



EVA SYLWESTER

PARKING THE LEAVES

All over Eugene, leaves recently shed by trees are getting a second chance at life thanks to a city recycling program that has been in place since the late 1960s.

The city of Eugene Public Works collects leaves from all parts of Eugene twice each year between early November and mid-January to keep the leaves from clogging storm drains. Eric Johnson, surface operations manager for Eugene Public Works, said the city collects about 16,000 cubic yards of leaves every leaf season. Last year, about a quarter of them went to private properties. The rest were divided among local recyclers, community gardens and processing for use as compost in parks.

"We never deliver leaves to our landfill," Johnson said.

Some of this year's collected leaves have already found a home at West University Park. The park, located at the corner of East 14th Avenue and Hilyard Street, was shut down about 10 years ago because of criminal activity. Now, on a different plot of land that is more visible to the street, members of West University Neighbors (WUN) are planning to re-open the park, says WUN Secretary Eugene Drix.

Progress on the park has been slower than expected, leaving the plot as a patch of grassless soil for the upcoming rainy winter months, so the WUN arranged for 14 truckloads of leaves to be dumped on the park site. The leaves are expected to cut down on the worst of the muddiness and to serve as mulch to fertilize the soil for future plants, Drix says.

"Leaves are rich in minerals, so when they do break down, they provide a great source of minerals to the soil," says Anne Donohue, compost specialist for the city of Eugene.

Donohue said two things that help leaves decompose faster are shredding them into smaller pieces and adding materials containing nitrogen to the compost pile. Sources of nitrogen include coffee grounds, alfalfa pellets and grass clippings.

Donohue added that though some people worry that leaves will make their compost piles too acidic, leaves are actually

less acidic than some commonly composted food items, like apples and oranges, and that the bacteria in the compost pile buffer the acidity. For more tips on composting, Donohue recommends the website eugenerecycles.org

Johnson said many people choose to compost their own leaves. Residents can request extra leaves for their yards by visiting eugene-or.gov/leaf or calling 682-4800. A schedule for leaf collection is also available at the website.

"The sooner the better to get your request in because it is pretty popular," Johnson said.

Leaf pickup in unincorporated Santa Clara/River Road and Springfield areas is handled through Lane County Public Works. Information is available at lanecounty.org/PW/Leaf.htm

—Eva Sylwester



MOONWATER REMEMBERED

Former longtime Eugene singer and musician June (Moonwater) Pierce died Oct. 26 and will be remembered in a celebration of life at dusk Sunday, Nov. 25 at Spencer Creek Grange on Lorane Highway. A potluck is planned.

Moonwater was born in Brooklyn in 1944, lived in California and Oregon and died of a stroke at age 63. She is survived by two daughters, three sons, two sisters, two brothers, 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A memorial fund has

• We're besieged with letters complaining about **iAsk a Mexican!**, our new syndicated column by Gustavo Arellano. Most of these letters came in too late for this issue since we are going to press a day early. Look for them next week. Meanwhile, a lively interview with Arellano can be found in *Utne* magazine. Go to utne.com and search for "Gustavo." In the introduction to the Q&A, interviewer Steven Robert Allen of *Alibi* newspaper writes, "I couldn't help but think that if we ran his column an angry mob would storm our offices ... After my initial horror subsided, however, I realized that beneath Arellano's offensive stereotypes and penchant for vulgarity lurked a smart, subversive social critic."

"From day one," Allen writes, "his column has embraced the full, terrifying scope of the immigration debate, ramming into it head-on, sometimes with what seems like reckless abandon."

In the interview, Arellano says he has critics and fans among both Latinos and Anglos. "What we tried to do from the start was just slam people and challenge everything they believe about Mexicans. That's why we run that logo. Of course it's a racist logo. But it's the Mexican that has been perpetuated by American culture for the past 150 years. ... There is a lot of racism out there, and stereotyping continues. As a child of Mexican immigrants, I'm not going to stand idly by and let people perpetuate those stereotypes. I'm going to go after them with everything I have."

• A Medal of Valor award for **killing a mentally ill teenager**? *The Register-Guard* reported the story Sunday in a follow-up to the shooting of Ryan Salisbury last November. The award makes no sense. Why would the Oregon Peace Officers Association honor officer Shawn Trotter for actions "above and beyond the call of duty to protect the public"? Is this award supposed to make Trotter feel better or somehow portray this tragedy as a positive response worthy of emulation? All it does is make police officers and their professional organization appear clueless and insensitive.

• As Duck watchers lose one football star after another with **season-ending leg injuries**, they must be wondering: Is this just the bad luck of a violent sport or is something else at play? Is the Autzen turf too grabby? Are the players' strengthening or stretching programs all wrong? Could Duck practices be too physical? Is the new high-octane Duck offense especially hard on players' legs? Could those fancy Nike shoes be part of the problem? Wouldn't that be ironic!

• Do you hear the word "passengers" in any of the hot debate about the 120-mile **railroad line from Eugene to Coquille** on the coast? Owned by a Florida hedge fund, the line was shut down in September for safety reasons confirmed by the Federal Railways Administration. The shutdown also has nearly shut down at least four major employers on the south coast that move lumber, wood chips and steel. With a nod to the grim forecasts of the latest climate change science, why don't we use this breakdown to start talking about moving passengers, too? With repair costs estimated at \$23 million, how much more will it cost to put on passenger cars, perhaps adding a short bus connection up to Florence? Plenty, but our Congressman Peter DeFazio is chair of the House Transportation Sub-committee and he would rather fund trains than wars. This could be the time.

• We wandered down to the **Holiday Market** this weekend at the fairgrounds and saw people in the booths actually dancing for joy and hugging each other and their customers. The first weekend of the market is a big reunion for people associated with the event, and the energy is infectious. And whoever's in charge of the live music has booked some great talent. Let's pack the market this year. It's free, it's fun. What's not to love?



Gary Brittain and the Fianacats onstage Saturday

COURTESY OF HOLIDAY MARKET

• Overheard: a conversation between two women waiting in the long line to use the **Hult Center women's bathrooms** during the intermission of *Evita* Saturday: "Why haven't they added more toilets for women here?" one asked. "Nothing's going to change until we get more women architects," another responded.

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