

THE NEW REALITY

The West Coast is experiencing extreme drought and heat this year. The question too few are asking: "Is this the new normal?" Politicians and planning bureaucrats in the service of construction companies and developers keep bleating the "growth is good" mantra with little thought of future generations and the planet. The destruction of the old City Hall and trees cut down for the new Hilton are but a few examples.

The old City Hall contained tons of perfectly good concrete, but the building, judged not good enough, was demolished. Then comes an odd declaration of a drought emergency on behalf of two concrete companies.

The concrete industry is one of two largest producers of carbon dioxide, creating up to 5 percent of worldwide manmade emissions. Cement manufacture contributes greenhouse gases both directly through the production of carbon dioxide, when calcium carbonate is thermally decomposed, and the use of energy, particularly through fossil fuel use.

Why couldn't the Eugene Planning Commission include saving the oxygen-producing trees when permitting the new Hilton's construction?

Both short-sighted politicians and planners need to take into consideration the new reality of climate chaos before any new construction or destruction takes place. With this year looking to be the hottest year on record and snow now falling as rain, society as well needs to realize that economic, population, consumption and urban growth cannot continue unabated.

As Ed Abbey stated, "Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell." Humanity itself may be this cancer's victim.

Scott Fife
Eugene

GLASSES HALF FULL

In response to your July 16 cover story, "Radical Predictions," we're indeed facing challenging times, but let me suggest a strategy for overcoming the maelstrom of negativity and mass doom-saying. Here it is: Take a hike!

- To the mountains to collect blackberries, thereby reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Heck, dry 'em and reduce dependence on refrigeration.

- Along the river to harvest stinging nettles or wild mushrooms. Both are free and fun activities, and once dried or cooked, both

are highly nutritious.

- With a fishing pole to catch yourself one of the many fish that populate our streams. You'll procure a quality source of protein, hinder industrial agriculture and witness the majesty of our irreplaceable watersheds.

- To the Capitol to support a cause. This will put your "money where your mouth is," while sparing the rest of us from defeatist malarkey.

- To a potluck, where sharing, cooperation and compassion are fostered. This'll be a reminder not to rely on corporations or industries of consumption for survival and happiness.

It's not revolutionary. It's not radical activism. Just a way of altering our "hell-in-a-handbasket" trajectory. And, it may just reduce childhood obesity, diabetes and a slew of other social and environmental maladies in the process.

So, take a hike — not just in body, but in mind and soul. Hike up one of our vistas and from that vantage, contemplate the grandeur of creation that dwarfs our collective trials and tribulations. And then, although the drought-stricken lakes and reservoirs may appear half empty, our "glasses" will be half full.

Phillip Davey
Eugene

RESTORE OUR FORESTS

As I write this we are on day four of triple-digit temperatures outside, and multiple wildfires are burning in Oregon. The salmon are dying from low-flowing and warm waterways, and other wildlife are stressed from lack of water and food from the drought. This is a harbinger of future years with the global warming crisis intensifying and positive feedback loops increasing.

At the same time there is a push by the logging industry and its paid-for legislators to weaken the Northwest Forest Plan by decreasing stream buffers and increasing clear-cut logging on our last and healthiest forests on federal lands. The private and state forests have been overcut and replanted with same age and same species trees, turning biodiverse forests into tree farms.

Let's transition to alternative and repurposed building materials and restore our forests. The greed and power of the corporatocracy must be stopped, and here in Oregon that is the logging industry.

Pamela Driscoll
Dexter

LIVING OUT! BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Why I'm Going to Pride

A LITTLE HISTORY ABOUT STANDING TOGETHER

I'm proud of my peeps. You know who I mean, all of us who are lesbian/gay/bi/trans/intersex/two-spirit/asexual/pansexual/queer/questioning and allies who have been living, working and fighting for our full equal rights and the freedom to — don't be shocked by this — be ourselves.

I'm proud of all of us, proud of our resilience, our perseverance, our creativity, our sense of humor, our courage and our community. I'm always proud of us, but I admit, I don't always haul my proud self out to our local Eugene-Springfield Pride Festival. Some years I just haven't felt like going. It's hot. It's crowded. I have the T-shirt.

I remember our first Eugene-Springfield Pride Festival in Amazon Park back in 1992. That was the year Lon Mabon and his nefarious Oregon Citizen's Alliance (OCA) put Measure 9 on the ballot which, in case it isn't burned into your memory like it is in mine, would have changed Oregon's Constitution to declare that homosexuality is "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse."

Ah, what a campaign year that was. Fighting the OCA brought our community together. We came out in droves. Our allies took a stand. We should've bought stock in political buttons.

That first Pride festival was all about celebrating just how normal, right, natural and agreeable (antonym of perverse) we are. The grass was green, the sky was blue and the rainbows were flying. I still recall the platform stage set up behind Amazon Community Center and all the brave souls who stepped up to address the small but exuberant crowd. In those days it was risky to side with us, and we cheered like crazy for the few elected officials who dared to speak out for liberty and justice for all. We played music, sang, danced, hugged and registered to vote.

That campaign was a tough fight and much mud was flung our way, but that November we ended up beating the OCA by more than 12 percent. Our ability to celebrate ourselves proved empowering and powerful.

I can't count how many local Pride celebrations I've been to since then — a LOT. When there was no specific political battle under way it was fun to just soak up the good vibes. I'd stroll the booths, buy raffle tickets and wrack my brain to remember the name of the old friend I was hugging. Being there to witness and be witnessed made me — and I think all of us — feel stronger and less vulnerable.

I once heard Timothy Leary talk about the power of the be-ins of the 1960s. He compared it to birds in flight that will take turns soaring above the rest of the flock

to see how many of them there are. Pride is like that — we get to see ourselves en masse, living proof that none of us is "the only one."

Sure, our Pride festival in Alton Baker Park is a little rinky-dink compared to the big celebrations and parades I've been to in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. I recommend planting those vivid images in your memory if you get the chance. Forever after, whenever you're the only LGBTI2-SAPQQA person somewhere, you can summon a mental picture that fuels your queer pride. Ever since I saw SF Pride's Dykes on Bikes I have been able to summon up the sight and sound and swelling pride, which comes in very handy at certain family gatherings and other times of isolation and alienation. Even the Eugene-Springfield Pride Festival, small townish as it may be, will imprint a colorful gaiety on your mental hard drive that you can replay in future moments of need.

And this year especially, with so much to be proud of, so much to celebrate, how can we NOT go? We just had this huge victory in the Supreme Court. The national tide has turned and supporters of full equality now vastly outnumber the bigots. And Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* won the Tony!

Pride is OUR holiday, and we happily share it with all people of goodwill who support and celebrate freedom. This year I don't care how hot and crowded it is. Wifey and I are going. I might even get another T-shirt.

The Eugene-Springfield Pride Festival is noon to 7 pm Saturday, Aug. 8, at Alton Baker Park in Eugene. Free with a \$5 suggested donation. See facebook.com/EugPRIDE. ■

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has shared her pride with EW readers since 1999.

