

Council, with the exception of Councilors Burke and Murphy, differs. The Council recently decided to terminate Judge Richard Brissenden's 12-year employment with the Municipal Court.

Their decision was based on the alleged concerns of some anonymous citizens, concerns that probably were not submitted by email, since a mail server would have, no doubt, relegated them to "junk" status.

One councilor defended her decision, saying that it was mainly a financial consideration. Judge Brissenden, she said, just wasn't fast enough to be profitable. Apparently they prefer a "conveyor-belt" system in which the guilt or innocence of accused citizens is decided as swiftly as the dollar will allow, justice notwithstanding, since there's not much financial gain in that principle. They tiptoed around Brissenden's lengthy dedication to their community, volunteer service, and habitually being on-call 24/7 to the police and court.

Jake Boone, one of the two councilors who voted against firing the judge, summed it up this way: "I think what it really boils down to is the danger of working for a group of elected people who don't have a lot of expertise in the job you're doing."

Brissenden is a man who has for years committed his time to advancing the cause of justice. He remains a gifted judge, and a public-spirited citizen.

*Ethel Bassett  
Walton*

**DIFFICULT ANIMALS**

It's official. Greenhill Humane Society is taking over Lane County Animal Services' vacancy. This gives GH a total of 25 days to train their employees to do something they've never done before ... help sick animals. In the past GH has held such "impressive" live release rates because they had the ability to discriminate the animals that were accepted into their facilities. Now they will have to deal with problem dogs, spring litters, and every flea-ridden alley cat that is picked up.

We can only hope that GH will open

their animal care committee to outside members and allow advocates from fellow animal welfare agencies with experience in more difficult cases to aide in their decisions with strays with medical and behavioral problems. A simple read over their Facebook page will show that even recently their idea of a problem animal is far too loose, having euthanized two cats for skin and dental issues and three dogs for, in many people's opinions, fixable behavioral issues, within the last month.

As a concerned citizen I can only hope that the city of Eugene has made an informed decision, not one only of haste. If any others are concerned I encourage you to not only write to local news agencies but to GH, Eugene City Council and Lane County Commission to express your worries on this matter.

*Drew Allen  
Eugene*

**HARD LESSON**

Regarding Camilla Mortensen's piece on strife in Lane County government (News Briefs, 6/7), one point of clarification:

It wasn't the County Commission's "proposal" of an income tax that led to the attempted recall of commissioner Bobby Green. Said proposal had been narrowly rejected by county voters in November, 2006 — four months before the commission decided to impose a 1.1 percent tax anyway. At the public hearing where that ill-fated decision was made, some well-known area "leaders" basically told the commissioners they had no cajones unless they ignored the voters and imposed the tax.

It took only one weekend to get more than enough signatures to stick the tax "where the sun don't shine." Given the narrow margin of defeat in November, a revised and more focused proposal might have flown at the polls on a second try. Instead, the commission thumbed its nose at the voters. Anyone with an IQ above room temperature could have predicted the result.

This should not necessarily prevent the commission from trying again — hopefully with the hard lesson from the past not forgotten.

*Jerry Ritter  
Springfield*

**PAY CAPS NOT NEEDED**

While well-intentioned, HUD's recently announced plan to impose pay caps for the hard-working professionals who lead local housing agencies is, unfortunately, unnecessary. Salary levels have been held in check ever since the Bush years. The Bush administrations failed to recognize the value in the services we at local housing agencies provide.

Funding levels during the Bush reign has kept our salaries low here on the West Coast and Pacific Northwest. Our agency barely saw one COLA in the last 10 years. We have yet to come up to market levels with any other housing agencies in our region.

Housing authority executives are public employees tasked with administering programs that meet the basic housing needs of nearly seven million of the most vulnerable Americans, including veterans, the elderly and the disabled, and working poor, families with young children, nearly all of whom would be at serious risk of homelessness if not for the services that local agencies provide.

We are not overpaid for the services we provide; in fact we are simply overworked. Many of our co-workers have opted out to early retirement to save a few jobs here and there. The work and the services we provide only increased with these budget balancing attempts. The work didn't go away, only the co-workers.

HUD's attempt to reel in some salary issues in giant housing authorities like those in Chicago, Philadelphia and New York, doesn't work in small housing authorities like those here in Oregon. What HUD should focus on is getting more money out of the federal budget to assist more struggling families that need

our services and pay the workers their fair share to keep up the excellent work we do.

*Cj Mann  
President, Housing Authority and  
Community Services Agency Local  
3267*

**DIFFERENT ROADS**

I was talking with a beautiful young lady the other day while she was waiting to pick up her children at an elementary school at which I volunteer. The school had had an "Old Time Rock & Roll" day, and her children had dressed up like hippies. I told her that the flowers in their hair brought me back to the years when I was a thinner version of my present self.

We talked about hitching across and around the U.S. and got to talking about all the folks holding up cardboard signs at the side of the road. I explained to her that it was not the same at all back in my day. We, the tens of thousands on the road, were looking for something indefinable, and we were traveling in hope of excitement. We were young and searching for the Dreams Come True place that we all believed was out there, somewhere, on the road, and we shone like the sun.

The poor folks alongside the on-ramps and on busy corners nowadays are not like we were. They are much, much older and most appear damaged and broken. While we were the yearning and the learning, burning to be free, these broken ones are the confused, the abused and the misused.

We took to the roads in hope. They are forced to the roads and hopeless. It is not the same. It is not the same at all.

*Jamie Selko  
Eugene*

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