

COUNCIL DELAYING ACTION

Jerry Ritter [Letters, 8/16] kindly asked me why housing for the homeless is a human right. The right derives from common decency, apparently a foreign concept to right-wingers.

Unfortunately the City Council is dragging its feet on Opportunity Village Eugene (OVE), and has not carried out any of the recommendations of the mayor's Opportunity Eugene Task Force on Homelessness. The OVE nonprofit, which is organizing the village, presented the council with a 20-page proposal. On July 18, the council directed the city manager to come back in September with a list of possible city properties that might be used to house the homeless and a process to consider them. Councilors Brown, Ortiz and Taylor pushed for faster action but were outvoted. So far the issue does not appear on any of the September work session agendas on the council's website.

The word we're hearing is that the city is unlikely to take any action in time for OVE to get homeless people out of the rain and cold by next winter, and there is no plan B. The Egan Warming Centers, First Place's housing of homeless families in churches at night, and the expansion of the Eugene Mission are all good things, but they will not meet the need. The last homeless count in January 2011 recorded over 2,000 people homeless in Lane County. Most of them are in the Eugene-Springfield area, because this is where the population is. See <http://wkly.ws/1cc>

What we're seeing is a massive failure of leadership, which is what we've come to expect from all levels of government. It's going to take public pressure to get the homeless indoors. I'm hoping for some public disruption in the fall.

Lynn Porter
Eugene

HOUSING IS A LEGAL RIGHT

In reference to Jerry Ritter's letter Aug. 16, he asks where in legal documents there is a legal right to housing.

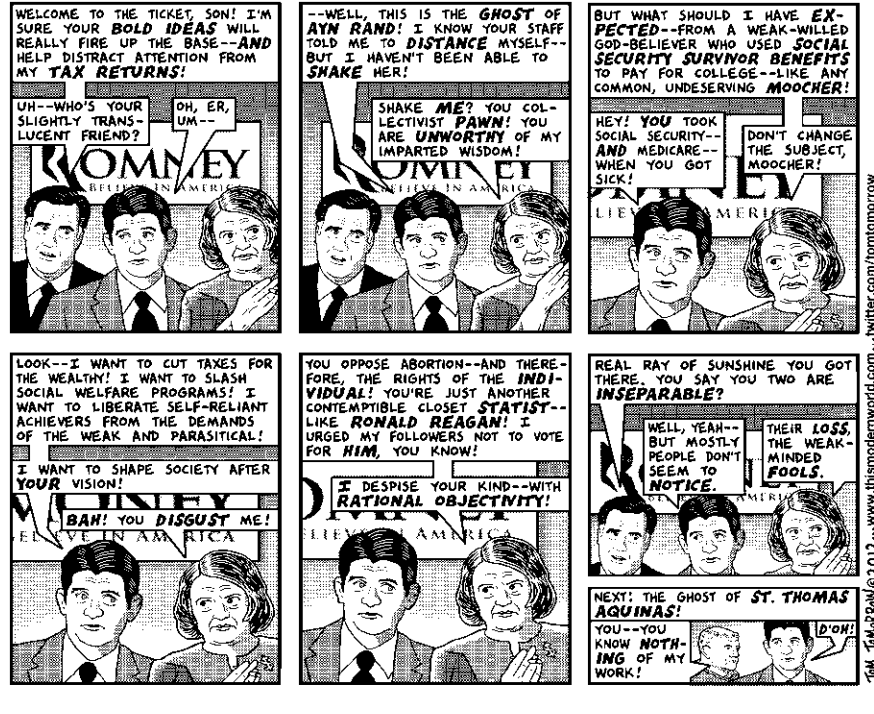
If he will consult the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which the Eugene Human Rights Commission ought to be able to provide to him, or visit wkly.ws/1cd) he will find that Article 25, Section 1 states that: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

The first paragraph of this document reads: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

This declaration is an international treaty signed by the U.S. in 1948, and therefore the law of the land. Everyone

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



should acquaint themselves with it and work towards its fulfillment.

Lucia McKelvey
Eugene

PROTECT THE HEADWATERS

Another treasure could disappear. Eugene's Amazon headwaters is a special area that must stay special for everyone in Eugene! I'm sad to hear the owners are trying for a fourth time to turn it into a housing project. We can't create another beautiful area with a flowing creek for all

of us to enjoy. It can't happen. Do visit this area and realize what we could lose if developers get their way.

When I worked with the Eugene Stream Team making our film *Speaking for Wetlands*, I learned how important it is to keep the natural watershed. There are vacant lots throughout the city including five on my block. Let's keep the Amazon headwaters as it is today.

Ruth Duemler
Eugene



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