

During the winter, some of Lane County's 73 parks close, and many see fewer visitors. According to Dave Stockdale of the Parks Division, lower traffic and the lack of a security presence leads to vandalism. "For whatever reason, occasionally people will come through there and they will find a pump house or a well house and they'll graffiti structures," he says. "They will sometimes cut down trees. Sometimes they'll break open electrical panels and steal the copper out of there."

Stockdale says the problem is further compounded by the fact that the system's 10 full-time employees can't make it to parks as much as they'd like, especially since the 73 parks are spread out in an area the size of Connecticut. But he says that hosts in parks have already made a big difference in places like Hendricks Bridge Park.

"When the host isn't there, even the toilet paper gets stolen out of the bathrooms, which is under a padlock, believe it or not," Stockdale says. "The second you put a host in the park, the vandalism and problems almost go away entirely." The hosts will be instructed not to interfere with crimes in progress; the parks department will instruct them to call the sheriff's office or the parks department in case of problems. Stockdale says that a simple presence and a well-kept RV are enough of a deterrent to prevent problems.

Keith Heath of St. Vincent de Paul, which will be running the program, says the program can help people with jobs transition back into long-term housing. "The program was designed to help them, if they're working, to get first, last and security," he says. "It's a safe place to park, and you don't have to worry about police hassling you for being on the streets and living in a vehicle."

When Heath last checked, 69 people were on his waiting list for legal camping, and that's only including people over 18, not families. The program currently oversees 25 legal campsites in the Eugene area; the county parks addition could raise that number to 30.

To apply for the program, contact the St. Vincent de Paul Eugene Service Station at 461-8688. — *Shannon Finnell*

FLUORIDATION FIGHT RETURNS

Will the next controversial public health issue in Oregon please stand up? Oh wait, it just did. On Sept. 12, the Portland City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to authorize the Portland Water Bureau to fluoridate the city's water supply in order to "reduce tooth decay and promote good oral health." The move effectively resurfaces the fluoridation issue in Oregon, where, according to the Oregon Dental Association, only about 20 percent of residents drink fluoridated water.

The ordinance passed amidst fierce protest from what *The Oregonian* editorial board called a "loud minority" that made "angry references ... to fascism and forced medication." But Oregon Citizens for Clean Drinking Water executive committee member Rick North says it's as much about due public process as it is the lack of scientific consensus about the safety of water fluoridation, calling Portland "the Gettysburg of the fluoridation of water." North says the council pushed the ordinance through so quickly that "it did not give time for any meaningful public debate." That group is now working with more than 100 volunteers to collect 20,000 petition signatures that, if collected by Oct. 12, will nullify the ordinance and force it to a public vote.

Will Eugene follow suit? It doesn't look likely. "As we're seeing in Portland, this can be a polarized issue. We don't advocate one way or the other; we just want to do what the citizens want," says Lance Robertson, public affairs manager at EWEB. Citing previous attempts at fluoridation ordinances that were voted down, he continues, "as a citizen-owned utility, we believe the citizens have spoken through the ballot box ... it's really not on our radar at this point."

Though perhaps not on EWEB's radar, Lane County

Health and Human Services, which advises the city of Eugene on public health issues, is watching closely. "We are paying attention to all aspects of the situation," says public information officer Jason Davis. He notes the advantageous position of having access to metrics such as cost-benefit analyses and being able to "learn and glean information" from Portland's experience. "From a public health perspective," Davis says, "we'll just be advising. Ultimately, that will be a city decision."

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) calls water fluoridation "one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century," attributing it as a primary cause for the decline of tooth decay in the U.S. since the 1950s. The Action Fluoride Network notes, however, that tooth decay decline in Europe has mirrored that of the U.S., despite that as of 2011, some 97 percent of Europeans were drinking non-fluoridated water.

Contention on the issue abounds, with most opponents calling for further scientific inquiry into the potentially harmful effects of accumulated fluoride exposure, untreatable dental and skeletal fluorosis, decreased thyroid activity, and increased sensitivity in infants and young children.

