

YOUNG DEMS PLAN ODYSSEY TO DNC

Democratic Party of Lane County Secretary Andrew Becker and Steven Coatsworth, the national committeeman for the Young Oregon Democrats of America (YODA), have been elected, along with others, to represent Oregon at the Democratic National Convention starting Sept. 3 in Charlotte, N.C.

The two will be driving cross-country in an old car painted as an American flag, in what they are dubbing a “Gonzo-throwback American Adventure.” They will be interviewing and videotaping people they meet along the way, both liberals and conservatives, about their views on the November election. Their interviews will be posted on a video blog at a website to be announced. They also plan to stream footage from the floor of the convention and distribute information to other delegates about Oregon’s vote-by-mail system and our initiative process.

Coatsworth says the two have managed to pay in advance for their hotel bill in Charlotte, but need to raise money to pay for their gas and food along the way.

“The cost for each individual on this trip is, ironically enough, approximately \$2,012,” Coatsworth says. “The goal for each of our seven delegates is to raise \$2,012. Each delegate is responsible for individually raising the funds that s/he will need for the convention. Surplus funds will be used to aid others in our Oregon delegation.” Other members of the delegation are Quintin Kreth, Richard Cundiff, Gerry Rempel, Kathyne Maurer and Matt Keating.

To contribute to the trip, send checks made out to Steve Coatsworth or Andrew Becker to 1338 Jefferson St., Level B, Eugene 97402.

— Ted Taylor

HEMPFEST PUTS EDUCATION FIRST

It’s high time for a rollback on the prohibition of the world’s most beneficial plant, activists say. Emerald Empire HempFest is gearing up for its ninth annual event at Maurie Jacobs Park July 20 to 22.

Fashioned after Seattle’s HempFest, the Emerald Empire HempFest is becoming something more than just a haven for pot paraphernalia and heavy tokers. “It’s all about education,” HempFest Executive Director Dan Koozer says.

“This year will be a celebrating event,” Koozer says, because Initiative 9, which qualified for the November ballot on July 14, gives Oregon voters a chance to legalize marijuana this fall.

“Keep it free,” the HempFest’s slogan, is double-sided. “HempFest is free for people to come and go, while trying to free the plant,” Koozer explains.

According to Koozer, there will be stages for musical performances, a food court, booths for artists, vendors featuring hemp products and nonprofits groups.

There will be guest speakers from Voter Power, THCF and Mercy Centers who will address environmental benefits of hemp, medical uses of marijuana and the negative consequences of prohibition.

The Emerald Empire HempFest’s “Ganja Goddesses” will be seeking donations to help cut production costs and to raise more green for the cause.

This is an all-age, alcohol-free event and no illegal activities will be tolerated. See www.emeraldempirehempfest.com for info.

— Mike W. Davis

ACTIVIST ALERT

• A free screening of *Bag It!*, a documentary on plastic bags, will be at 7:30 pm Thursday, July 19, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. in Eugene. Sponsored by OLCV, Surfrider Foundation, Sierra Club and Environment Oregon. Plastic bags will be on the agenda of a work session of the Eugene City Council Monday, July 23, and a draft ordinance can be read at www.Eugene-or.gov

• Author and **Rabbi Maurice Harris** will speak at 10 am Sunday, July 22, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene, 1635 W. 13th Ave., on the topic of “Being Pro-Gay and Hanging in There with Leviticus.” Harris was ordained at the Re-constructionist Rabbinical College, the first major rabbinical seminary to ordain gay and lesbian rabbis beginning in 1984, and he is a longtime advocate for marriage equality and the full affirmation of LGBT people in religious communities.

• National mental health advocate **Laura Van Tosh** will speak at a free public forum from 1 to 3 pm Tuesday, July 24, at Lane County Behavioral Health Services, 2411 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 198, near Autzen Stadium in Eugene. Tosh is an advocate for mental health peer services nationally and in Oregon. For more information, email oregon.united@gmail.com or call 345-9106.

