

The participants found empty metered parking spaces in the area of 8th Avenue, Pearl and Broadway and rolled out green carpeting or even real grass sod and set up lawn chairs and hammocks. To keep city meter readers happy, the group fed the parking meters and got some help from amused and supportive passers-by. Some fed the meters, and one woman left a dollar bill since she had no change. City ordinances apparently do not prohibit such peaceful activities as long as meters are fed.

"I've never done anything like this, and it's great, lots of fun," said Lauren Robertson from her parking space on 8th a few feet away from sidewalk diners at Mezza Luna Pizzeria.

Others who came by got involved and stopped to chat. One woman stayed and talked for an hour.

"We're getting a lot of questions, and a few weird looks," said Aubra Penner, Robertson's daughter and a PSU student on vacation.

What did the merchants think about nearby parking spaces being occupied for eight hours? "Starbucks was not a great vibe, but everyone else has been great," said Robertson.

Others participating included Amy Annino, Christo Brehm, Krinstina Koenig, Michelle Parkins, Lanbin Ren, Rena Schlachter, Lauren Schwarts and Anne Godfrey.

PARK(ing) Day (parkingday.org) began in San Francisco in 2005, and by 2007 had grown to more than 200 temporary parks in 50 cities worldwide. Its mission statement: "To rethink the ways streets are used, call attention to the need for urban parks, and improve the quality of urban human habitat ... at least until the meter runs out."

— Ted Taylor

BAD SUMMER FOR OUTDOORS?

With gas prices soaring and a spate of outdoor-adventure related deaths in the news is the "staycation" going to trump fitness oriented wilderness treks?

Five people have died on southern Oregon's Rogue River since the first of June thanks to higher water and faster currents on the popular whitewater destination. Half of those people were wearing life jackets. This isn't the first time Oregon has had a high number of boating deaths. In 2006 it was the Deschutes River that claimed the most lives — six — while the Rogue claimed two that year.

After Chapin Clark, the retired dean of the University of Oregon's law school, was killed when a fishing boat overturned on the Rogue on 2002, Oregon required that boaters on guided trips navigating Class III rapids or stronger wear lifejackets and carry a throw bag to pull overboard rafters to safety.

The group American Whitewater, which tracks rafting and kayaking related deaths, showed the highest number of deaths occurred in 2003, when 57 people died



TED TAYLOR

Michelle Parkins (in hammock), Lauren Robertson and Aubra Penner relax in front of Mezza Luna and Starbucks

shooting the rapids on America's rivers. However, with 10 million people a year rafting the rivers, the number is still fairly low.

Other Oregonian injuries reported this summer include a Salem man who fell to his death while hiking Smith Rock in Central Oregon and a Springfield man who survived a grizzly bear attack near Yellowstone.

Despite the possible dangers of the outdoors, Eugeneans may want to stay healthy and live a little longer by heading out to portions of the newly acquired Amazon Headwaters Forest after the Lane County Fair to hike off some of that fried food and cotton candy. — Camilla Mortensen

PERMACULTURE GATHERING

For 11 years, people have been gathering in Lane County to share ideas and inspiration about creating sustainable human environments. This year's Permaculture Gathering, also known as the Cascadia EcoFair, runs Aug. 29-31 at River's Turn Farm north of Coburg. Information is available by visiting cascadiaecofair.org or emailing jflan@efn.org or calling 345-6822.

The content of the gathering is based on "an ethic of interacting with the natural world in mutually beneficial ways," and is not just for permaculture designers, but for "anyone wanting to harmonize their life with the biosphere."

The event includes camping, meals, entertainment, farm tours, and workshops on appropriate technology, permaculture plants, adapting to the climate crisis, alternative energy, ecobuilding, fermented foods, culture change, relocalization of the economy, gardening, farming and farmscaping, cheesemaking and more.

Sliding scale ticket prices start at \$45; daily rates, work trades and scholarships are available.

