range that once housed stately storybook rainforest lay clearcut and barren behind locked gates. Imagine next that upon the frequent landslides, extinction of wild salmon and pesticide-filled waterways, we suddenly realize our grave mistake.

This may be our future sooner than we know it as the state of Oregon is disposing

of our public forests as we speak. Three parcels of the Elliott State Forest east of Coos Bay were just sold to the timber industry, and two more are scheduled for this fall, totaling nearly 3,000 acres. More acres could be on the way. Our state's natural resources should not be the coffers for our state's schools and to manage them as such is as archaic as killing whales for oil.

Our legislators in Salem and our State Land Board must find an alternative to selling off the Elliott State Forest to fund our schools. Our clean water, wild salmon and our children's futures are too important.

Rory Isbell
Eugene

SHARED-USE SYSTEMS

Jeff Warren's June 19 "Bike Path Obstacles" letter makes a good point. Eugene-Springfield has a good system of shared-use paths but no bike paths. There are also a much-admired series of bike lanes where human-powered bicycle-vehicles can go as fast as the petroleum or electric-powered car-vehicles. Both systems are expanding all the time.

When we share our off-street path systems we must all be conscious of other users. Be that keeping a short leash on your dog or walking no more than two abreast or simply paying attention to other types of users on this shared-use system.

A few bikers make it unpleasant for many others by simply going too fast. I'm not sure what the exact speed equivalent is when a 250-pound bike and rider crashes into a 3-mph pedestrian but in the car-pedestrian world, when a car is going 40 mph, a pedestrian is killed 70 percent of the time, yet when a car is going 30 mph, 80 percent of the pedestrians survive. My guess is that serious injury occurs when a bike is going 15 mph and much less serious injuries occur or are avoided altogether when going 10 mph.

Bikes are vehicles. If you want to go faster than 10 mph, get out on the streets with the other vehicles. If you want to ride among walkers, skaters and people with families or dogs, simply *slow down* and make yourself known when you pass.

We can all get along this summer.

Tom Schneider
Former member, Eugene Bike
Pedestrian Advisory Committee,
Safe Passages Project founder

HEART OF THE PROBLEM

I would like to congratulate James Ready for his ability to think for himself and reason about the problem of guns [Letters, 6/19]. He gets right to the heart of the problem when he says, “deal with the causes.” Wow! Way to go Mr. Ready.

Lisa Tyler
Springfield

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