



MALL RATS DEMYSTIFIED

Bailey Ellis-Wiard was 17 years old when a homeless man stopped her on the downtown mall and asked for a penny. They were of a similar age, and she took the interruption in her errands as a chance to ask a few questions: How long had he been living on the streets? Why? Where did he sleep?

A week later she ran into him again, then again. The two unlikely compatriots became friends. Ellis-Wiard used the two months of their friendship to try to understand the world of this 20-year-old ex-Marine and homeless alcoholic. She was introduced to his court of Kesey Square street kids and became fascinated with the issue of teen homelessness. She met kids who were homeless by choice.

"For some it's a rite of passage," Ellis-Wiard explains. "They can live on the streets for a few weeks and return home, but for most it often leads into homelessness *not* by choice due to substance abuse."

Then her friend disappeared, and in the space of two evenings Ellis-Wiard pounded out the rough draft of a play. "It was awful," she says with chagrin, "but I didn't necessarily think of it as something that would be performed. Maybe (the play) was just something that could document what had happened."

She showed the play to a few friends as a way of sharing her experiences. Within a few years she had carefully rewritten the script and held a staged reading. She was supported by the likes of Patrick Torelle, Ralph Steadman and Trial by Fire Theatreworks.

She finds herself directing an 18-member cast at LCC's Blue Door Theatre this summer. "Rhea Gates has been the biggest help!" Ellis-Wiard says of LCC's Student Production Association president, who is also playing the lead role based on Ellis-Wiard.

The hardest part of being the director of her own script? "Getting my ducks in a row," Ellis-Wiard says with a sigh. Competing for actors, shaking folks down for props, trying to set a rehearsal schedule that accommodates everyone's work schedules, cobbling together costumes — Ellis-Wiard has had her hands full staging the show.

Ironically, sharing what is a very personal story has not been at all difficult. "This isn't about me," Ellis-Wiard says. "It's about the very important issue of teen homelessness."

The few times most of us have ever stopped to wonder about the street kids hanging out around Kesey Square, our thoughts are primarily centered around getting through them with our change still in our pocket and our conscience unrattled. *Shannon: Based On A (Maybe) True Story* offers us a chance to explore the world of teen homelessness through the lens of a young woman with no agenda, only curious compassion.

Admission is by donation (\$5 suggested) and all proceeds will go to Sheltercare, but Ellis-Wiard stresses that anyone can attend the play, regardless of ability to pay. "What's most important is that people come," she says.

Shannon plays 8 pm Aug. 4-14 at LCC's Blue Door Theater; info on Facebook at <http://wkly.ws/139> and at <http://wkly.ws/13a> — *Anna Grace*

PHOTO BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN



Learning to climb trees at action camp

ACTION ON THE ELLIOTT

The effort to save Oregon's state lands from logging ramped up in the predawn hours of July 26 when the Cascadia Forest Defenders, Earth First! and other activists put up tree sits and blockaded access to several timber sales along the west fork of the Millicoma River in the Elliott State Forest.

As of press time, one of the three tree-sit platforms had been knocked out of the tree by an unidentified man on a bulldozer.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is planning to increase the logging on the native, previously uncut forest, which is home to Endangered Species Act-listed marbled murrelets. CFD and Earth First! are using direct action campaigning to stop the clearcutting.

The protest is the culmination of a four-day "action camp" to train forest activists and support nonviolent direct defense of the coastal rainforest.

"Direct action is one of our most effective tools for creating change in this country," says Kim Marks of Rising Tide North America. "Just ask the suffragettes, the Underground Railroad and the unions, which created the eight-hour workday and ended child labor camps." Marks led workshops on strategic campaigning and on renegade blockades at the action camp.

At 93,000 acres the Elliott State Forest is the largest original coastal forest left in Oregon, according to conservation group Cascadia Wildands, which has been working to defend the Elliott through lawsuits and public comments. The group says ODF not only plans to start clearcutting on the previously intact western half of the forest, but also the logging on the forest could increase to 1,000 acres a year.

