

drawing as therapy

by harvey dickson



Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

JAMES EWELL

As intake coordinator at the Looking Glass New Roads Program office on West 7th, James Ewell meets some 250 new homeless young people every month. "I'm always up front," he says. "I sign in each youth and ask how we can help." New Roads offers shower and laundry facilities, three meals a day, and medical services to drop-in visitors ages 16-21, plus a long-term transitional living program. "We have 32 slots every year," says Ewell. "Stable employment is the first step to getting into housing." A Eugene native, the son of a psychologist and a teacher, Ewell had friends who were mall rats. He studied psychology at the UO and volunteered at New Roads during his senior year. "Two days before graduation, they offered me a job on the street outreach team," he says. Six months later, he started doing intakes. Now, three years later, Ewell also coordinates volunteers and works with individual clients as a case manager. "I love working here," he says. "I get to see the growth of each person. Today I have a seventh client getting approved for the housing program."



• News of the plea bargains of three eco-saboteurs in federal court in Eugene July 20 is making headlines worldwide. We even heard from a Dutch magazine looking for photos of the Whiteaker neighborhood. Eugene's reputation as the "home of the anarchists" is getting another boost. But a couple of much larger issues are playing out here. The overriding and forever unresolved issue is: How can people without money and power defend our environment from rampant greed and corruption? What is an appropriate and effective response? We see property destruction as just another form of violence, and yet our celebrated 1773 Boston Tea Party was politically motivated property destruction. Note, however, that the tax-resisting colonists did not torch the ships in Boston Harbor. Another big issue here is our government's fanatic persecution of dissent, way out of proportion to the crimes committed. The FBI's Operation Backfire threatens suspects with life sentences if they do not cooperate in federal witch hunts. Meanwhile, the much more serious threats to our national security go unchecked. The many millions spent in pursuit of these "high priority" suspects would have been far better spent chasing real terrorists – fanatics bent on making political statements by destroying people, not property.

• Hot weather makes just about everybody miserable, but particularly hard hit are low-income people who have no air conditioning, and no shelter from the heat. We swelter at EW's offices when even with AC our indoor temps hover around 80. Pity the poor folks who labor in much hotter conditions. This is a good time to think about ripping up a bit of concrete, planting some shade trees on the southwest side of buildings to block that deadly afternoon sun. A lot of Eugene-area homes and businesses could save money and increase comfort by strategically planting deciduous trees.

• Speaking of sunshine, here are a few bare facts from the fun and informative City Club presentation July 14 by Pat Brown, national president of the American Association for Nude Recreation. Most of the year she lives at the Willamettans Family Resort in Marcola. Oregon was the first state in the country to sanction a state park with a nude beach, Rooster Rock on the Columbia. AANR members are conservative, more likely to be Republican. Nude recreation is growing in the U.S. and Canada. It's a \$400 million industry. Skinny dipping is also called "chunky dunking." Nude recreation is not a threat; it's a freedom. A perfect world is "where we appreciate our differences," she said. "I had to accept the concept that my body is not the sum and substance of me ... it's not about how others see you, but how you see yourself."

• Can we blame Bush for everything idiotic that's going on in the world? Well, not really, but disaster seems to follow White House policy both domestic and foreign. A long run of bad luck? Nah, it's just manifestations of incompetence, ignorance and arrogance. Our leadership's blunders in the Mideast have destabilized an already shaky balance of power in the region. And now the Mideast is facing all-out theocratic war involving Israel and all its neighbors. Our government has decided we have no choice but to support Israel, no matter how extreme its actions, and that makes America even more despised and more of a target at home and abroad. Diplomacy has been shuffled aside as an impediment to ideology. It's going to take a long time to undo the damage caused by George Bush and his team.



SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

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