

WORTHY SHEEP

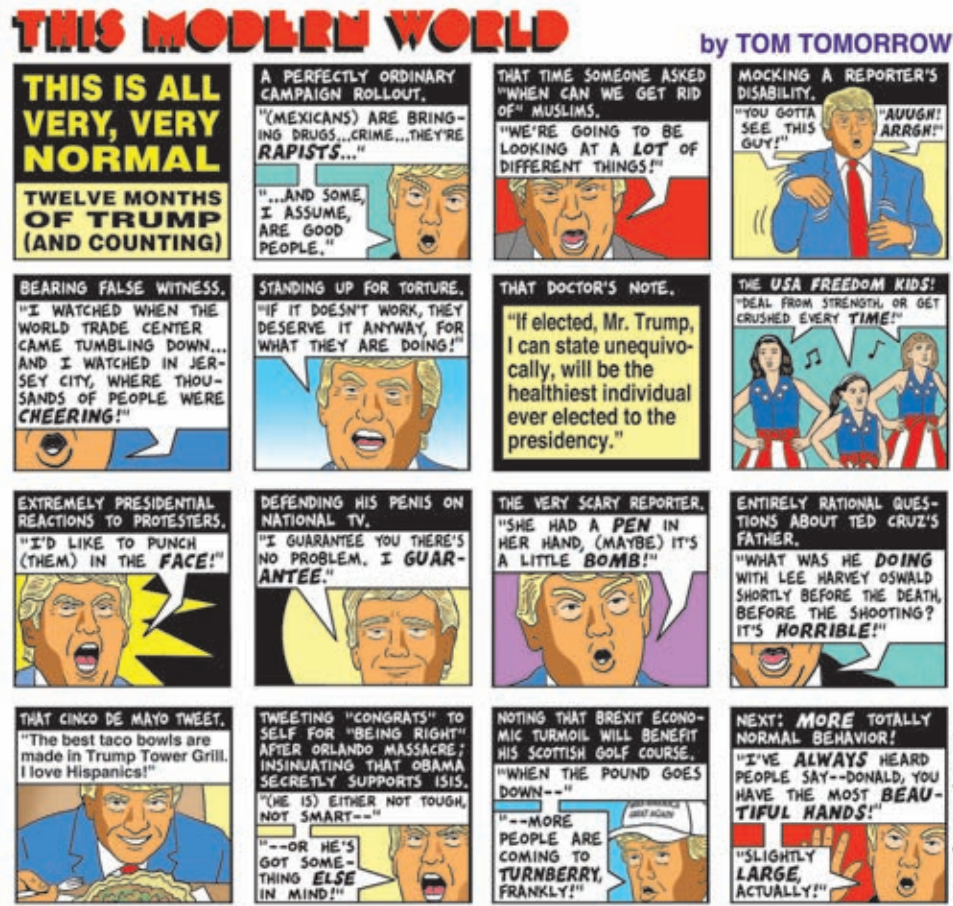
The June 23 *EW* provided a striking example of how humans compartmentalize nonhuman animals: Some species are treated as companions, while others are viewed as mere resources for human use.

A two-page spread (plus cover photo) involved lovely photos being used to increase the adoption rate of pit bulls. Subsequent pages included two large promotions for the "Black Sheep Gathering," celebrating an industry that is anything but innocuous.

Most people mistakenly think that wool production doesn't involve animal cruelty and believe that shearing sheep is doing the animals a favor. But since shearers are paid by volume, gentleness is ignored in favor of speed. It's a rough process, and manhandling these gentle animals is the norm.

Shearing wouldn't be necessary but for the fact that modern-day sheep have been manipulated to grow massive amounts of wool, unlike their non-domesticated relatives who grow hair that naturally sheds.

People are surprised to learn that sheep are born with tails, normally cut off without anesthetic soon after birth. Males are castrated (again, without anesthetic) and lambs killed for meat are slaughtered at six months. Sheep used for wool are slaughtered once their productivity wanes, usually at around five to six years. During their abbreviated lifespan, they often suffer from skin infections, foot rot and joint problems from being weighed down by their



constantly growing wool coats. They're also affected by weather; if sheared in early spring, they are left naked and susceptible to the cold. Those not sheared are subject to heat stroke. Look around at the sheep dotting fields around Eugene — the vast majority have no shelter from the elements.

Sheep are just as worthy as dogs of not being used and abused. As society becomes more educated about animal sentience, it will come to realize that farmed animals are no less morally relevant than companion animals.

Barb Lomow
Eugene

DURD, NOT TURD

In response to Janet Bevirt and Bonny Bettman McCormack's use of DTURD as an acronym for Downtown Urban Renewal District [Letters, June 23], "DURD" would be the appropriate acronym since "downtown" is one word, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Inserting the "T" into this acronym is not an accident and what it insinuates is clearly crass and unproductive.

But City Council passed the debated funding measure, so whether it's a DURD or DTURD is a moot point now anyway, isn't it?

Anya Dobrowolski
Eugene

TRILLIUM TAKEOVER

The recent takeover of Agate/Trillium by Centene raises serious questions with respect to the Affordable Care Act.

Given the lofty cash reserves and \$109 million payout to the shareholders of Agate/Trillium, the question that is begged is: "What percentage of their revenues were actually spent on patient care?"

In an amendment to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) written by Sen. Al Franken, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 now mandates minimum Medical Loss Ratios of 85 percent for the large group market and 80 percent for the individual and small group markets. Insurers that do not spend 80 to 85 percent of their premiums on patient health care costs must now issue rebates to those that paid premiums to them.

I would encourage the state of Oregon to do an ACA audit of Trillium to see if they met the spending requirements on

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