

Occupy Eugene Update

Where we are and what we are doing?

"So has Occupy Eugene dropped the ball on the homeless situation?" a friend asked me recently.

Our summer issue of the *Eugene Occupier* had just come out, and I happened to have a stack with me. I handed him a copy and invited him to read the front-page article on Opportunity Village by Jean Stacey. Opportunity Village is an exciting new project whose goal is to create a safe place where homeless people can sleep, live and contribute – and eventually transition back into the larger society. Activists from OE Homeless Solutions committee together with activists from other organizations, such as CALC and Occupy Inter-Faith, are creating a new nonprofit to make this dream a reality.



I could have also pointed my questioner to the article on the Downtown Public Safety Zone by Ally Valkyrie. This exclusion zone, as many call it, targets the homeless. A majority of the people who get cited for acts such as jaywalking and who end up being excluded from the zone are the poor and the homeless. Other people jaywalk downtown on a regular basis, but if they look like shoppers or business people, they are usually not cited.

The DPSZ was slated to sunset last April. The police recommended that the zone become permanent and the City Council seemed willing to extend it for two years, but OE activists, along with other opponents of the law, argued for ending it. The council compromised by extending the zone – but only until November. When public hearings come up in September, OE will again testify against the DPSZ, questioning the constitutionality of a process that targets the homeless and disenfranchised and can exclude them from downtown Eugene without first convicting them of any crime.

So, no, OE hasn't dropped the ball on the homeless situation.

We realize, however, that we have become much less visible to people since our eviction last December from our encampment at the Washington-Jefferson Park. And now, with the closure on July 11 of our colorful, flag-flying Outpost VI at the old Federal Building, people are once more asking us where we are and what we are doing. We are happy to provide some answers.

Is Occupy Eugene still around? Yes, we are. We have offices and meeting spaces at two locations. We have a donated storefront and warehouse we call Occupy Eugene V at 1274 W. 7th Ave., and we have space at the Growers Market at 454 Willamette St. You can also find us outside at our biweekly General Assemblies, Tuesdays beginning at 7 pm and Fridays beginning at 6 pm at the Free Speech Plaza. We have over a dozen committees that meet regularly too.

Since meeting times and places may change, always check our calendar at occupyeugenemedia.org for the latest information.

What Is OE Doing These Days? In addition to our work supporting the homeless, we hold free medical and dental clinics open to all from 1 to 5 pm Sundays at the Park Blocks at 8th and Oak. We help homeowners who are attempting to save their homes from foreclosures. We protest big banks in front of Bank of America at 4:30 pm every Friday and encourage people to move their money to credit unions or small, locally owned banks.

We fundraise most Saturdays at the Free Speech Plaza by Saturday Market. We publish and distribute thousands of copies of our newsletter. We broadcast TV shows created by our talented media team on Comcast Cable Channel 29 on Sunday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm and on Monday at 8 pm. We air radio programs from 6:30 to 8 pm every Wednesday on KWVA 88.1 and we have 30 audio podcasts available for download.

We support our allies who are working in areas such as health care for all, a cleaner, safer environment and a country where corporations do not count as people.

How can I find out more about OE? You can explore our website or join our announcement list by signing up at <http://occupyeugenemedia.org/contact> You can call us at 525-0130.

Can I attend a meeting? Yes. All our meetings are open, both General Assemblies and committee meetings. We make decisions by consensus, work openly and welcome anyone who wants to join us in our efforts to move toward a better world.

Vickie Nelson is a retired librarian who has been working with Occupy Eugene since last fall. She is on the Communications Committee and the Newsletter Committee. You can find Occupy Eugene's newsletter at occupyeugenemedia.org/newsletter

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

EXPERTS AGREE: NOTHING CAN BE DONE

GUNS

THE COLORADO THEATRE MASSACRE HAS AGAIN RAISED THE ISSUE OF GUN CONTROL--

--WHICH NO SANE POLITICIAN WILL TOUCH WITH A TEN-FOOT POLE!

TALK ABOUT A NON-STARTER!

GLOBAL WARMING

SCIENTISTS SAY THAT CLIMATE DAMAGE WILL SOON BE IRREVERSIBLE--UNLESS WE TAKE DRA-MATIC ACTION TO CUT EMISSIONS.

LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ELECTION YEAR!

OR ANY OTHER YEAR.

