

• **Claire Syrett** has announced her candidacy for the Ward 7 Eugene City Council seat following the decision by Andrea Ortiz to pull her name from the ballot. We can't imagine a stronger, more qualified and more energetic candidate, but there's still time for others to join this last-minute race. Syrett has been a solid member on the Eugene Budget Committee, the Lane County Human Services Commission, Sustainability Commission, the Airport Advisory Board and other panels. And her years as field director for the ACLU and as a labor organizer have helped her plug into a broad network of people doing good, useful work in the area. Her experience in land use issues is unknown, but she can tap local experts on growth, sprawl and toxics.

Last week in this column we mentioned Michael Carrigan as a likely candidate. Carrigan ran Ortiz's campaign eight years ago instead of running himself and appears to be in a similar situation now. "I'm relieved I don't have to grapple with the decision about whether to run or not because Claire Syrett wants to do it," he says. "I support her 100 percent. I hope no one signs up to run against her; but if so, I've agreed to help her campaign." Fans of outgoing County Commissioner Rob Handy are urging him to run for the council. "I appreciate the support and validation," he tells us. "I have made no decision at this time."

Speaking of Handy, we hear he has been allowed back in his county office after being locked out for more than 80 days, but he still does not have unlimited access. The absurdities continue in Lane County administration.

• If you missed the **Willamette Brews and Blues Festival** this past weekend at Island Park, then you missed Commissioner Pete Sorenson playing his trumpet to a crowd. Sorenson picked up his horn and played "Hey Baby" with the Randy Oxford Band and proceeds from the event went to FOOD for Lane County.

• **Local architects** appear to be overwhelmingly supportive of the West Eugene EmX Extension. Some 20 former presidents of the Southwest Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects signed a letter recently saying, "We believe that EmX represents an advanced mass transit system able to support compact livable communities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, operate at a lower cost to the community, encourage development along transit corridors and create construction jobs in our community." The statement goes on to call for community support for EmX in west Eugene and "additional corridors throughout the area as outlined in TransPlan and the Metro Plan."

Meanwhile, who on the City Council remains uncommitted on the West Eugene EmX? George Poling and Mike Clark are likely a lost cause, but our list of fence-sitters includes Pat Farr, George Brown and Chris Pryor. They could use some nudging from their constituents. And isn't it about time for some organized community support for EmX leading up to the council vote and beyond?

• **Summer at the Saturday's markets**, both crafts and produce, always brings special reconnections with former Eugeneans here to visit family and friends. That's where we heard from Erika Hess, who grew up in Eugene, and her husband, Bob Neustadt, about an exciting project supporting No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes, a humanitarian group that provides water, food and medical care to migrants in the desert and to others on the Mexican side of the border who need help after being deported. Both professors in Flagstaff, Ariz., they're fundraising for a CD of border songs and spoken word with 100 percent of the proceeds going to No More Deaths. If you're interested, check out bordersongscd@gmail.com

• **Do long, hot summers** lead to more hatred and violence? It feels that way this year as the scorching heat drags on across the country. Senseless and hate-filled shootings in Colorado and Wisconsin follow senseless and hate-filled rhetoric on radio airwaves. Have we learned nothing from Gabby Giffords and other mass gun killings? We need stricter gun laws and better health care for the mentally ill and traumatized war vets, for a start. Our hearts go out to the Sikh community, including the local folks here in Eugene.

• **Biased political phone calls** disguised as "opinion polls" are back, asking misleading questions in an effort to sway voters in the November election. We hear the latest push-polls are targeting voters in Rep. Phil Barnhart's District 11. Democrat Barnhart is being challenged (again) by Republican Kelly Lovelace. Expect similar calls biased in favor of Republican Joe Pishioneri in his open race for District 12 against John Lively. Both races are reportedly targeted by conservatives as winnable; out-of-state Tea Party money is expected to be a factor. The push-polling appears to be by The Hoffman Group, a subsidiary of Gateway Communications, a Portland telemarketing company that does a lot of work for right-wing candidates and causes. We want to hear about these calls and the misleading questions they ask, so don't hang up; take notes. The best way to combat deceptive "polling" is to expose it.

## ACTIVIST ALERT

• The annual **Eugene/Springfield Pride Celebration** will be from noon to 7 pm Saturday, Aug. 11, at Alton Baker Park. Entertainment includes Wetsock, Spin Cycle Squares, Richard Mills, Champagne GaGa and the Imperial Sovereign Court of the Emerald Empire. The event is free but a \$5 donation will be asked to help cover expenses. A "Rhapsody Under the Stars" annual coronation event is coming up Aug. 17-19 at Valley River Inn. See Facebook at <http://wkly.ws/1c0>

• The **Green Neighbor (Not Just) Bike Tours** continue with a South East Neighbors gathering at 11 am Saturday, Aug. 11, at Avalon Lodge, 5210 Canyon Dr. See <http://wkly.ws/1c1> for schedule and more information, or leave a message at 632-4321.

• The Lane County Chapter of the ACLU of Oregon is holding a series of "**Civil Conversations**" from 5:30 to 7 pm on the second Tuesday of the month at Café Yumm, 730 E. Broadway. The next is Aug. 14 on "Separation of Church and State" with Dan Bryant as facilitator. See [www.aclu-or.org](http://www.aclu-or.org)

• **Rep. Peter Defazio** will host town hall meetings at 5:15 pm Thursday, Aug. 16, at Eugene City Council Chambers, 777 Pearl St., followed by 7 pm at Springfield City Council Chambers, 225 5th St. Later this month Defazio will be in Cottage Grove, Drain, Albany and Corvallis. See [defazio.house.gov](http://defazio.house.gov)

## LIGHTEN UP

I can think of only two possible explanations for the blistering heat all around the globe this summer: Either the scientists are right when they say that human activity is causing climate change, or whoever has his hand on the world's thermostat is really pissed.

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

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