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## Letters to the editor

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### STREET LEGAL

#### Curb your enthusiasm for initiatives that override local control

Editor, The Times:

The attorneys who sued to block I-776 chose a weak legal theory as the basis of their case ("[State Supreme Court upholds \\$30 car tabs](#)," Times, page one, Oct. 31, and "[Car-tab savings likely weeks away](#)," Local News, Nov. 1). The single-subject rule has become a lazy method for attacking Tim Eyman's initiatives. Those of us who oppose his initiatives can say many things about his personality, as unproductive as that is, but the man is smart enough to learn from his mistakes.

The real problem with I-776, the one that should be an abomination to a democratic society in general, and "local control" advocates like Eyman in particular, is that it subjects local projects funded by local taxes, imposed by voters in local taxing districts, to statewide scrutiny.

The precincts paying the taxes voted against I-776. What right do voters in Spokane and Yakima and Walla Walla have to interfere with our right as Puget Sound voters to tax ourselves to fund transportation projects in our communities?

In a democracy, we have a right to govern ourselves, but that means we have to reap the consequences of our own self-government. The problem with I-776 is that voters who have no stake in the issue and face no consequences for their decisions have been given the right to impose their will and the resulting consequences on those who are now forced to face the consequences.

If anyone can show how this benefits a democratic, civil society, I'd love to hear the reasoning.

**Andrew Viertel, Seattle**

#### Blind alley

The Washington state Supreme Court has righteously upheld the state's constitution by resisting subversion of the \$30 license tab *law* enacted by the people.

Due to the resultant erasure of 20 percent of Sound Transit's tax revenue, this community cannot afford the reckless pursuit of what is *not* a "mass transit" transportation mode and what, regardless of definition, will *not* deliver congestion relief.

Yes, patronage jobs, patronage housing, patronage development rights it

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will deliver, but not one ounce of even local (to say nothing of "regional") congestion relief.

Now is the appropriate time for Sound Transit Chairman and King County Executive Ron Sims to cleanse us of the "light" rail and prove to voters that he possesses the capability of making the tough calls prerequisite for governor. Please, Chairman Sims, do not allow this boondoggle to embarrass you out of serious contention.

**Craig Keller, Seattle**

### **Snazzy options**

Instead of bemoaning the negative fallout of the I-776 decision, a "glass-half-full" approach would be more productive.

No matter what happens to local tax revenues initiated by the RTA vote in 1996, there will still be enough to increase freeway capacity by 20 percent through computerized management of access; to install a dandy Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on 200 miles of key arterials converted into mini-expressways; lay the Alaskan Way Viaduct traffic on the ground with a snazzy park atop it; and get 50-percent funding from the feds for a demonstration of the Car Bus car ferry.

But these measures to genuinely improve urban mobility for motorists and transit users alike cannot happen without enlightened and courageous legislators who properly enact a Sound Transit revote referendum in the upcoming '04 session.

**Dave Petrie, transportation engineer, Des Moines**

## **ELECTION RETURNS**

### **Awaiting sober reform**

Everyone has a drunk uncle. We may not want to admit or even recognize it. He is the one who promises to do better. Who says he has learned from his mistakes and assures that "it" will never happen again. But each month he spends his paycheck and then comes over to borrow a little to tide him over.

In Seattle's case, our drunk uncle is our School District. Hopefully, with an almost entirely brand new board, our uncle has reformed ("[Incumbents hammered: 3 on council ousted, 3 on school board losing](#)," page one, Nov. 5). But we will have to wait and see.

Perhaps the first test will be if they really expect us to blindly pass the proposed school levy in February.

I would be more convinced to vote for a levy if they had the discipline to wait until they get their house in order and show actual proof that they have the capacity to, as John Stanford would say, "Do what you say you are going to do."

**Thomas Karchesy, Seattle**

### **NICE WORKS**

#### **Milk of human kindness**

Bravo! in response to Philip W. Eaton's commentary, "[Please join my revolution: thank you very much](#)" (guest commentary, Nov. 4). There are others, like us at The PoliteChild, who not only welcome the idea of a "politeness revolution," but have already been battling to put "civil" back into "civilization" and are actually regaining some ground.

We certainly know that rudeness begets rudeness, as Mr. Eaton illustrated. After all, cutting someone off on the road these days can lead to getting shot. It's certainly true that no organization can survive in circumstances of continual rudeness and unkindness. I would add that no "society" can either, because our ruthless quest for "me first!" is completely inconsistent with the idea of supporting one another in a sense of community.

If we are to change, it *must* begin with us. You can't change someone else's behavior, you can only control your own. Hopefully more people will see what a difference kindness and courtesy can make. Suicidal people's lives have been saved merely because someone showed them a small kindness through word or deed.

And, finally, we do have the T-shirt for Mr. Eaton. It says, simply: "Got manners?"

**Corinne Gregory, founder and president, The PoliteChild, Woodinville**

## **SUPERHERO WORSHIP**

### **Holy hyperbole, Batman**

Richard McCormick (former University of Washington president): Screw-up and cover-up ("[McCormick apologizes for affair that brought 'considerable pain,'](#)" page one, Nov. 3).

On and on it goes. Protect the fellow incompetents.

Tell me again how vital, how important, how necessary, how wonderful, how outstanding, how expert, everybody is.

Bat guano.

**Nick Shultz, Seattle**

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