

EDITOR'S NOTE: Too many letters, too little space. Check our website (www.eugeneweekly.com) last week and this week for additional letters.

POOR MUSIC SELECTION

Like any serious music fan, I am saddened by your Aug. 12 cover story on the decline of local, independent music stores. I have no doubt that money-grubbing majors and thieving burners play massive roles in this trend. But, the stores themselves are partly to blame for having such poor available stock.

When I moved here from rural Pennsylvania, I was giddy at the thought of having several good record stores in the area. Unfortunately, I am routinely disappointed when I walk in to find that they don't have what I want. Whenever I go in to pick up a new disc by top independent bands like Skinny Puppy, an older album by mainstay acts like Sleater-Kinney, or even high-profile, major label release by someone like Prince, I walk out empty-handed. Yes, I know that it makes no sense to hold stock if you aren't going to turn it over quickly, but Eugene's local shops don't meet the needs of those willing to pay a bit extra in order to experience the thrill of a release-date purchase and the ambiance of the neighborhood shop.

I can't help but think that Face the Music and others would be better off by taking steps to meet the needs of their true, loyal customers rather than trying to lure back burners who value money more than music.

Ron Davies
Eugene



friendly, and to thank him for sending it in.

Mr. Brown is correct in stating that our policy states that each child over 1 shall be obliged to purchase a ticket, but that is for a couple of reasons. The most important is that 90 percent of the shows at Cuthbert are produced by outside promoters who rent the facility from Cultural Services. This means they set the ticket prices and have absolute control over them. The second reason is that we have limited seating at Cuthbert and even a young child can take up a seat that could be sold to someone else.

The good news is that when we are sponsoring our own shows at Cuthbert, we do try and set a fair ticket price for children and will be even more conscious of that in the future. Second, we have high hopes for expanding the Cuthbert season from nine to 30-plus shows over the next five years. Many of these will be locally produced and will allow us the flexibility to offer up more family-friendly prices.

I thank Mr. Brown for sending in his concerns. All the arts in Eugene/Springfield — including Cuthbert — need to work harder at serving families. Count on the fact that we will do all in our power, Mr. Brown, to be a part of that important effort.

Robert J. Hankins
Cultural Services Director
Eugene

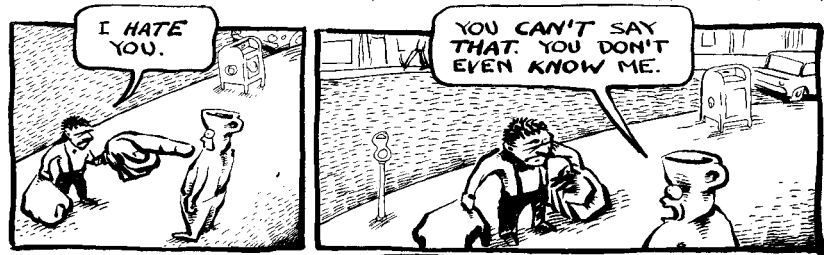
LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

First of all, thank you *EW* for printing Dr. Megan Schmidt's Viewpoint (7/15) and the responses thereafter. That says a lot about the *Weekly*. Thanks to those who have written in and to those who have been reading the

SERVING FAMILIES

I would like to take a moment to respond to the letter from Steve Brown (8/12) suggesting that Cuthbert Amphitheater is not family

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



GETTING-TO-KNOW-EACH-OTHER FRIENDSHIP MONTAGE...



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thought-provoking perspectives on the issue. This has been a healthy exchange within the community concerning a vital subject through a medium we are fortunate to have.

What are we going to do about it? How are we going to help the *EW* get by without it supporting the sex industry? Business matters are surely out of my area of expertise, but I hope this will get the ball rolling. Will fund-raising work? I'm thinking of for example KLCC's brewfest or something of the like. A call for donations? Grants?? As a last resort should the *EW* charge a nickel? I imagine the folks at the *Weekly* have at least started to travel down this road before. Where did you all leave off, what made you stop, can you please update us and address this so we can help?

Readers, let's not let this issue die, are we not in the 21st century still addressing the impacts of the oldest profession? We can start by enabling our local publication to cease promulgating the subjugation of women and to fully represent the way we walk our talk. Dr. Schmidt calls for a challenge to do so. Let's answer.

Dave Kofranek
Eugene

DESTROYING LIVES

Before Megan Schmidt wrote her Viewpoint complaining about *EW*'s less up-standing sponsors and the subsequent response, I never realized how powerful this free publication was. I had no idea *EW* was

viewpoint BY ANN-MARIE HOGAN

Better Government
Through independent auditing



EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter was sent Aug. 12 to the Eugene mayor and council members in response to recent local media reports on the need for an independent auditor. *EW* was given permission to reprint it as a guest commentary.

We are aware that the city of Eugene does not have an independent performance auditor. The National Association of Local Government Auditors (www.NALGA.org) believes the independent performance audit function plays a key role in effective governance and public accountability.

Taxpayers and elected representatives want assurance that scarce tax dollars are protected by strong management controls and practices. An independent performance audit function can provide such assurance to you and your constituents through independent reviews and evaluations.

The value of an independent performance audit function is in providing objective, accurate, and meaningful information about operations so you can make informed decisions to better serve your citizens.

Members of our organization who direct successful local government audit shops in the state of Oregon were in contact with the council two years ago when the Charter Review Committee proposed establishment of such a function. More recently, it appears that concerns expressed by staff in your city centered around the question of independence, as well as the issue of cost effectiveness.

Government Auditing Standards and NALGA Model Legislation recommend that

audit organizations be organizationally located outside the staff or line management function of the organization. Audit organizations should report the results of their audits to the public and be accountable to either the legislative body of the organization or directly to the public through an elected auditor office.

Independence is important because auditors should be sufficiently removed from political pressures to ensure that they can conduct audits objectively and can report findings, opinions, and conclusions objectively without fear of repercussion. For this reason, federal performance auditors (GAO) report to Congress, rather than the executive branch.

Independent performance auditors can help:

- Strengthen internal controls
- Deter fraud
- Identify waste and abuse
- Provide professional resources

In many cases, audit work leads to new revenue, cost recovery, and economic impact well beyond the audit department's annual budget. Many independent performance audit departments pay for themselves many times over.

An independent performance audit function for the city of Eugene would be a long-term financial resource for the city. We have enclosed the brochure, *Guidelines and Model Authorizing Legislation for Local Government Audit Functions*.

Our organization would be happy to answer any questions you have about establishing an independent performance audit function.

Ann-Marie Hogan chairs the Advocacy Committee of NALGA and is the elected city auditor in Berkeley, Calif. She says she has "worked productively with several city managers to improve the efficiency of operations, identify new revenue, and increase accountability to the public."