PARVIN BUTTE

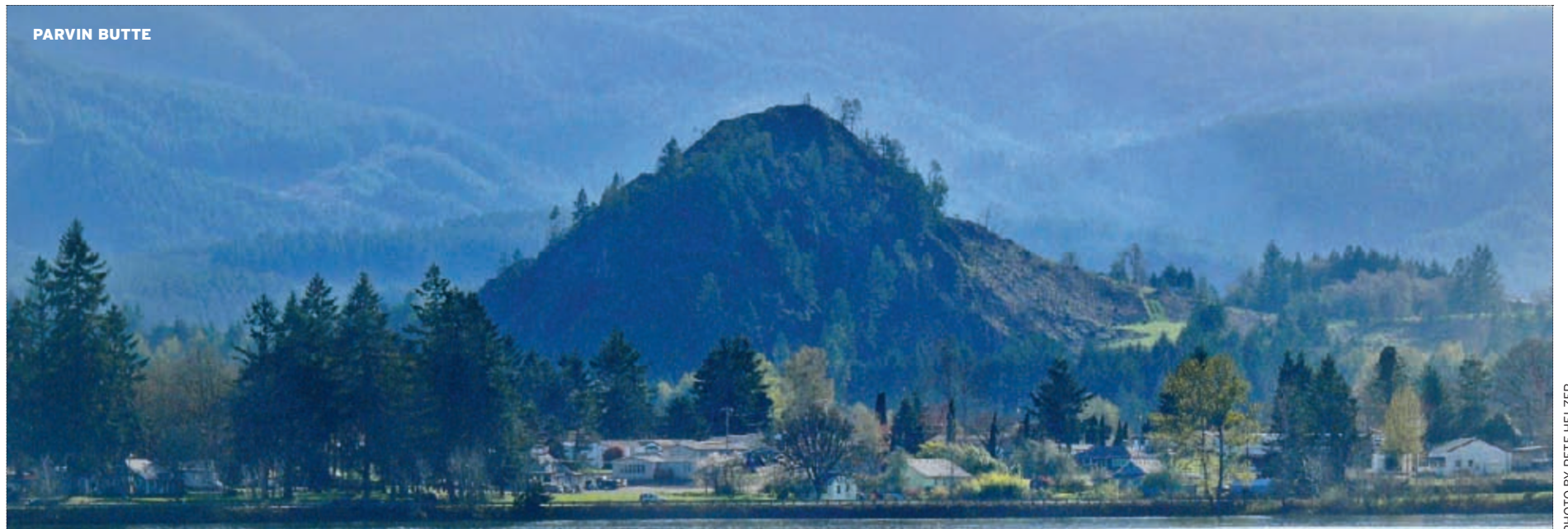


PHOTO BY PETE HELZER

PARVIN BUTTE DISPUTE

Parvin Butte is still standing. Shorn of most of its trees and blasted by heavy equipment, the Dexter landmark lingers in the background as summer visitors play on Dexter Lake. The Dexter/Lost Valley neighbors are still fighting to save the butte from McDougal brothers and developer Greg Demers, whose company Lost Creek Rock Products (LCRP), has been decimating it. The latest skirmish took place in front of Lane County Hearings Official Gary Darnielle on July 12.

Parvin Butte neighbors came to testify before Darnielle on a site review of LCRP’s quarry and mining-related activities within a 200-foot setback area surrounding the quarry operation. LCRP has argued site review isn’t needed at all. Site review allows neighbors input on troubling aspects of a quarry mine, like pollution, traffic and noise.

Attorney for the neighbors Dan Stotter says there is a key difference between what triggers a site review — the gravel trucks going through the setback — and the scope of the site review, which would deal with the quarry mining itself and its explosions and heavy equipment that affect neighbors. It’s like the difference between an invitation to dinner, he says, and what you have for dinner.

Large animal vet Jeff Pelton testified on the effects the blasting would have on animals from sheep to horses that are the source of income for many in the Parvin Butte area. “In a nutshell, I demanded that they should show it is safe for livestock before they let them reduce Parvin Butte to rubble,” Pelton says.

A source of contention at the hearing was that LCRP earlier applied for, and was granted, a bridge permit to access the site. The quarry argued that access to Parvin by way of Rattlesnake and Schafler roads was terrible and another route via a new bridge was needed, Stotter says. But now in the site review application the gravel miners are

arguing to use the Rattlesnake Road route, without withdrawing their bridge permit.

Neighbor Jim Babson argued in his testimony that LCRP might not have right-of-way access to all of Schafler Road and has requested the gravel miners produce deeds showing they indeed have right-of-way access for this plan.

Other testimony was more emotional. Neighbor Arlen Markus says some neighbors were in tears at the hearing as they spoke of how 136 trucks a day, from 7 am to 6 pm, six days a week would affect their rural community: heavy traffic going through nearby Pleasant Hill and its schools, problems blasting will cause a veterans’ home on Rattlesnake Road that houses vets with traumatic issues from wartime experiences and the damages dust produced by the quarry will cause a nearby organic farm.

Stotter says Rattlesnake itself has blind corners and other unsafe driving conditions for large commercial gravel trucks.

The attorney says people can submit comments on the issue to the county until July 26. A decision from Darnielle is expected by mid-August, but Stotter suspects attorneys for LCRP will let a 120-day clock on this issue run out, so they can take the case to circuit court, rather than the normal route after a decision is made by the county for it to go the Land Use Board of Appeals.

Stotter says quarry attorney Bill Kloos’ office is not willing to stipulate any additional time. Forty-five days have already passed. Darnielle has said he will make his decision within week of the August 9 final rebuttal by the applicant, but after that the Lane County Board of Commissioners would weigh in. The board, which is currently led by a conservative majority, “could take longer than needed intentionally so as to duck the issue politically and send it to court,” Stotter says.

— Camilla Mortensen