

rently some 39,000 veterans in Lane County receiving roughly \$7 million a month in veterans benefits from the VA. These benefits are paid for a wide variety of debilitating injuries that veterans suffered while serving our country. Many would be living on the streets or worse without these benefits.

It seems obvious that this need will only increase as more veterans return from Iraq with disabilities that may last a lifetime. Here is where cruel irony lies. The funding for this crucial service is due to be cut if the county doesn't get more money. While the office is federally mandated, the level of services is not. Therefore what may remain may be an administrative office incapable of offering services to the flood of returning veterans. The county will lose a highly skilled professional staff that guides the vets through the monumental maze that is the VA. I know from personal experience that without their assistance I would not have been able to get the help I needed.

Whatever the outcome of the tax measures the Veterans Services of Lane County or its staff shouldn't be on the block. We owe our veterans at least that much. Please let your county officials know that "supporting the troops" requires more than wearing colored ribbons or waving the flag.

*Jack Bates
Eugene*

RECKLESS PROPOSAL

I read with great interest James Johnston's Outdoors column (4/19) about the Wild and Scenic Rogue River. We are blessed by this ecological gem that still supports wild Chinook salmon, an unparalleled backcountry experience and a thriving recreation-based economy.

Unbeknownst to many, the Medford Bureau of Land Management (a federal agency in charge of managing our federal public lands) has for years been planning the Kelsey-Whisky timber sale, which would log the heart out of the Zane Grey roadless area, a 46,464-acre unroaded block above the wild and scenic stretch of the river and adjacent to the Wild Rogue Wilderness. Zane Grey, the famed author the area is named after, must be rolling in his grave. A series of

lawsuits has delayed this reckless proposal, but the BLM, with the approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is moving full steam ahead to log this treasured place with your tax dollars.

Aside from utilizing the courtroom, a coalition of conservation groups, local businesses and outfitters are moving forward with a proposal that would designate additional Wilderness and Wild and Scenic river corridors in this unprotected place.

Contact Rep. DeFazio to let him know you want the Rogue River protected so future generations can relish in the place without the eyesore of clearcuts and stumps. Tell him to de-fund the Medford BLM too, which remains the old-growth logging workhorse in the region. Peter DeFazio, 405 East 8th Ave. #2030, Eugene 97401; 465-6732. For more info, visit www.savethewildrogue.org

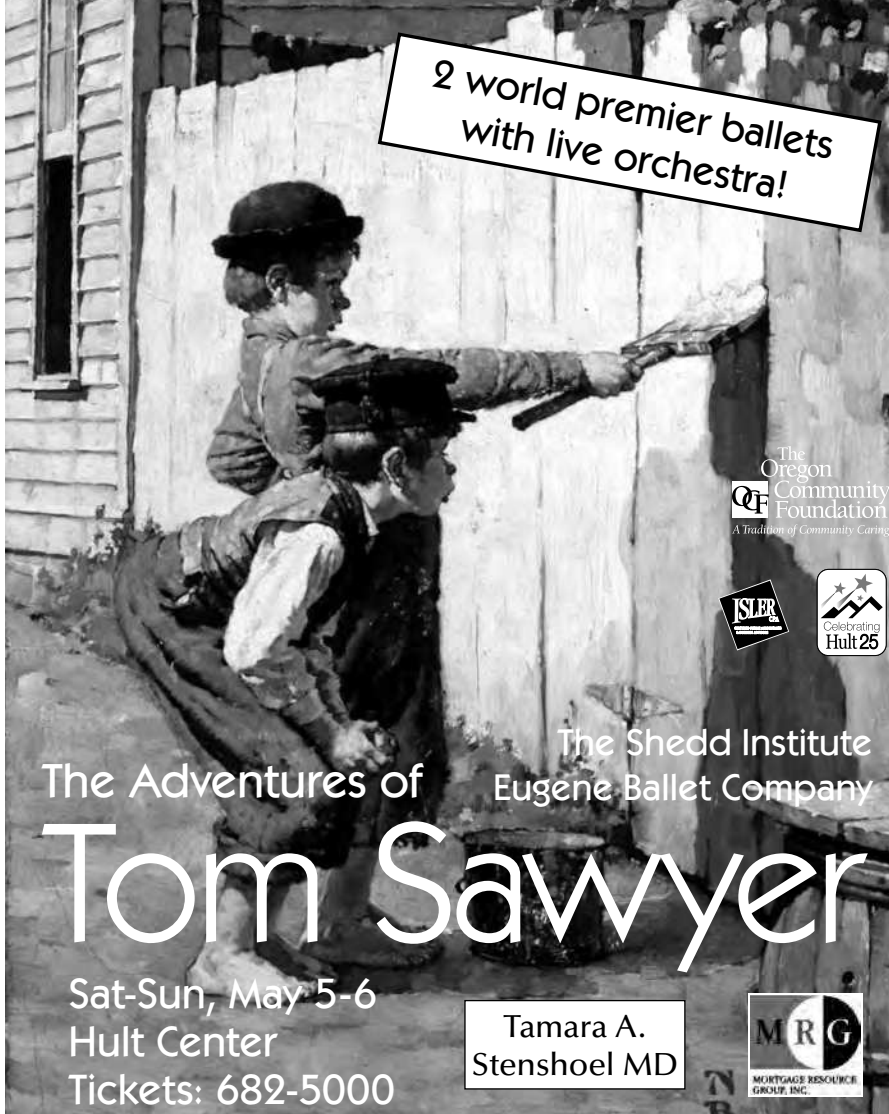
*Josh Laughlin
Cascadia Wildlands Project
Eugene*

CHAINSAW MASSACRE

There seems to be an increase in the destruction of one of Eugene's major resources, the city trees. The culprit is none other than our own EWEB. On Friday, April 20, on the eve of Earth Day, the EWEB crew arrived on Knoop Lane off River Road and proceeded to cut down the two remaining pine trees next door to our property. They had cut one of the three trees a few weeks earlier and had promised me they would only cut down one of the three trees. They showed up on Friday and cut down the two remaining perfectly healthy trees because they were getting tangled in their lines. I don't know if they had or even if they needed the owner's permission. It seems a moot point anyway since the owner is a developer in Santa Barbara, Calif., and has little but money invested in this piece of land which is an integral part of our neighborhood.

Our neighborhood has been altered forever. The little run-down house shielded by the grove of trees is now an outright eyesore with all its structural and cosmetic flaws glaring in the bright light. The crows are gone. These were large, established trees. They were enjoyed by all of us who lived

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