

TARGETING THE POOR

Regarding the proposed ordinance banning drivers from handing donations to panhandlers at street corners ("The Next Anti-Panhandle City," Jan. 24):

The city studies to death the need for a new crosswalk or a traffic signal before going ahead. Why is this not being done before banning drivers from handing donations to impoverished people in need at every intersection in the city due to so-called safety issues?

There may well be a handful of intersections where responsible empirical research focusing on safety criteria yields findings suggesting the need for signage warnings about pan handling. In the absence of the city doing such research and demonstrating such findings, banning donors in cars from handing desperate people money or basic necessities is simply anti-poor, not pro-safety.

My bet is that the city does not want to do the due diligence required to demonstrate the need for this proposed ordinance. Meanwhile, councilors are about to hold a hearing on an ordinance to solve a traffic safety problem that they cannot demonstrate exists. Why?

The folks who are homeless and the growing legion of homeless rights advocates know.

Ken Neubeck
Eugene

GOOD WORK

Your excellent cover story on the decline of *The Register-Guard* (EW, Jan. 17) was the result of careful reporting by Taylor Griggs. It was analytical on the history of the local decline as well as the national decline of reporting. Good work.

Fred and Deb Mohr
Eugene

HELP THE POOR

"Decent provision for the poor," said famed lexicographer Samuel Johnson, "is the true test of civilization."

Johnson would thank you, as do I, for printing Lynn Porter's Jan. 17 viewpoint describing the ways in which homeless elderly people, women, children and the disabled are harassed by Eugene police and treated like criminals. Living a dangerous, miserable existence, these unfortunate citizens are doing their utmost simply to survive in this corrupt, predatory economic system.

The entire Republican Party and a few Democrats have, through legalized bribery, been bought and paid for by powerful mega-corporate interests expecting a big return on their campaign-contribution investments. And they certainly get it. Where? From the middle-class and from the poor.

Now 81, a political activist, a socialist and a progressive populist, I've been carefully examining the spectrum of political evidence since the late 1950s. Republican thievery is obvious and overwhelming. These homeless people deserve better.

A good place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm.

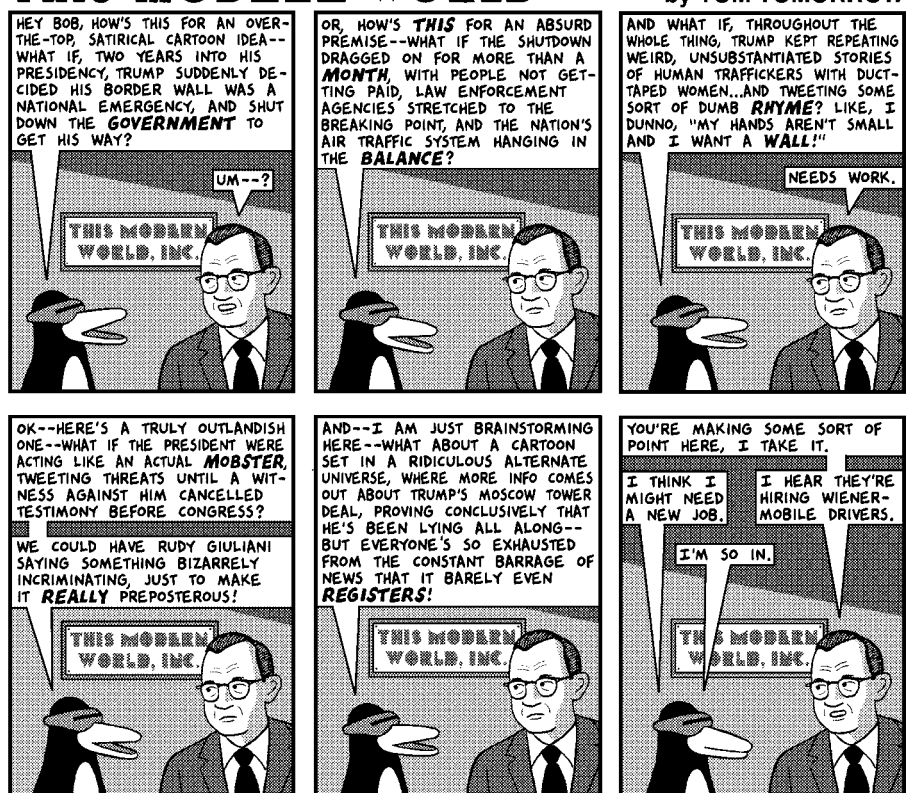
Jerome Garger
Yachats

TOXIC MEDIA

Your Jan. 17 cover story "Requiem for a Newspaper" strikes a significant chord. It's a fine piece of reportage of the quality *The Register-Guard* used to offer quite often.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Alas, the only areas the RG now covers fairly well are sports, food, entertainment and longer pieces from the Associated Press, all of which rarely address relevant local issues and require no on-ground investigation to speak of.

