

the volume of plastics clogging our shorelines and seas, but also they reduce the immense cost of recycling plastic bags, he says.

Portland recently banned the distribution of plastic bags in its major grocery stores. According to Mathews, this ban has gone off without a hitch. "During the first couple of weeks there is usually some confusion," he said, "but then people just get used to it."

Hilex Poly, a plastic bag producer based in Georgia, opposes the ban and claims that the best solution would be to improve plastic bag recycling rather than banning bags altogether. The wood products industry supports a movement that would have them cranking out paper alternatives to the plastic bag. And plastic bags would still be legal for items like meat and vegetables.

The potential ban asks Oregonians to question how much they are willing to change their lifestyles in the name of the environment.

"We've seen it happen in cities around the world, and it hasn't been a problem," Mathews says of the ban. "It's good for the environment, and it doesn't hurt us at all."

— Caitlin McKimmy

## COUGAR ON LCC CAMPUS?

Exams are worrisome enough for LCC students during finals week. Add a possible sighting of a cougar in the campus parking lot and staying inside cramming all night doesn't seem so bad.

Unless the cougar is actually a dog.

LCC students received an email alert Nov. 22 advising them to be cautious of a cougar after a student reported spotting one in parking lot L at the main campus. The email urged students to call Public Safety to report any additional sightings.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) was called out to investigate tracks that were found near the sighting. Brian Wolfer, ODFW district wildlife biologist based in Springfield, determined they did not belong to a cougar.

"The only tracks we could locate were all dog tracks," he said. "We couldn't find any cougar tracks where the sighting supposedly occurred."

There have been confirmed cougar sightings in the area around LCC main campus in the past, according to Wolfer. Over the summer cougars were spotted in the Ridgeline trail system and confirmed by ODFW.

But Predator Defense Executive Director Brooks Fahy said the occurrence is a non-issue. "This is not a new phenomenon," he said. According to Fahy, there has never been an attack on a human being by a cougar in the state of

Oregon and reasons for concern are overblown.

"We are not a part of their prey base," he said.

LCC had not reported any additional sightings as of Monday.

"At this point we're monitoring to see what's going on, and we haven't been able to confirm that there's actually a cougar there," said ODFW biologist Wolfer.

Wolfer suggests students take precautions even though the cougar hasn't been confirmed because it wouldn't surprise him if there was one. Students should maintain eye contact with a cougar, he says, and make themselves look bigger by raising their arms or a backpack over their head. They should also have a light at night while walking through the parking lot.

— Ted Shorack

## ACTIVIST ALERT

- The first free **Opal Hour** social networking gathering for activism in mental health will be from 5 to 7 pm Thursday, Dec. 1, Rosa Parks Day, at the LILA Peer Support Club, 990 Oak St., Eugene. Live music by psychiatric survivor Liam Rhythm. Speakers include Mark Roberts, president of Lane Independent Living Alliance. Call 345-9106 or email oregon.united@gmail.com

- Mayor **Kitty Piercy's reelection** campaign kicks off with a gathering from 5 to 7 pm Friday, Dec. 2, at Cowfish Lounge and Danceclub, 62 W. Broadway. RSVP at Piercy's new campaign Facebook page, or contact Jake Foster, Piercy's new campaign manager, at jake@kittypiercy.com

- An **International Human Rights Day** celebration with a theme of "Act Now! Protect Human Rights in the Community" will be presented by the city of Eugene Human Rights Commission, the Equity and Human Rights Center, and the Community Coalition for Advancement of Human Rights, from 5:30 to 8 pm Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the Atrium Building, 99 W. 10th Ave. Keynote speaker is Ajamu Baraka. For information call 682-5177.

- Kit Kittredge, an activist member of both CodePink and Veterans for Peace, will speak at 6 pm Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Eugene Public Library, sponsored by Al Nakba Awareness Project. Kittredge was aboard the last two Gaza Freedom Flotillas including the recent "Freedom Waves" that were seized by Israel in international waters. She has visited Gaza five times in the past three years with CodePink, working with doctors, farmers and children's groups, and was in Tahrir Square during the January 2011 Egyptian revolution. She has just returned from Egypt.