THE BANKING CRISIS

THE LIBOR RATE-FIXING SCANDAL MAKES IT CLEAR--BIG FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS STILL DON'T THINK THE RULES APPLY TO THEM.

AND OBVIOUSLY THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE COULD POSSIBLY DO ABOUT THAT.

WE'VE WASTED PRECIOUS SE-CONDS OF OUR LIVES EVEN DISCUSSING THE MATTER.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

WEALTHY AMERICANS ARE ACTUALLY PAYING SOME OF THE LOWEST EFFECTIVE TAX RATES IN FIFTY YEARS.

IT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE! NO POINT IN GETTING UPSET ABOUT IT!

MIGHT AS WELL ACCEPT IT-- YOU'RE POWER-LESS TO CHANGE ANYTHING.

VOTER APATHY

FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, AMERICANS SEEM TO FEEL ALIEN-ATED FROM THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

HOW UTTERLY IRRATIONAL OF THEM!

OH WELL! WHAT CAN YOU DO?

NOT MUCH, AMIRITE?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EMX IS A WINNING PLAN

Kudos to Eugene City Councilor Betty Taylor for her recent decision to support the West Eugene EmX Extension [Slant, 7/26]. Taylor was initially skeptical, but after putting in the legwork to educate herself about the actual facts on the ground, she changed her mind.

One of the reasons for Taylor's support is the efficient land use pattern that EmX encourages. Contrary to some opponents' beliefs, the West 11th area is planned to accommodate a large chunk of Eugene's future growth. EmX will allow densification of both housing and businesses along West 11th, because it will mitigate brewing traffic overload problems while providing a fast, reliable and permanent rapid transit system to serve new residents and customers.

Eugene cannot afford a do-nothing, head-in-the-sand approach to growth management planning. We have an opportunity to secure \$75 million in earmarked federal grants to build a project that will carry us into the next 50 years, set the table for a more livable and affordable community, and help prevent sprawl onto rural lands.

The concerns of affected businesses are important, but those can be adequately addressed — we do not need to throw away this opportunity. Prior EmX construction projects have not caused the closure of any businesses. Further, LTD revised the original West Eugene EmX plan in response to business concerns; the number of lost off-street parking places can be reduced to just 18.

Those who are still skeptical should follow Taylor's lead, and learn more about this important transit project. It's a winner.

Mia Nelson
Willamette Valley Advocate
1000 Friends of Oregon
Eugene

OOZE ALONG WITH ME

Dear citizens of Eugene, I am writing to introduce myself to you and to encourage all of you to cheer me on at the SLUG Queen Coronation Ceremony and Competition at 6 pm Friday, Aug. 10, in the Park Blocks

downtown. I may be the new slug in town and I may lack experience, but I hope that my smarts, luck, uniqueness and glittery attitude will help me to rise to the slimy throne and into your hearts.

After moving to Eugene a few years ago, I fell in love with this amazing monarchy of strong women and drag queens, and I hope to join their ranks. Should I win the crown, I promise you this:

There will be fun. There will be silliness. There will be SLIMEM!

Citizens of Eugene, cast away your shells and ooze with me.

Gloria Slimem
aka Shannon Rose
2012 SLUG Queen hopeful

DANGEROUS BUMS

Lynn Porter writes [8/2]: "I also wondered why they think homeless people are dangerous."

Let me relate some of my own, personal experiences. This reality therapy is needed for all the saps who think the homeless are "old and disabled" or abused moms, or just harmless hobos.

Not long ago I parked my car at Walmart on 11th. Two homeless guys used an ice axe to break into my car and steal my lunch, causing \$900 of damage and putting my car in the shop for a week. This is not what I would consider "harmless." When I worked for the state highway department, we would clean the homeless camps under the bridges. Found in a typical camp: knives, axes and hypo kits, not unusual and not harmless.

My buddy Greg took a homeless woman into his house. She stole his money, invited her "boyfriend" over when Greg was gone, and then proceeded to party and trash Greg's house. My buddy no longer brings street people back to his house. In our former town, bums would camp by the river. One of the bum's girlfriends was found drowned, an apparent homicide after a quarrel with her boyfriend, another bum. This is not harmless.

I was a social worker for awhile. Talking with derelicts, I discovered: The vast majority are men. Yes, bums are down on their luck, but they choose to drink, take drugs, quit their jobs, abandon their