

website at <http://wkly.ws/n4> will fill you in on the details. However, 1978 was the first year of the Eugene Summer Solstice Tournament, which Henry Callahan & co. founded. The 32nd annual tournament was last weekend, at Ascot Park and Roosevelt Middle School. I hope some people managed to catch some top-level Ultimate while the show was in town.

*Jacob Blair
Eugene*

THE MYOPIC CABAL

It is astonishing to watch our current elected leaders fiddle-faddle around with citizens' lives and stubbornly refuse to look outside the box.

Gov. Kulongoski and his cohorts Senate President Peter Courtney and John Kitzhaber plan to fix the general fund budget problem by cutting school days, laying off Oregon State Police officers, releasing criminals and letting some of our senior and disabled citizens die. They prefer this plan to legalizing and taxing marijuana.

On the Republican side Sen. Ted Ferrioli has been waging a violent drug war against Oregonians who smoke marijuana for decades. No new ideas there.

These are our incompetent leaders. It's like these leaders forgot to pay the water bill. Now they are running around crying, "We're dying of thirst!" while outside it is raining.

When it comes to marijuana — it is raining money. Legalize it, tax it, fix the budget.

*Chris Pender
Eugene*

DEAD OR ALIVE

Statistics show the crime rate is falling. Maybe that explains why the Lane County Sheriff's and the D.A.'s office have time to prosecute my mom over a misunderstanding about a stray, dying cat.

Two years ago, a stray cat began eating with our outside cats and adopted us. A neighbor recalled that his name was Stanley, and he had been left by an elderly man who moved away. Stanley took sick three weeks ago with raspy breathing and became emaciated since he wouldn't eat or drink. A kindly neighbor lady, knowing we can't afford expensive vet bills, took Stan to the vet for antibiotic shots and found he had an identifying chip.

Days later a man called numerous times claiming it had been his ex-wife's pet. She had moved out of state, but he wanted the ill cat back, "dead or alive." He sounded threatening to an elderly lady, using profanity and phrases like "I know

where to find you!" Also, he called the cat a name different than the one on the chip and supplied other info that conflicted with what we knew as fact, causing disbelief he was the correct owner.

He frightened and confused the lady and got the police involved. The sheriff refused to charge the guy with threatening and harassing phone calls, yet filed a report that led the D.A. to bring charges against my mom that could result in a felony conviction although she has no prior record.

The vet said the cat was unlikely to remember its past owners and felt it had a better chance of survival with its present family. Last year, Stanley got ill to the point of losing mobility of his back legs, but we nursed him to recovery. Last week, Stanley resumed eating and drinking but has since taken a slight turn for the worse.

We feel we're doing the right thing for the cat, but legally we're confused. We can't afford legal representation, but if you pet lovers or others have any good advice, please contact C. Wulf, Veneta, 514-3673. Meanwhile, when the police or D.A.'s office ask voters for more funding, remember how they are wasting time and your money on frivolous cases, and vote against them.

*Les Wulf
Eugene*

A JUICY TALE

The next time you allow your child to take juice to school in a plastic container, think twice! Thanks to a small amount of one week old juice that had fermented in the bottom of a plastic bottle left in her backpack, my stepdaughter was issued a ticket for possession of alcohol by a minor, suspended from school, thus missing her Shasta Middle School graduation, and her newly acquired position as a Willamette High School junior varsity cheerleader is in jeopardy.

The whole thing started when some students borrowed my stepdaughter's "empty" juice container to get some fresh water. The students noticed an offending alcohol smell. This resulted in a trip to the principal's office where the witnessing students were asked to write testimonies concerning the offending bottle. After someone at the school suggested that my stepdaughter was drunk, she challenged them to call the police to check her for alcohol possession and use, and the school followed suit. The officer's tests showed the bottle positive for alcohol, but the breathalyzer test proved negative. The officer who wrote the citation did not take any time to think critically about the

A Formal Complaint

Rights activists taking the next step

The "magic boxes" painted on the sidewalks adjacent to the downtown LTD station (see EW, 5/27) did the trick of removing crowds that had been blocking the sidewalk. The purpose of the boxes is to restore constitutional rights to everyone, according to Chief Pete Kerns.