- Gov. Kitzhaber's full statement running in this issue of *EW* is required reading if you hope to understand the **firing of Richard Lariviere** from the UO presidency. Kitzhaber's father was a UO professor, his mother a state president of the League of Women Voters, and he fiercely believes in excellence in education from preschool through college. His support of the State Board of Higher Education's decision to let Lariviere go is unequivocal.

The Oregon University System, set up in the 1930s, is as necessary now as it was then to avoid duplication of programs and warfare between the seven universities. It's not a wise strategic move for the UO to abandon and totally offend that system. Portland holds most of the political power in this state. Kitzhaber and other state officials are open to giving each of the institutions more autonomy and are looking at other funding mechanisms.

An *Oregon Daily Emerald* editorial writer said Nov. 28, "The fear and confusion around campus isn't about 'how perfect Lariviere is' but how disconcerting the students' image of a potential Lariviere replacement is." We agree with this sentiment but believe that students have been misled about the reasons for the termination in the heat of the day and the public relations campaign around it. As Kitzhaber points out, our educational goals are the same as they were before Lariviere came here and they will continue to be the same after he is gone. The current conflict is about how to best reach those goals.

The UO faculty has appreciated Lariviere's solid academic credentials. His successor should have the same. He has raised faculty morale, is perceived to be fighting for them at a time when all educators are under siege. He has reached out to the broader community: little efforts such as walking in the Eugene Celebration parade and knocking on student doors in the West University neighborhood, and larger efforts like reversing rigid UO policy in developing the Riverfront Research park.

He appears to thoroughly enjoy the UO's first-class athletic program, clearly another requirement and potential problem for his successor. How much power should Phil Knight and his millions have in the policy of this university?

It must have been difficult for Lariviere to try to transition the UO from the 16-year presidency of David Frohnmayer, popular and politically astute Oregon icon. Maybe his two-and-a-half-year tenure will make it easier for the next occupant of Johnson Hall to navigate out of Dave's long shadow.

But, as the Kitzhaber statement makes clear, Lariviere didn't understand politics, the art of the possible. His advisers served him poorly or he didn't listen, but we all know where the buck stops. Several months ago, he hired Bob Berdahl, former UO history professor and administrator who went from Eugene to be president of the University of Texas and chancellor of the California system, to help steer him through the political thickets. Too late.

- In mid-November we broke the news about a petition to put the gerrymandered county **redistricting to a public vote**, but now the county administration is fighting back. A letter Nov. 29 from Assistant County Counsel Marc Kardell says the petition does not comply with the Oregon Constitution, nor with the Lane County Charter Chapter III, which simply requires periodic review of district boundaries by the commissioners. Does that requirement automatically eliminate voters weighing in? When we asked Kardell about that, he declined to answer and referred the question to county spokesperson Amber Fossen who said, "Redistricting is an administrative decision that falls within the scope of responsibilities for elected commissioners." But Chapter II of the charter says "Legislative action that the board takes as governing body of a local service district shall be subject to the referendum upon petition of 10 percent of the legal voters of the district." So which part of the charter has precedence? A Circuit Court judge will decide, hopefully soon. The 90-day clock to gather signatures is ticking.

Backers of the referendum are holding a news conference as we go to press this week. Attorney and co-petitioner David Force tells us he has filed a writ of mandamus with the District Court seeking a court order to allow the petition drive to proceed. "Designing a map for political purposes is clearly prohibited under Oregon law," says Force, and "there was absolutely no need for any changes to be made to the districts as the population of the county remained virtually unchanged since the 2000 census."

Force tells us he's heard rumors that the conservative majority on the commission is responsible for the obfuscation and delay and says, "Any defiance of the charter would be a naked abuse of political power by the Tea Party trio of county commissioners."

*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

### CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

In our "Food Coma" story on Olive Grand Nov. 17 we neglected to include the shop's location. Olive Grand can be found at 1041 Willamette St. downtown, phone 685-1000. See also olivegrand.com

## LIGHTEN UP

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

Gov. Kitzhaber said that his goal for higher education requires university presidents and other leaders to pull "in the same direction." He then blasts UO President Lariviere for pulling forward. What direction does the governor have in mind?