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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

that a big slice of Eugene's community comes out only on certain nights to play, i.e., the once a month ARTWalk, the once a year Celebration and certain other occasions? Why does it feel safe then? Why couldn't we just have music and a celebration of Eugene's "downtown living room" on some weekends and a meeting place for all of our citizens and their guests? A "Jardin" if you will, where many of the wonderful people in Eugene can congregate and help to bring about a feeling of good will. The downtown area has to be about all of us to work. It *does* take a village. There are several of us who would be more than willing to volunteer our time towards an effective entertainment committee.

Eugene Otis
Eugene

ODFW PROPAGANDA

Not surprisingly, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) administrator Ron Anglin continues with the fear-based rhetoric of encouraging the public to report any cougar sighting to "ensure the safety of the community" ("ODFW Responds," letters, 8/9).

Here are some facts to consider: The ODFW's mission is to regulate killing. Its main constituent is the hunting lobby. ODFW uses the number of reported sightings to instill public fear of potential encounters with cougars. Cougar biologists agree that solicitation of cougar sightings is an inappropriate and unreliable method of determining cougar numbers, as sightings have proven to be extremely rare.

Under the guise of public safety, ODFW's decisions to control cougar populations are driven by the desire to artificially increase deer and elk numbers rather than maintaining biodiversity. During the 1994 Measure 18 campaign (banning the use of dogs to hunt cougars), ODFW began aggressively soliciting cougar sightings and complaints from the public. Predator Defense took legal action to get copies of supposed sightings and damage complaints. Our review of reports filed between May 1994 through 1996 found that 96.7 percent of

sightings and 91.7 percent of damage complaints were unconfirmed. No government agent investigated these sightings or incidents. More than a decade later, not much has changed. ODFW still does not investigate the majority of complaints and often gives permission to kill cougars without any verification of a problem.

Wildlife science does not support the contention that killing cougars is necessary to control their populations. Left unchallenged, the ODFW will continue to use myth and fear to justify the slaughter of Oregon's cougars.

Brooks Fahy
Executive Director, Predator Defense
Eugene

DIRTY MONEY

Although Phil Knight certainly has a right to spend his millions as he pleases, one important footnote has been overlooked in the press regarding his recent \$100 million donation to UO athletics: It's dirty money. Knight's Nike has a long-standing history of reaping its profits on the backs of slave laborers in overseas sweatshops. Although Nike downplays this with spins and shameless excuses, the sobering facts are readily available on many websites.

When I learned of this many years ago, I stopped buying Nike products. Nevertheless, it is probably ridiculous to expect this to matter to the good ol' boys at UO. Who bites the hand that feeds them, right? In light of this and other recent events too numerous to mention here, the Ducks are looking more and more like dogs rolling over for a smelly bone.

Dave Ryan
Eugene

GRACIOUS GRASS BURNERS

I have just read that our grass seed farmers will not do any burning during the Olympic trials so that the athletes can have clean air to breathe. So gracious of them. Imagine the bad press throughout the nation if the air quality was as usual filled with their noxious smoke.

As far as stopping their burning for the rest of the time (for the rest of us), as most

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