

BODY POSITIVE

Major kudos to Freudian Slip for the recent ad in *Eugene Weekly* that moves beyond the typical super skinny and young lingerie model. Great job of promoting a body positive message! I hope we see more real women in their ads — she is beautiful and sexy — and more like the rest of us.

Kristine Jensen
Eugene

DON'T BLAME TRUMP

I am just about as “live and let live” as it gets. If Hugo Nicolas and another couple million DACA folks stay or leave, it probably won't affect me one way or another (“Dream Chaser,” 2/8). I likely won't notice whatever financial impact it has on the country.

But may I quote Barack Obama? In 2010, specifically regarding immigration reforms, he said, “I am not king. I can't do these things just by myself.”

And in 2011, Obama said that with “respect to the notion that I can just suspend deportations through executive order, that's just not the case.” In May 2011, he acknowledged that he couldn't “just bypass Congress and change the [immigration] law myself ... That's not how a democracy works.”

Do we have immigration laws or not? Do we have a Constitution or not? If Hugo gets deported, don't blame Trump — he didn't make a bad situation worse by getting millions of people's hopes up.

Brian Palmer
Eugene

REFORM CAN'T WAIT

Journalist George Packer laments the erosion of “middle-class democracy” (“Identity, Politics and Distrust,” 1/18). The fairness and balance we've lost since the New Deal is heartbreaking. He suggests expanding civics education, which could help.

However, we can't wait for today's young people to take over. We need political reform now. Building an inclusive and egalitarian representative democracy will require better leaders.

Uncontested offices are widespread in contemporary elections. When there is only one candidate on the ballot, voting is a hollow ritual without influence.

In Eugene, unopposed representatives rule. Only councilor Emily Semple won a contested election. Six of the councilors ran unchallenged and the other one was appointed. The mayor had opponents in the low-turnout May election, but got a majority. So, there wasn't any runoff at the higher-turnout November election.

No wonder elected city officials are so out of touch with public opinion.

Is it time to consider full-time salaries for the council and mayor to enlarge the number of candidates? Paying meager part-time stipends limits the supply of

people who can occupy office. Officeholders currently have to be affluent, retired or juggle two jobs, excluding many middle-class working-age residents from running.

Brian Wanty
Eugene

A FRIEND OF EDUCATION

If you think education for all ages is important, Kevin Matthews for Lane County Commissioner is your candidate!

From early days as a kid's craft teacher, to teaching at two universities, to serving on the board of a community education non-profit, to his current service on the budget committee at Lane Community College, Kevin's track record shows he walks the talk on investing in learning together.

Our kids are our future, and they deserve the best we can give them. Without a solid education, the foundations of democracy are threatened.

NOTES FROM THE RIVERSIDE BY MARK HARRIS

Black Lives, Local History

A BLACK LIVES MATTER PHOTO EXHIBIT AT CHURCHILL HIGH SCHOOL CAUSES CONTROVERSY

Black History Month started as an internal celebration, expanding from Negro History Week during the Harlem Renaissance. Designated the second week of February to bookend the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, it should always help us remember who are our true allies, and who, like Lincoln are not, and why they are not. Allies who aid adversaries can have many motivations.

When free black Americans moved to Oregon during the state's founding, they were made illegals in their own country. In the 20th century, when they fought in foreign wars for their country, they were lynched in uniform in the streets of New York City, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, etc. Black World War II veterans could not buy housing in Eugene.

The Eugene Police Department (EPD) enforced legal discrimination, which included sundown laws. *The Oregonian* reported in 1937 that the Klan claimed more than 16,000 members statewide and planned to make Eugene their state headquarters again. The Klan planned to continue to organize in politics and law enforcement. There was never a historic movement to stop or eradicate them from those or any ranks.

If Lane County black women were raped, especially by white men, they felt they couldn't go to the police. A black man who married a white woman was found in the Willamette River — half his body anyway. An arrest was made, but no trial, therefore no conviction. That message was not lost on De Norval Unthank, an African-American, and his white fiancée, both UO students, when a cross was burned on her sorority lawn.

Even though black law enforcement officers began to be hired in the '60s and '70s, such as Lemuel McKinney, phenomena like “The Book” persisted. The Book was a collection of photographs of people of color, both law abiding, and not. Not exactly my idea of community policing.

I experienced my first and only “driving while black” stop in the '80s, while working for WhiteBird Clinic. While working at Churchill High School, the first school resource officer arrested two black students for “tagging” a locker, and called them a gang — on the basis of them wearing twin ball caps with “home-boys” on them.

White students who also wrote on lockers were not arrested in school. This was one of the incidents that created the school district's racial justice task force, addressing racism in the schools, and our community. Eugene hired its first black chief of police, Leonard Cooke. He asked me to consider joining the force, which I declined as I preferred social work.

I was the first black person to attend the Eugene Police Department's Citizen's

Academy; I appreciated the inside look, but found some contradictions, particularly in dealing with racism, both within the department and enforcing the law. I shared some of these with Chief Cooke, as well as an article I found. A study done by NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives) showed that in the past decade more than 100 black police officers had been killed in the line of duty by white police officers, some even from the same watch in their own precinct.

When black-related events at the Hult Center in the mid-'80s received bomb threats emptying the Hult onto 7th Avenue, the EPD bomb squad swept the building; in subsequent years, motorcycle units escorted MLK marchers. I'm truly grateful and appreciative for that work, and the work done when I've been a crime victim, burglarized by white drug addicts, according to my police sources. Irony given my occupation — treating the same.

Non-violent self-affirming and empowerment movements like Black Lives Matter have existed for millennia as an integral part of African and African-American culture. When the BLM movement arose in the 21st century, extrajudicial killings of unarmed black people had been going on for more than a century.

When Churchill High School's Black Student Union (BSU) decided this February to commemorate Black History Month, with a BLM photograph exhibit, they were expressing their constitutional right to free speech. The exhibit consisted of photos of dozens of unarmed black children, women and men killed by police, who then were largely acquitted. It generated feelings similar to the lynching of Emmett Till.

Unlike lynching photography, taken post mortem, these photographs could be of the people smiling in life. Featuring Amadou Diallo (shot 41 times), Philando Castile (stopped 46 times before he was killed) and other police shootings.

It was told to me that a school secretary married to a law enforcement officer, as well as the school resource officer posted at Churchill, objected to the exhibit.

If a white supremacist anti-abortion group can present its constitutionally protected views at both the UO and LCC, then a Black History Month exhibit featuring Black Lives Matter material should also be shown, in high school, as part of the educational experience. Despite its history, EPD has not been involved in extrajudicial shootings of black people, and hopefully it never will. Its members could be engaged in the struggle for racial justice.

I think that if white supremacists have free speech rights, then BSUs also have free speech rights — unless of course, high schools are exempted from being part of the United States.