

speaker also failed to comply with the officer's orders in English. Warden claims that he thought the unarmed student "sitting on the ground" was "coming at me to potentially hurt me."

The city has known that its police officers Taser people who don't understand police orders, without changing its policy and training to address the problem.

In June, the Eugene police auditor and Civilian Review Board described in their annual report an incident in which police officers Tasered a nonthreatening, non-communicative mentally ill man for failing to comply with orders. The report said the police policy allowing shocking after warning is "flawed" in that "it does not address the issue that to be meaningful a warning must be heard and understood."

The only apparent city response to the report was the City Council appointing an auditor and review board members who are less critical of police. Failing to respond to documented problems can open the city to expensive lawsuits. — Alan Pittman

TOWN HALL TO EXAMINE ISSUES OF HOMELESS

A town hall meeting titled "Intersections: The Rights of the Homeless and the Rights of the Community" is planned for 7 to 10 pm Tuesday, Nov. 24, at Harris Hall, 8th and Oak in Eugene.

This working meeting will address the need for local jurisdictions to change their ordinances and policies to comply with a 2006 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, *Jones v. Los Angeles*, in which the court held that homeless individuals in public spaces cannot be intimidated, harassed, roused or arrested for having no shelter to go to, according to Eugene activist Paul Prenskey.

"This ruling is binding on local jurisdictions, and L.A., Fresno, and Portland, among others, have changed their laws and policies accordingly," says Prenskey. "We will organize a public effort to get the cities of Lane County and the county administration to change their ordinances and for police departments to change their policies to come into compliance."

Prenskey says the meeting will also be an effort "to get our arms around the totality of the situation faced by the homeless — no access to shelter, food or clothing for the winter, the problem of predators among the homeless population, and the need for a support system to respond in real time to the need of those stranded in public this winter to get to available shelter, or have some of their needs met on the spot if they choose to 'stay out.'"

Prenskey envisions a paid hotline coordinator, a network of volunteers to take one or more 7 pm to 3 am shifts on-call to offer transport to available shelter, and a street patrol to assist people in connecting with unmet needs, and in weeding out predators.

A panel is being formed of law enforcers, downtown security personnel and concerned business community members to

balance a panel representing the homeless themselves.

Prenskey says he hopes to see "an effort to destigmatize homelessness and encourage local residents to make the effort this winter to do unto the least among us as we would want done unto us."

A panel discussion of homelessness is also on the program at City Club of Eugene Friday, Nov. 20. See Activist Alert.

ACTIVIST ALERT

• Two Lane County **Green Drinks** groups are combining from 6 to 8 pm Thursday, Nov. 19, for a special meeting at Davis' Restaurant on Broadway. Erik Stafl,

CEO of the new electric vehicle company Arcimoto, is scheduled to give a very brief presentation. To get on the Green Drinks mailing list, send a note to helios@helios-network.org or call 284-7020.

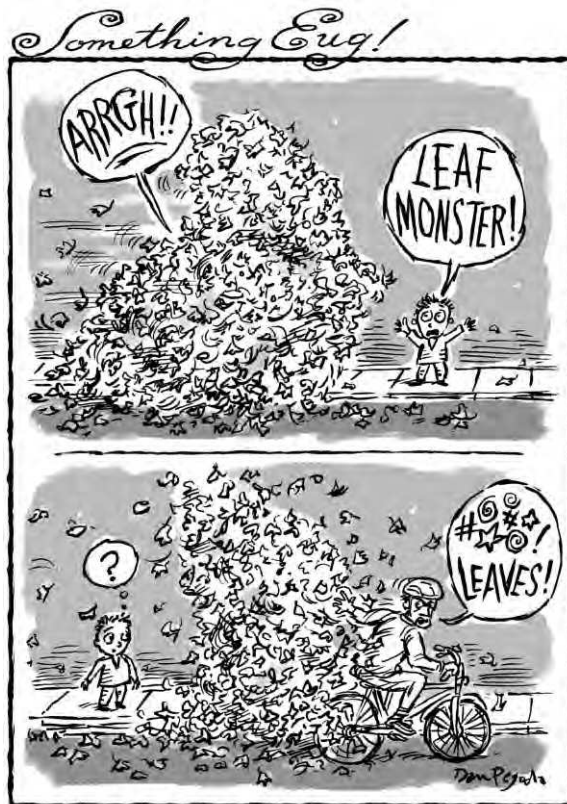
• At least two members of the "**Mad as Hell Doctors**" contingency that recently returned from Washington, D.C., are planning to attend a potluck and discussion about health insurance reform at 7 pm Thursday, Nov. 19, at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St. (see News Briefs last week).

• "**Sheltering the Homeless: Why Bother?**" is the topic at City Club of Eugene at noon Friday, Nov. 20, at the Hilton. Speakers are Terry McDonald, David Robertson and Susan Ban.