While the city has provided some clarification, there is still some confusion about the no-blocking zones. For instance, our guest viewpoint in *The Register-Guard* June 27 was given a headline referring to "free speech issues," even though it turns out free speech is not the issue. Unless, in a backwards way, that issue includes what was apparently said by downtown patrol officers, statements they did not have the right to make. Officers did not have the right to threaten kids with fines or jail for stepping or standing inside the boxes.

The Code of Conduct for Eugene police officers includes the "fundamental duty to observe, respect, and protect the constitutional rights of every person." Officers must also be truthful and not convey misleading information.

Especially on behalf of the young people - many understandably afraid to challenge police - we are filing a formal complaint with the police auditor. Our purpose is not to put officers on the hot seat, but rather to improve the system, including better training about constitutional rights and profiling.

If the sometimes-unpleasant kids are not intentionally blocking passage, could it be that their constitutional rights to be inside the boxes trump the civil rights of others using the sidewalks, even the frail and disabled?

Fortunately, one group's rights won't be pitted against another's. The council's number one goal is "A community where all people are safe, valued and welcome," especially downtown. To the extent that goal was going sideways with unauthorized, illegal, targeted threats by police regarding the boxes, those concerns seem to have been nipped in the bud.

Ironically, Chief Kerns wrote to City Council that, "The project has drawn sharp criticism from some local activists who, with limited information, have drawn conclusions about the legitimacy of the project."

That would be us. But we haven't questioned the legitimacy of the boxes, nor have we suffered from limited information. Rather, we went up the chain of command with information from the street level, from kids and a key officer, to head off a lawsuit against the city. (The city attorney had approved the no-blocking zones and painted boxes and lettering. But the message in spoken warnings and threats was a different matter.)

Another aspect of our complaint will be aimed higher up the chain of command. Many opportunities are being missed that could result in better communication, coordination, and collaboration with affected and/or supportive community members and potential partners. This would be good for public relations, but more importantly, it could lead to strategic capacity-building for a viable downtown.

The Magic Box Project was developed in closed meetings of downtown security agencies, police, and other city employees. It was not mentioned in advance in the monthly open meetings of the informal Downtown Safety Council, nor was it discussed in last fall's Downtown Public Safety Task Team meetings (open to the public but not publicized).

The downtown exclusion zone ordinance is under review by the police department, and will likely be amended and extended by City Council in late summer. Legal issues need community discussion and buy-in by various stakeholder groups, including civil liberties organizations.

Proactive transparency about the place of the exclusion ordinance within the larger package of intended downtown public safety measures will help smooth the way. Human rights issues are related, including the need for safe, dry, legal places to sleep, and the imperative for affected groups to be represented in the process.

We look forward to being in the loop, and hope many others will be as well.

Community activists Majeska Seese-Green and Carol Berg-Caldwell co-founded the nonprofit A Community Together - Lane County (ACT). The public is welcome to ACT's one-year birthday celebration picnic on Sunday, July 25, and to a community play-day at Skinner Butte Park on Sunday, Sept. 12, sponsored by ACT's project Police and Community Together (PACT). For more information as it becomes available, call 337-1643 or email info@actlane.org

Yield to Predictability

Yielding at the wrong time risks collisions.

With few exceptions, the rules of the road for motorists also apply to bicyclists. When either motorist or bicyclist disrupts traffic patterns by inappropriately yielding the right-of-way, it can lead to immediate danger as well as increase future uncertainty. Predictability is the hallmark of safe driving and riding.

Free bike light with bicycle overhaul!

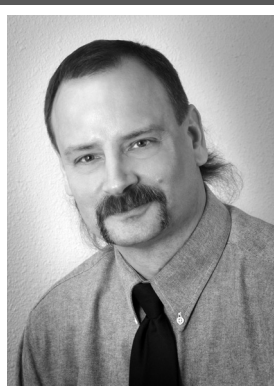
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arriving by bike

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• Pick up the Oregon Bicyclist Manual (ODOT) at our store. Also Eugene/Springfield and Lane County bike maps! •



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