Having read the RG regularly since 1955, I am sickened by what's happened to the Baker legacy and greedy GateHouse Media's toxic effect on meaningful public discourse.

Peter Wengert
Louisville, Colorado

THE EUGENE FOX-NEWS WEEKLY

You asked in the Jan. 14 Slant section: "If Landeros had been a white man, not a person of mixed Mexican and Filipino heritage, would anyone be asking why they had a gun, or would instead there be praise for standing up for gun rights?"

C'mon, that's really not a question. It precludes too much. You know that.

When I first heard the reports of a man being shot on school property, the report said noting about race or ethnicity. Immediately after the newscast I asked my friend, "Why would a person carry a gun onto elementary school property?" However, I sure as hell won't praise anyone for standing up for gun rights if that means bringing a weapon into community entrusted with the care of our children.

You're just feeding grist into the Fox News mentality mill when you ask such censorious questions.

Dan Dizney
Eugene

THE BIG TAKEOVER

I'm a land-rights activist for the landless. In the final years before GateHouse took over *The Register-Guard*, it published stories by Saul Hubbard, Francesca Fontana and others about the gigantic areas of land, bought and sold among the powerful in finance and government at prices below \$10,000 per acre at the edge of the urban reserve.

This translates into \$200 for a piece of land the size of 1,000 square feet — big

enough for a tiny house, RV or trailer.

If the homeless and the low-income renters only knew they could own their own land for less than a month's rent, they might start demanding it. But now they just won't know.

The profits on a single land deal can exceed the entire cost of *The Register-Guard* buyout. Maybe some rich dudes in Eugene flew to Texas and invested in GateHouse. We would never know that, either — because corporations and investors have "privacy" rights.

Todd Boyle
Eugene

IT'S FOR EVERYBODY

In a recent letter, Eric Harris portrays the Eugene Public Library as something reminiscent of *Animal House* or perhaps *Reefer Madness*. The most charitable and restrained response I can offer is that my experience does not in any way match what he describes.

I am a frequent visitor to the library — often stopping by once or twice a week — and can't remember ever really having a negative experience. I have occasionally heard someone raise his voice. I have heard a cell phone go off. I have even seen the "tumult" of "defiant youths" — to quote Harris — who sometimes absentmindedly will put their feet on a piece of furniture only to be respectfully asked by staff to move their feet back to the floor.

Much to Harris' apparent dismay it is a public library. Indeed, it is an excellent public library that is consequently used by a huge number of people for a thousand different reasons.

As the number of inclusive public spaces has diminished only to be replaced by commercial, retail and otherwise exclusionary profit-driven spaces, it seems our tolerance for our own neighbors has waned a great deal. The hell Harris describes is not to be found in the library; it's in his head, and it's nothing more than other people.

By my account, the Eugene Public Library is one of the single best things about living in Eugene.

Ian E. Smith
Eugene

A COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Kudos to the Eugene Public Library for welcoming and serving all members of the community. Library employees meet high standards of customer service, security and cleanliness, in my experience.

The library is a lifeline for people in all kinds of need. To be warm, dry, have access to water and a toilet is a boon for fellow citizens not fortunate enough to have a place of their own.

Books and online resources provide education and recreation. Direct services like Whitebird counseling and Community Court offer support and guidance.

As a taxpayer and frequent library patron, I feel my dollars are well spent at the Eugene Public Library.

Alice Parman
Eugene

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

As a male, I never felt comfortable giving my opinion on a controversial topic such as Planned Parenthood. It is a female-dominated topic of discussion, and rightly so.

I am writing in response to the op-ed viewpoint "The Right to Sexual & Reproductive Health" by Lisa Gardner that addressed Planned Parenthood as a right to the people (Jan. 3).

According to a new analysis by Guttmacher researchers, published in *The American Journal of Public Health*, 4.6 percent of women will have had an abortion by age 20, and 19 percent will have done so by age 30. It is a reassuring thought knowing there are resources for people who need the care that places such as Planned Parenthood provide.

Though reproductive health centers are usually known for abortion procedures and care, that's not all they provide. STD screening, birth control, pregnancy testing and general health care are just a few services that Planned Parenthood provides. The organization accepts many people from a wide range of demographics, and accepts many forms of health care plans, as well as those who are uninsured.

Planned Parenthood is diligent in assuring that anyone and everyone is educated with honest and up to date information regarding anything related to its business and practices.

I truly believe that places such as Planned Parenthood are not only a valuable resource for the people who truly need it, but a basic human right to have in society.

Cory Castleman
Eugene

DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER

Praise and blame are used by foolish messengers to abuse themselves, whether they realize it or not. Are you humble enough to see that? Or are you one of those messengers who need rules for everything? I'm going to let you in on a secret: Rules are nothing more than glorified suggestions.

Acceptance, enjoyment and enthusiasm are the three energy frequencies of awakened doing. Doing is actions, and actions speak louder than mere words.

I'm good — go about your business.

Joe Canfield
Springfield