I just wanted you to be aware that although Greg Albansoder is a project manager for the City of Davenport, he is only a landscape architect, not an engineer. (See " Bike Lanes Help Move Toward 'Complete Streets
,"
River Cities' Reader
Issue 632, May 9-15, 2007.)

I am currently the Professional Engineer that designs the majority of street construction and replacement projects in Davenport, and I have no plans whatsoever to mix vehicular and bicycle traffic together on the roadways. I agree with Mr. Mook of Bettendorf that the reconfiguration would be impossible and that separate sidewalks, recreational trails, and bike paths are a far safer and better alternative.

Eric R. Schallert

Davenport

Spreading Misinformation

I am curious as to why you would publish the article on "fear mongering" by Jay Lehr. (See " When Will We Tire of the Fear Mongers? " *River Cities' Reader* Issue 634, May 23-29, 2007.) As a person in the employ of the Heartland Institute, which has the

goal of minimizing any sort of regulations/restrictions on businesses, he is certainly not an individual whose views are to be treated as authoritative or unbiased.

Why should your readers believe, for instance, that DDT has no negative effect on the environment just on his say-so, despite research that shows its persistence in all organisms up the food chain, evidence that it causes thinning of birds' eggs, and the dramatic recovery of bald eagle, osprey, peregrine falcon, and pelican populations after DDT was banned? Does he really expect us to believe that DDT was banned just because the media published results of scientific studies describing the threat?

Some "inconvenient truths" that contradict Mr. Lehr's statements are that the ozone layer has recovered since chlorofluorocarbons have been regulated; it is the consensus of the world's scientific community (not the font of unvarnished truth, the United Nations, that has merely promulgated their findings) that the globe is warming due to human-induced release of billions of tons of carbon that was long sequestered beneath the earth in oil and coal deposits, and that sea levels will probably rise imperiling low-lying coastal regions and islands, and disrupting ecosystems everywhere. Radon and asbestos are carcinogens.

I doubt - seriously doubt - Mr. Lehr's claim that there is a "fear gene." Our genetic makeup gives us, and all organisms, the ability to respond to threats because of a multitude of genes that produce a brain and nervous system. What we can do that other organisms can't is learn from the research and experiences of experts and take proper precautions. The media help to disseminate the information we need to make choices; this is not "fear mongering." "Fear mongering" is spreading misinformation to elicit emotional versus rational responses to issues, as Mr. Lehr has in his article. And shame on your publication for aiding him in that effort.

Brent Langley

Coal Valley, Illinois

No Silver Platter

Dr. Lehr has been writing a series of articles for *Environment & Climate News* (http://www.heartland.org/Publications.cfm?pblId=1) that does what Mr. Hahn asks for. (See "Respect for Human Ignorance," *River Cities' Reader Issue* 635, May 30-June 5, 2007.) The series unpacks many environmental scares and explains the real facts behind them. The latest installment, "Food Irradiation: A Healthy Secret," is available online at (http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=21221).

Entire books have been written about the environmental scares Dr. Lehr mentions in his commentary - indeed, he has written some of those books. There is a great deal of information out there debunking these scares, but it won't come to you on a silver platter. If you're open to it and look for it, it's there. *Environment & Climate News* is a great place to start. (Full disclosure: I am executive editor of this publication.)

Diane Bast

(Via the *River Cities' Reader* Web site.)

Stop Worrying

Just as Mr. Hahn says, the truth to myths and facts is out there, and we should be looking for the truth. Unfortunately, many people do not have the time for this type of search, as we are busy living. Or, for some of us, hiding from life. I believe the real truth is somewhere in between. Be aware of what can happen, but also be aware that it happens very rarely in most cases. Live well and stop worrying so much. If you are worrying, look up the cause of your worry and see if it is founded in some type of fact. If you don't have time to research your worries, then you don't have time to worry about them, either.

Michael

(Via the *River Cities' Reader* Web site.)

Story Had It All

Virginia Johnson's was the best and I think she should have gotten first place! (See " Winners of the 2007

River Cities' Reader
Short Fiction Contest
," Issue 635, May 30-June 5, 2007.) Her 200-word story had it all: plot, spanning a period of a day, four characters (if you count the dogs), dialogue, metaphors, alliteration, a theme, wonderful images ... . Made me want to go camping

Nhodson

(Via the *River Cities' Reader* Web site.)

Short-Fiction Follies

I found most of these entries unintelligible. This used to be a fun and clever contest, but now, it seems you are only posting stories by folks that might be your friends. The third-place story was gibberish, and I don't understand the criteria that allowed it such a high honor. Most of the honorable mentions were much better than that dreck.

Zee

(Via the *River Cities' Reader* Web site.)