ACTIVIST ALERT

• An **LRAPA public hearing** on "streamlining" the permitting process for industrial polluters is scheduled from 5:30 to 8 pm Aug. 26 at the Springfield Public Library. Those who cannot attend the hearing can

• **Lane Regional Air Protection Agency** is holding a public hearing on "streamlining" the permitting process for industrial polluters but you probably don't know about it unless you are in the habit of reading legal ads. From what we can tell, no press releases were faxed or emailed, and the notice is nearly impossible to find at lrapa.org (click on Permitting & Enforcement, then Public Comment, then Rulemaking).

This hearing deals with 385 pages of changes proposed by LRAPA staff, and buried in the minutia are some significant changes that could affect the quality of the air we breathe for generations. The new rules are intended to align LRAPA more closely with DEQ and appear to be more geared to minimizing staff workload than proactive and innovative air quality management. LRAPA has the legal authority to develop more stringent rules and regulations than the weak state DEQ, and if we're not going to pursue stronger controls, then what's the point of funding our own agency?

The new rules, for example, "encourage" polluters to "take into account the overall impact of the control methods selected, considering risks to all environmental media and risks from all affected products and processes." Why not change "encourage" to "require" and set standards and benchmarks?

We can't blame just the staff for weak rules. They answer to the LRAPA board, which is currently split between industry interests and public health interests, with industry carrying more weight. That balance needs to change if we're ever going to see any innovation in the public interest. Meanwhile, public input does make a difference (see Activist Alert for more info and contacts).

• **Parking meters downtown?** As much as we might find them irritating, there's no consensus to be found on whether parking meters have an overall positive or negative force on the vitality and livability of our city. We have debated this topic for years. In the end it's an emotional but inconsequential issue, and City Councilor Mike Clark knows that. His proposal to remove downtown parking meters is just part of his campaign to distract us from more substantive issues (such as the crying need for an independent performance auditor), put Mayor Kitty Piercy in an awkward no-win position and get his name in the paper. Oops. It just happened again.

• In this column Aug. 7 we wrote about the **big photo in the R-G** of Scott Thomas holding a misleading sign reading "A Million Dollars for Police Review While Criminals Run Loose." Turns out there's a Detective Scott Thomas in the Eugene Police Department. Is it the same guy? The EPD isn't saying. And a Scott Thomas has gotten two recent letters published in the R-G supporting the cops and blasting civilian review. Thomas has a right to his express his opinions, of course, but it seems relevant to the community discussion that he identify himself as a police officer, just as the police union leaders identify themselves in op-eds. Makes us wonder who else on the EPD is actively politicizing police review.

On the other hand, we know not all cops on the force think alike. We get off-the-record comments from EPD officers who think reform of the department is long overdue, including a strong civilian review process.

• We're delighted that Eugene's annual **S.L.U.G. Queen** competition is getting the publicity it deserves from the mainstream press this year. Hopefully this means that even more of Eugene's usually wacky candidates will turn out in slimy costumes on Sept. 5 with their typical display of talents. We cheer S.L.U.G. Queen contender Constance Van Flandern's efforts to jazz up Eugene's quirky contest, but we're puzzled by her reported "disappointment" in the voters' choice not to give \$40 million to developers in the city's urban renewal measure last fall. The S.L.U.G. Queen's traditionally use their "rain" to raise

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

JOY HATCH

"When I was pregnant, there was a lot of pressure to buy stuff," says Joy Hatch, a teacher at Shasta Middle School. "I didn't want to do it." The daughter of frugal Iowans who honeymooned in Oregon and decided to stay, Hatch grew up in Newport. "My dad was a game warden, and my mom stayed home," she



says. "She hung up the wash, canned, and made our bread, yogurt and hand soap." Hatch had stayed in touch with college friend Rebecca Kelley, who was pregnant at the same time in Portland. Unable to find a book on eco-friendly child raising, they decided to write one. "We had no idea how to publish a book," says Hatch, who started writing in the spring of 2007, six months after her son Roscoe was born. "It was a lot of trial and error." While waiting for their agent to find a publisher, Hatch and Kelley launched a website, The Thrifty Green Baby Guide (greenbabyguide.com). "We started a blog in December," says Hatch. "Every month the number of viewers has doubled. Last month we had 10,000 visitors." Three weeks ago, Hatch and Kelley got the news that their book will be published in 2010.