Jason Gonzales of CFD, and one of the organizers of the action camp, says the group wants to send a message to ODF that "we're in the fight to win." He points out that after years of "relentless direct action" the Forest Service had to change its ways. He says that agency still has its problems, but has made vast improvements, where "ODF as an agency has been going the opposite way."

CFD organizer Meredith Cocks called the clearcutting on the Elliott "really atrocious," she says, "A lot of people in the group are really passionate about it."

The camp, which was partly supported by donations from local businesses, at its height drew over 70 participants both local and from across the country. Many attendees came from the recent Earth First! Rendezvous in Montana, which culminated in a protest against Big Oil at the governor's office that made headlines across the country.

The CFD camp, deep in the Elliott off long and winding forest roads (that got certain *EW* reporters a little lost), had workshops ranging from educating activists about the Elliott to wilderness survival and tree climbing to fighting oppression. Participants also learned informally from chatting with more experienced activists about the nuts and bolts of living on a platform in an old-growth tree. Games were used to train participants in running on steep slopes and through the forest's understory.

CFD organizer Emmalyn Garrett says that the trees of the Elliott are of more benefit to Oregon's schoolchildren if left standing. The logging, she says, generates only a small percentage of school funds.

The Elliott State Forest, which is also used by Oregonians for recreation, is part of Oregon's Common School Fund lands. A report on the Elliott by economist Eric Fruits that was presented to the State Land Board states, "Department of State Lands management of the Elliott State Forest yields returns of less than 1 percent." The State Land Board is made up of Gov. Kitzhaber, the Oregon secretary of state and the state treasurer.

There is "a deep-seated issue of politicians and wealthy timber interests colluding to make a buck at the cost of Oregon's future," Garrett says. "Our group is really committed to being out here and having a sustained presence."

The protesters have issued a list of demands including stopping the use of herbicides in the forest and stopping the logging of native forests on public land in Oregon.

Some of the camp's attendees not involved in the current tree sit and blockades will be heading to the third Annual Cascadia Trans' and Womyn's Action Camp July 27 to Aug 1. For more info go to <http://twac.wordpress.com/>

For updates on the action in the Elliott, go to blogs.eugeneweekly.com and see next week's issue. — *Camilla Mortensen*

ACTIVIST ALERT

- The **Eugene Veg Education Network** is sponsoring a free talk on "Personal Food Choices and Climate Change" with speakers Dale Lugenbehl and Sandy Aldridge at 7 pm Thursday, July 28, at the McNail-Riley House, 13th and Jefferson.

- The next volunteer clean-up at **Civic Stadium** will be from 10 am to noon Saturday, July 30. Bring hand tools, gloves and water.

- **Controversial issues in Oregon** will be the subject of a new weekly series on Community TV, cable channel 29. It begins at 7 pm Saturday, July 30. The first program debate will review "Is Israel Justified Being in Palestine?" and debaters will be Barry Sommer and George Beres. Future programs will include politics, religion, athletics and election reform.

- **ELAW** will be the featured nonprofit at the 7 pm Thursday, Aug. 4, Em's baseball game, which means ELAW makes \$3 on every \$9 ticket they sell, and folks can use the tickets as a voucher for any game this season. Contact ELAW's Michele Kuhnle at michele@elaw.org or 687-8454 ext. 14.

- A **Hiroshima-Nagasaki-Fukushima Commemoration** will be from 7 to 9:30 pm Saturday, Aug. 6, at Alton Baker Park near the duck pond. A community potluck is followed by an 8 pm program featuring Japanese Koto music, Taiko drumming, Obon dancing, origami making and a call to action by Mayor Kitty Piercy. The event will close at dusk with the floating of candle lanterns on the duck pond while Koto master Mitsuki Dazai plays traditional Japanese music. The event is free but donations can be made to benefit Japanese tsunami survivors. Contact Michael Carrigan of CALC at 485-1755 or calpeace@efn.org for more information.

LIGHTEN UP

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

Obama has already given away the store to the Republicans in the negotiations over the debt ceiling. What's left to give them? Bo, the White House dog?