

• The campaign for three **contested 4J School Board positions** is off to a shaky start with a field of 10 candidates. Eight showed up at a City Club of Eugene forum last Friday and many in the audience left scratching their heads. A lot of platitudes about education were touted, but not many specific solutions were offered to the district's myriad challenges.

The proposed temporary income tax for schools is certainly not the only issue in this race, but it is one distinct indicator of political leanings. In the Position 1 race, incumbent Alicia Hays supports the tax while challenger Greg Stallings is against it. Hays' other challenger Gary Carpenter, who could not make the forum, supports both the income tax and the 4J bond measure. Carpenter is principal at Elmira High School. In Position 4, incumbent Craig Smith backs the tax along with his challenger Natasha Hennings, but candidates Linda Hamilton and Mark Callahan are against it. Hamilton says schools need more funding, but it should come from the state. She does back the 4J bond measure. In Position 7, incumbent Mary Walston favors the tax, while her challengers Matt Ginsberg and Sherry Callahan think schools need to better utilize the money they already have.

Yes, the two Callahans are married to each other, but are running for different positions. Sherry Callahan, who did not attend the forum, has posted on her website (www.electcallahan.com) an odd email from opponent Matt Ginsberg saying her campaign is "halfhearted," hurts her husband's race and his own campaign, and suggesting she withdraw. Gotta love the internet.

• Why does the **R-G editorial board** continue to rant against Lane County Commissioners Rob Handy and Pete Sorenson? The latest puzzling editorial was Sunday, April 17, complaining that the commissioners haven't shown any "expression of contrition" following the settlement of an expensive lawsuit over the state Open Meetings Law. Huh? Slow news day? Or is the R-G is still trying to justify its ill-advised early editorial campaign aligning itself with the local timber industry and other conservative business interests in the community?

Let's not forget that this lawsuit was never about technical violations of gray areas in the Open Meetings Law. If the timber industry really gave a rat's ass about the decision-making process they would have sued previous conservative commissioners who were far more closed and secretive. We've said it before: This lawsuit was a business investment. Millions, if not billions in profits will be made over time if the struggling timber industry can defame, deflate and unseat those pesky enviros on the commission. The lawsuit feels like an act of desperation by an industry losing its long-held power to dictate unsustainable land-use policy. Somehow R-G editorial writers have consistently missed this obvious connection. Follow the money, guys. It's not that hard.

• It was cold and rainy day at **Saturday Market and Farmers Market** this past weekend, and one metal artist we talked to barely sold enough art to pay for his lunch burrito. But a few loyal market-goers could still be found browsing booths and buying beautiful fresh veggies. Let's all get down there next Saturday, rain or shine, and get some cash flowing into our local economy.

• Lane County excels in **multicultural gatherings**. We caught two remarkable events in just the past week. The first, on April 11, was the Interfaith Prayer and Reflection service that's taken place at 7 pm on the 11th of each month since Sept. 11, 2001 (see interfaithprayer.org). First Christian Church downtown hosts the unique service organized by people from many local faith communities. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Bahá'ís, Hindus, Buddhists, Native Americans and others shared music and wisdom from their religious traditions. No proselytizing, just a respectful and inspiring celebration of diverse spiritual paths.

A few days later, on April 16, a large gathering happened at Amigos Cultural Center, the old Whiteaker School. Members of Native tribes from around the country came together to hear about the Winnemem Wintu Tribe's project to restore native salmon runs. Adding to the Wild Salmon Party were performances of Hawaiian Island singers and dancers and Japanese Taiko drumming. Making a symbolic run to begin the ceremonies were members of Juventud Faceta, a Latino youth empowerment group, who are adopting the Winnemem "water warriors" program (see News Briefs last week).

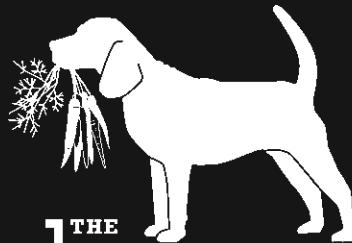
• We visited a local **auto wrecking yard** recently in search of early 1990s VW parts and discovered that thousands of not-so-old wrecked vehicles are no longer available for scavenging. Scrap metal prices hit a record high a while back and older wrecks were worth more crushed than they were for parts. Good for the wrecking yards; not so good for those of us who like to keep our 20- and 30-year-old buggies running forever.

Alternatives can be found to the high prices at wrecking yards and elsewhere; local classified ads and the internet are making it easier to find replacement parts for all kinds of worn-out equipment – but maybe not for that old inflatable doll in your closet. Now there's a business for someone: reconditioned sex toys. Or maybe some old equipment lying around can be repurposed for pleasure. Any suggested names for such an enterprise?

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

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