

BUTT SEX

Lon, [Letters 6/30] when I was reading your response to the editor in the *Weekly* I opened up the Bible and opened it to Ezekiel Chapter 16. "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."

The Christian god did not mention a thing about the lovely butt sex that must have been going on in Sodom when accounting for the sins of Sodom. Arrogant people who turn away the poor and needy are the sinners of Sodom! As a decent person, people being shot at and killed certainly qualify as the needy in my book.

Bonnie Doran
Eugene

PRIVILEGED POKÉMON

We were excited as anyone else at the news of the release of Pokémon Go, and we have enjoyed playing along with our friends. As we walked downtown, we took another look to see it from a different angle. We saw groups of people filling the area, with players congregating in doorways and jaywalking across streets to "catch 'em all."

Pokémon Go players are privileged to be able to block entire sidewalks and block entrances and exits of downtown businesses, many times stopping unexpectedly in mid-stride in our excitement to catch that rare Pokémon. Members of the unhoused community are criminalized daily for doing any of these things. PokGo players get "excuse me," while the unhoused get verbally assaulted. We get to break the law just for fun, while the unhoused are ticketed, arrested and prosecuted for just trying to survive. We use the streets of downtown as our "playground" without consequence because we are holding a smartphone. Not all of our community's citizens can afford this luxury.

We are as guilty as anyone else. We want to recognize that privilege and call it for what it is.

Crystal and Vickie Webb
Eugene

GRIM STATISTICS

There has been outrage expressed nationwide over the killing of young black men by police. But Alex Kaye's "Selective Outrage" letter [July 14] misses the elephant in the room.

There have been nearly 3,500 murders in Chicago alone during the past nine years and countless injuries from gun violence. Both the perpetrators and victims have been

overwhelmingly black. This in a city with some of the strictest gun laws in the nation. Detroit isn't far behind in the grim statistics.

So I have to ask, "where are the Black Lives Matter protesters? Where are Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton? Where is President Obama? Where are *EW* and other left-leaning media?"

The inconvenient truth is that a young black man is far, far more likely to be killed by another young black man than by police. But you don't hear that from the left. Nor much commentary about 75 percent of black children being born out of wedlock and how that is an underlying cause of the violence in our inner cities.

As Taylor Swift sang, "I've never heard silence quite this loud." It seems that "black lives matter" only when a white person, especially a white cop, kills a black person, whether justifiably or not. Talk about "selective outrage."

All lives matter!

Jerry Ritter
Springfield

CRUEL WOOL

Regarding Darrell Olson's July 14 response to my June 30 letter titled "Worthy Sheep," I am encouraged that your eyes have been opened to the exploitation and many cruelties involved in the wool

industry (and all animal agriculture, for that matter). I truly wish you were correct in portraying the Black Sheep Gathering as having "nothing to do with 'actual' sheep" and being nothing more than "a gathering of people and includes music and food." However, if you check its website, you'll see that sheep, goats and alpacas are, in fact, trucked to the venue and put on display for several days. It's just one more bewildering, stressful experience that the animals are forced to involuntarily endure in unfamiliar surroundings.

The "gathering" lists a potluck dinner, which includes lamb and goat flesh. The website encourages participants to donate their slaughtered animals for this dinner as "an opportunity to promote your farm and support the Gathering."

"Promote" is the key word. As is the case with pretty much any event that involves farmed animals, or, as industry labels them, "livestock" — a calculated term used deliberately to desensitize humans into regarding farmed animals as nothing more than useful objects — it's ultimately about commerce. It's about the buying and selling of thinking, feeling individuals, either for their "by-products" or their actual bodies.

Barb Lomow
Eugene

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Zombie Wolf

A BAD BILL AND A CREDIBILITY PROBLEM

When I was in the Oregon Legislature 20 years ago, I wrote an "insider baseball" perspective for *EW* on how ideas become bills, and how bills become laws. Out of office now for 12 years and retired for a year, some bills still piss me off.

Gov. Kate Brown has a credibility problem now that she can't seem to shake. It's like a zombie wolf. It was supposed to be a dead issue. House Bill 4040 passed during the 2016 legislative session and was signed into law by Brown over the objection of a majority of Oregon House and Senate Democrats, one principled Democratic congressman and most Oregon animal rights advocates and conservation groups.

Now, months later, the Oregon Court of Appeals and the Government Ethics Commission weighed in, and so has our grumpy congressman.

Let's recap our wolf's weary wanderings. In 2015, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission removed the re-introduced gray wolf from the state's endangered species list even though it had already been hunted to extinction in the early 1900s. Three conservation groups (Cascadia Wildlands, the Center for Biological Diversity and Oregon Wild) sued to stop the de-listing, calling it premature. Immediately following the lawsuit, three Oregon legislators (Sal Esquivel, Greg Barreto and Brad Witt) and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association drafted HB 4040: a bill which made the commission's 2015 delisting decision a law, in order to block judicial review. Esquivel, Barreto and Witt then lied to their colleagues during House debate over the bill. They swore up and down that HB 4040 was not intended to impact any litigation or request for review of the delisting. At the same time, when asked, Kate Brown said her office was "neutral" on the bill. By the time it got to the Senate, everyone's story started to unravel, and the bill passed.

Many of us who were told about Kate's "neutrality" on this issue assumed she would veto HB 4040. But she didn't. Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum filed a "notice of probable mootness" soon after HB 4040 was signed into law, prompting the case's dismissal on those grounds on April 22. The conservation groups appealed that decision and additionally asked the Oregon Government Ethics Commission for an investigation into the three legislators for knowingly misleading their colleagues

about the real intent of HB 4040.

This prompted Congressman Peter DeFazio to send Kate a June 9 letter that accused the governor of contradictory statements about the bill. DeFazio said Brown's office advocated on behalf of the bill's passage, at the same time that she stated publicly she would not advocate for or against the bill.

The conservation groups pursued the "mootness" decision to the Court of Appeals and argued that HB 4040 was an overreach by the Legislature into judicial matters and therefore potentially unconstitutional.

Now, the two latest decisions issued this month move the case back to the courts for review ... and apparently allow public officials to continue lying to each other. The Oregon Court of Appeals has decided to reconsider the lawsuit against the state.

In her decision, Judge Erika Hadlock wrote: "The issues presented by this judicial review and by HB 4040 are complex matters of public importance ... Without deciding what, if any, effect HB 4040 has on this judicial review, the court determines that the issues of possible mootness and the validity of HB 4040 are more appropriately decided by a department of the court following full briefing."

Then on July 1, the Government Ethics Commission ruled that the conduct of the three legislators in deliberately lying about their intention with HB 4040 was not technically "misconduct." Generally, state ethics laws ban lobbyists and public officials from knowingly providing false or misleading statements to other public officials.

But the commission dismissed the complaints because lawmakers who lie to other lawmakers can only be held accountable by other lawmakers.

Apparently, the Oregon Constitution "permits legislators to lie with impunity to their colleagues," a Cascadia Wildlands spokesperson said.

Esquivel and Barreto, the two Republicans, issued a press release afterwards calling the complaint "frivolous." Nowhere in the press release did they deny that they lied! (Witt, the Democrat, remained silent.) Once again, Kate's left with some explaining to do.

And now it gets worse: Last week the U.S. House passed Congressman Greg Walden's bill to remove all protections for the gray wolf at the federal level. Walden apparently flunked Conservation Biology 101, whose fundamental essence is that populations of any species must not become fragmented or they will become extinct.

So the wolf lives ... for now. Stay tuned.

Tony Corcoran is a retired state employee and former state senator.