

COUNTING CALORIES?

I was somewhat perplexed to discover that in the Jan. 8 issue, an article on eating disorders and body image was followed two pages later by a brief article listing apps that can help people count calories both eaten and burned. Though I am aware that such apps may — in some cases — be beneficial for people who truly need to lose weight for medical reasons, it seemed like an odd contrast to the preceding article in which one young woman described how, at age 13, she would obsessively count calories on a daily basis, feeling like a failure if she ate more than 1,000 calories.

I am not claiming that calorie-tracking apps somehow cause eating disorders, but I was somewhat troubled by the first sentence describing the MyFitnessPal app — the sentence suggesting that what makes this app so effective is its ability to make you feel bad for “eating a McMnamins hamburger.” Is equating food with guilt and shame truly a worthy goal to be promoting?

As I can attest to from personal experience, constantly monitoring one’s caloric intake can become an unhealthy and dangerous habit. Also, I firmly believe that the calorie content of a particular food item is far less important than the ingredients it contains: A bowl of oatmeal with peanut butter may have more calories than a Slimfast bar, but the oatmeal also has far more protein, fiber, healthy fats and other nutrients than the preservative and corn syrup-laden diet bar. Perhaps I am simply overreacting because of my own experiences with restricted eating, but I am sure there are other people who share similar sentiments.

Kendra Lady
Eugene

FUTURE OF HIGHWAYS

EW’s year-end issue Dec. 31 discussed some dreams for the region’s rivers; here are two extra topics that are usually ignored.

ODOT is plotting an 11-lane-wide Beltline bridge over the Willamette River. The city of Eugene and Lane County are collaborating with this scheme, which is estimated to cost over a quarter billion dollars.

According to ODOT, traffic peaked in Lane County in 2003, yet the Beltline study claims it will increase nearly a third over the next 20 years. Will we have traffic jams after the low-flow shutdown of the Alaska pipeline and the decline of the fracking bubble?

The millions allocated for this bogus Environmental Impact Statement would be better spent directly on the Beltline “low-build” safety alternative to fix the Delta/Beltline interchange.

One response to energy depletion and climate change would be better intercity rail. Funds to widen Beltline would be better spent replacing the worn-out railroad bridge across the Willamette between Junction City and Harrisburg. Details at peaktraffic.org/beltline.html.

Perhaps the biggest damage to Oregon’s rivers is from corporate clearcuts and helicopter herbicides. While National Forest logging gets some scrutiny, the bigger problem of corporate cutting and

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



spraying is rarely mentioned. This damage is permitted by our Democratic governor via the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Deforestation doesn’t only harm water quality, it also disrupts the hydrologic cycle, one of the factors behind climate change. Forestclimate.org has video from the “Clearcutting the Climate” conference that was held in Eugene in 2008.

Mark Robinowitz
Eugene

A ZOO FOR DRIVERS

Portland is “highly livable” (*Slant* 1/8)? Have you tried to drive in and around Portland in the last couple years? It’s a zoo!

Jerry Ritter
Springfield

WYDEN’S BACK-PATting

I was reminded at the town hall with Sen. Ron Wyden Jan. 5 of why I have no trust in the man. The town hall was advertised as a place where citizens can ask questions or talk about concerns. The event started promptly at 2 pm but the question and comment segment didn’t start until 2:20 and was over by 3:40, but Wyden claimed it went on for two hours.

The audience was about 300 students and 100 voting adults. When a question was asked, Wyden used this as a time to pat himself on his back and to explain to the students what each issue was about and then going off on unrelated tangents. In other words, a lot of hot air. There were about 15 people who got to ask their questions and/or make comments. Most left with questions and concerns unanswered. I expected our legislator to stay until all of our voices were heard.

My guess is he spends a whole lot of time with the timber barons of Oregon on how to craft a logging bill that will be sold as a win-win for the timber industry and the natural world, but will, in fact, clearcut over 1 million acres of some the best forests left in western Oregon, otherwise known as the O&C bill.

In my opinion, Wyden is a wolf in sheep’s clothing who really doesn’t give a dang about the people or our precious natural resources and future generations. It would be really nice to have a public servant who serves the public and not billion-dollar corporations for a change. It seems we always come back to campaign finance reform, doesn’t it?

Pam Driscoll
Dexter

INSURING THAT CAT BITE

Regarding Robert Bolman’s “The \$818 Cat Bite” letter Dec. 31: Nowhere in Bolman’s letter does he indicate whether he has health insurance. Nor does he say whether or not he will pay his bill(s). If he does not, he becomes part of the non-payer problem the rest of us subsidize. If he does, he can probably afford insurance.

The Oregon Health Plan is available if he is a low-income resident of Oregon. Coverage under The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is required by the federal government and subsidized for low-income folks. Presumably, either would have covered most or all of his ER visit. I agree with Bolman that a one-payer system is long overdue in our country. Obamacare is one step in that direction, a step Bolman should take immediately if he hasn’t already.

Tom Arnold
Eugene

EDITOR’S NOTE: We checked with Bolman and he tells us he is on Obamacare but has a \$5,000 deductible so he’s stuck with the full \$818. He will be in small claims court in February arguing that the bill, four times the cost of a comparable urgent care visit, is “absurd and should be reduced.”

AVOIDING THINKING?

Had to laugh some at Robert Simms’ letter Dec. 31 in which he castigates the fact that much of the aid for the homeless comes from religious sources and that those who reside at The Mission are “forced” to listen to a sermon before dinner. What I found particularly amusing in an ironic way was his statement: “Religious faith

is merely a lazy person’s excuse for not having to think.” Along similar lines every time I see a healthy looking person on the street corner with his hand out, I think to myself how panhandling is merely a lazy person’s excuse for not having to work.

Karl Stout
Eugene

HIGH-RISE SLUMS

Eugene Weekly often complains it has no room for important news items. Find some room anyway. UO has announced a new vague plan to spend about \$45 million on a new dorm that may be located near 17th and Moss Street. Ever since Amazon housing got destroyed by UO in the 1990s local media have instead focused on sporting events, global whining or debating which jock should get the most worship or dress up in pink for various causes. Crooks like [former UO athletic director Pat] Kilkenny have been enabled to create high-rise slums like Skybox and Courtside as UO continues to trash the Fairmount area and remove low-income housing.

Zachary Vishanoff
Eugene

PERPETUAL HATRED

The shootings in France are first and foremost the result when a racist “us vs. them” mentality is applied between people. Historically, there has been an ongoing crusade against Eastern Islam from Western Christianity for centuries, right up to the present, unending animosities that both sides justify by violence.

America’s Civil War highlighted the divisions and violence between North and South, and the civil rights between blacks and whites; this country was founded on the violence and near extermination of a Native population who, eventually having to defend themselves, to a great degree actually welcomed and assisted the white man in the Natives’ traditional homeland.

France, Britain and the U.S. were and are colonialist empires still dealing with the blowback of their expansionist arrogance, looking only to exploit and humiliate resources and people. Democracy was, and is, not involved.

When the U.S. government decides to find, and fund, comedy in the assassination of another country’s leader, simply because they are different, what does that say about our government? How about the folks who flock to the movie in its support? Should we, too, be outraged and/or deserving if what happened in France were to blowback on us as a result of such racist propaganda?

As Einstein so eloquently stated: “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the level of thinking that created them.”

Sean S. Doyle
Corvallis

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