

- The receptionist will ask for your name and phone number when the donation is weighed in. She will issue a receipt if you ask for one.

- Produce that spoils very rapidly (such as soft berries) is not a good donation. Overripe or oversized produce probably won't get used. Produce cannot have been on the ground (like windfall fruit) where it may have become contaminated.

This year, FFLC and Grassroots Garden have been chosen to receive a portion of the proceeds from sales at the Oregon Plant Fair May 10 in Alton Baker Park. For more garden-specific suggestions or plants for extra rows, visit the fair between 10 am and 2 pm.

Grassroots Garden is one of three FFLC garden programs that Butzer describes as an important connection for bringing "thousands of pounds of fresh organic produce that is distributed through emergency food boxes, community meal sites and other partner agencies."

This growing season, gardeners at home can add their surplus to that harvest and help stave off hunger in Lane County.

— Wade Christensen

## CHIRP THRILLS AT FERN RIDGE FEST

Vibrant yellow and pink birds scamper across the ground. Petite black and blue birds soar in and out of view of the Secret House gardens. Sounds of chirping and whistling flood the courtyard.

"If we feed them, they will come," says Patti Chappel about her many winged visitors. Chappel, the owner of the Secret House Winery, is hosting the third annual Fern Ridge Wings & Wine Festival from 10 am to 4 pm Saturday, May 10. The event is cosponsored by the city of Veneta and several Lane County organizations.

"The magic thing about birding is that all

of a sudden things come into focus that you never thought were there," says Chappel, who hopes the festival will serve to educate and create wildlife awareness.

Secret House's grounds will hold hourly walks, a local art contest for kids and info booths hosting interesting activities. Many of the activities are free but need to be signed up for in advance because of limited spots.

For folks who want more activity, there will be birding tours at Fern Ridge and the Oregon Country Fair grounds with birding experts. Birding at the end of Royal Avenue with biologist Dan Farrar will reveal various shorebirds, raptors and other birds otherwise missed by the untrained eye.

"Learning to birdwatch is like getting a new car. As soon as you get one you notice it all the time around town," says Farrar. "As soon as you identify a bird and it becomes meaningful to you then you start to notice that bird."

If you are looking for a little more wine in your birding, the festival is a great place to start a tour of four wineries including Sweet Cheeks, Sylvan Ridge and King Estates. At each site there will be an opportunity to taste wine and view birds in the area.

"There is a lot of action here," says Chappel. "Love is in the air."

Some additional bird watching opportunities during the festival will be available as early as 7 am Saturday. For more details visit [wingsandwinefestival.com](http://wingsandwinefestival.com) or call 935-8841. — Cali Bagby

## COUNTY BUDGET MEETINGS NOW

May brings a series of Lane County Budget Committee meetings open to the

- **Endorsement time** is upon us, and ballots are arriving in the mail this week. We're being more selective in our picks this election. It doesn't make sense to endorse candidates who are unopposed on the ballot. There's a grain of truth in the old saying, "Don't vote – it just encourages them." If there's a candidate you don't like, don't vote for them just because they are the only name on the ballot.

For example, we will happily mark our ballots for Pete DeFazio for Congress, George Brown, Betty Taylor and Andrea Ortiz for City Council and Pete Sorenson for County Commission. But we're less likely to support other unopposed candidates who have been disappointing. Chris Pryor has been a predictable antiprogressive voice on the council; he has never had a challenger in Ward 8. nor has he faced the public in a debate. Likewise, Terry Beyer is the only Democrat in the House District 12 primary, but her conservative voting record mimics many Republicans.

How can we fill our ballots with more and better candidates? Well, we can start by raising the pay for Eugene city councilors. We can also be more proactive in recruiting and cultivating candidates to run for open positions and challenge bad incumbents. Lane County voters are not enamored with incumbency, and good campaigns can remove even entrenched politicians. Remember County Commissioners Steve Cornacchia and Anna Morrison and City Councilor Scott Meisner? Out to pasture. And now longtime Commissioner Bobby Green is sweating his future employment.

- Some good questions were fielded at the **mayoral debate** at City Club May 2, but one big question Jim Torrey avoided answering related to his support of George Bush and the Iraq invasion and the economic impact of Bush policies at home. Torrey dismissed the question by saying that his attention was on local issues. Kitty Piercy understands the connection, and we suspect Torrey does too but doesn't want to talk about it – just like he doesn't want to talk about how he would pay for more cops and filling potholes.

The Iraq invasion and occupation has in fact cost Eugene taxpayers about \$147 million so far (\$355 million for Lane County taxpayers; see [NationalPriorities.org](http://NationalPriorities.org)), and it's guaranteed to go much higher. In addition, the White House has cut Secure Rural Schools payments to Lane County and other federal timber counties to help pay for the war and tax cuts. Bush policies are directly related to Lane County's new budget proposal that eliminates about 188 full-time positions and numerous critical county services. And that \$147 million squandered on bullets, bombs and \$4 cans of soda pop would have filled a lot of Eugene potholes.

- **Speaking of potholes**, why are some mayoral candidates focusing on street problems? City attitude surveys show that potholes are way down on the list of citizen concerns. The focus on pavement by what *EW* wine columnist Lance Sparks calls "potholeheads" is likely strategic. Every voter understands potholes, but not every voter can relate so easily to the more subtle issues of protecting our environment and quality of life.

Also, can a Eugene mayor order Public Works to fix the streets? Nope. Our mayor has a bully pulpit but not much real power over the budget and no line-item vetoes or additions. Once a year the council debates and votes on the Budget Committee's recommended spending plan, but unless there's a 4-4 tie on the council, the mayor doesn't even get to vote.

- The website [icasualites.org](http://icasualites.org) is an excellent, nonpartisan source for statistics and news from international sources about the Iraq occupation and is the go-to site for much of the information in our "War Dead" box in News Briefs each week. The British site has been under attack by some sophisticated hackers who apparently don't want this information to be readily accessible to the public and to the media. In recent weeks only basic information has been available on the popular site due to hackers, and the site has been shut down at times.

- **Videographer Tim Lewis** tells us he's producing a series of short YouTube videos that will be uploaded for public viewing this week. One will include some old footage of Jim Torrey from his first terms as mayor. Others will follow, including some new footage of current topics, such as the Amazon Headwaters. Search for "Picture Eugene" on YouTube.

*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@eugene-weekly.com](mailto:editor@eugene-weekly.com)

## Happening people

BY PAUL NEEVEL

### GAIL UDELL

With 10 years of work experience in printing, San Francisco Bay Area native Gail Udell discovered Oregon on a vacation trip to Florence in 1994. "I picked up the Eugene phone book and saw lots of print shops," she says. "I came up and got an apartment. The first day I looked at the paper, I found a job at Eugene Print." Four years later, she met her husband, Jason Udell. In 2003, aware in advance that their daughter Teagan would be born with Down Syndrome, Udell searched in vain for local DS resources. "It was a negative experience," she says. Since the birth of her second daughter Shealyn in 2006, Udell has partnered with fellow DS mom Sydney Shook to start the Emerald Family Down Syndrome Network. "We get together the second Saturday of every month," she says. "Anyone is welcome. It's a chance to get together and play, to socialize and share ideas." EFDSN's first annual Buddy Walk drew a crowd last September. "It was hugely successful," Udell reports. "A lot of adults showed up." EFDSN's next event is Friends and Family Night at McMenamins North Bank on June 10. Learn more at [efdsn.org](http://efdsn.org)