• **MECCA**, the Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts, is celebrating its 10th anniversary and grand re-opening following a move this summer. A public celebration and open house will be held from 4 to 7 pm Saturday, Nov. 21, at MECCA, 449 Willamette St., in Eugene. Refreshments, live music, prizes and creative activities will be available.

• A "**We are One**" fundraiser performance for the International Arts Center in Guinea, West Africa, is planned for 7 pm Saturday, Nov. 21, at Agate Hall Auditorium, 1787 Agate St. Tickets are \$5 in advance through the WOW Hall, or \$10 at the door.

• **Stand for Children** is organizing a rain-or-shine, door-to-door and sidewalk leafletting day Sunday, Nov. 22, in support of Measures 66 and 67 on the January ballot. Volunteers are gathering at 1 pm at the SEIU office in the basement of the Oregon Community Credit Union at 488 E. 11th Ave. RSVP to jmarshall@stand.org or call 912-2921.



SLANT

• Opponents to the Eugene City Council intervening on the police department's **out-of-control Taser use** would have you believe Eugene isn't a democracy but some banana dictatorship. Eugene doesn't have a democratic council form of government, the argument goes; we have a "strong city manager form of government." Huh? The City Charter says, "All power of the city is vested in the City Council." If the councilors can pass an ordinance micromanaging the exact angle at which pedestrians can cross the street (jaywalking), they can certainly set policy on the use by city employees of potentially lethal, 50,000-volt weapons.

• County Commissioner **Bill Fleenor** announced this week that he will seek another four-year term, and we're pleased to hear it. Fleenor has been a huge improvement over his predecessor, Anna Morrison, when it comes to environmental and social justice issues. And he's been good on taxation issues and public safety, despite efforts by conservatives and *The Register-Guard* to unfairly label him as soft on crime and punishment. The campaign will hopefully provide an opportunity to set the record straight, though we predict the same old erroneous information will be trotted out again and again, particularly regarding the funding of jail beds. Fleenor is still being blamed for jail bed cuts made by Commissioners Faye Stewart and Bobby Green, before Fleenor was even on the board.

In Fleenor's prepared remarks at his announcement this week, he recalled the words of the late Sen. Wayne Morse: "Why can't there be elected officials who just follow the facts wherever they lead, let

the chips fall wherever they may, while always putting the people first?" Fleenor added, "Maybe it's naïve for me to think I can be that person, but believe me, I'm trying to be!"

• **Lane Transit District** finds itself in a pickle, trying to choose between several unwieldy options for the federally subsidized EmX bus rapid transit route in west Eugene. Each option has its advantages and disadvantages, but probably the option that will draw the most public ire is along the north bank of Amazon Creek and the popular creekside bike path that hundreds of cyclists and walkers use each day. Less resistance is likely for a route that would use parts of 6th, 7th, 11th and 13th avenues, particularly if those routes can be designed to serve transit riders, create minimal disruption to existing residents and businesses, and remove few trees.

This is a difficult and painful process, but establishing bus rapid transit lines to serve west Eugene is vitally important, not so much for the next few years, but for the long term. We need to plan for 20 to 50 years and beyond, when mass transit will dominate our evolving transportation system. The EmX routes may have noisy, stinky buses for the next 10 years, but after that the same dedicated routes can be converted to relatively quiet, clean light rail.

• Imagine a **4,500-acre natural area** in the middle of our metropolitan area. That's the hope Chris Orsinger held out to the City Club of Eugene Nov. 3 at the Hilton. Orsinger is executive director of Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah. For years, he has been negotiating with the Wildish company for an option

to purchase its 1,200-acre parcel to add to our precious park. If that big deal can come together, river restoration will be huge for salmon, other fish, turtles and waterfowl. Listening to both Orsinger and Jonathan Stafford, president of the arboretum at Pisgah, we were impressed at the power of patience in bringing such great assets to our community.

• Dunno if columnist David Sarasohn in *The Sunday Oregonian* (Nov. 15) is ahead or behind the curve. He's still bringing up the possibility of **Peter DeFazio running for governor**. Sarasohn says DeFazio told him he won't make his final decision until filing day, next March. We'll put ourselves in that large group the Portlanders mention that does not expect our congressman to run. For many reasons, we want him right where he is, as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee.

• The residents of Cottage Grove and Veneta are finding out that **growth doesn't pay**. Both cities are now faced with crushing sewer bills that they never would have had if they had restricted wanton sprawl. Little rural villages can run on septic systems. Cities can't without drowning in their own poop. Rural villages work fine with low taxes. Sprawling cities can't. If the residents of Veneta and Cottage Grove don't want ever-rising taxes and fees, they should dump the development interests and speculators who run their towns.

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