On the bright side, a study published in the *Journal of Human Resources* found that exposure to fluoridated water increases women's earnings by approximately 4 percent. — *Shelley Deadmond*

HARVEST FEAST HIGHLIGHTS IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

Each year, the Civil Liberties Defense Center's Harvest Feast benefit highlights civil liberties issues related to food production, like pesticide sprays and genetically modified organisms. This year's theme, "Fiesta en el Jardin," honors the work that CLDC and its partners have done for immigrant communities in Oregon.

CLDC's Oct. 5 Harvest Feast at Mount Pisgah features a five-course organic Latin dinner, wine, sangria and Ninkasi beer, plus music from Sol de los Andes.

CLDC attorney Lauren Regan says the CLDC has been holding immigrants' rights trainings in rural Oregon. She says many Latino immigrants working in nurseries, canneries or slaughterhouses are unaware that "everybody, whether you're documented or not, has the same exact Constitutional rights in the U.S." The trainings included information on basic rights, how to interact with law enforcement and deportation proceedings.

The CLDC and the Rural Organizing Project also met with local law enforcement agencies after hearing about local police attempting to enforce immigration laws, which is prohibited by Oregon law. "We would get anecdotal reports from those communities talking about their local police setting up road blocks on the only road into a farm where those migrant workers worked," Regan says. "They would stop every car and basically ask for drivers licenses and other pretexts in order to try to get as many brown-skinned people deported as possible."

Regan says the law against local enforcement of federal immigration laws was put in place to further public safety. "Oregon passed this law specifically saying local cops can't enforce immigration laws, and the reason that they did it was because they wanted everyone to feel safe if they had to report a crime," she says. "An undocumented woman, in order to feel safe to call the police as a result of a domestic violence incident, needs to know when the cops come, she's not going to end up deported."

In addition to dinner and entertainment, the CLDC will auction off an all-inclusive stay at Breitenbush Retreat Center, tickets to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and local restaurant gift certificates. Speakers include Sarah Cantrill and Jorge Navarro of Huerto de la Familia. The outdoor venue will have heaters in case of a chill. — *Shannon Finnell*

lighten up

Romney is running such a pathetic campaign that he is winning over the bleeding-heart liberals.

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

ACTIVIST ALERT

- Climate expert and author **Bob Doppelt** will be speaking from 7 to 9 pm Thursday, Sept. 27, at Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette St. His free talk will be based on his new book, *From Me to We: The Five Transformational Commitments Required to Rescue the Planet, Your Organization, and Your Life*.

- Eugene **School District 4J** is seeking public input about improving the condition and design of school buildings, many of which are more than 50 years old. Community forums are planned for 7 to 8:30 pm Thursday, Sept. 27, at Cesar Chávez Elementary School; Monday, Oct. 1, at North Eugene High; Thursday, Oct. 4, at Cal Young Middle School, and Wednesday, Oct. 10, at Roosevelt Middle School. Spanish interpretation will be provided. See www.4j.lane.edu/building4j

- The fifth annual **Harvest Festival for Human Rights** will be from 2 to 4:30 pm Saturday, Sept. 29, outside Springfield First Baptist Church, 1175 G. St. It is organized by Community Alliance of Lane County and the Springfield Shelter Rights Alliance. "These are hard and anxious times for lots of people," say organizers. "The event will showcase services available for low-income people and offer ways for community members to be good neighbors to each other." The event offers live music and free hot food, a produce and dry foods giveaway, a clothing giveaway, art activities for kids and information tables. Call 485-1755.

- **Basic Rights Oregon** is planning its Eugene Autumn Party benefit from 3 to 5 pm Sunday, Sept. 30, at Temple Beth Israel, 1175 E. 29th Ave. in Eugene. Suggested donation \$25.

- The video **Strangers to the Gods** will be shown at 6 pm Sunday, Sept. 30, at Reality Kitchen, 245 Van Buren in Eugene. The film deals with the forced relocation of Native Americans to accommodate strip mining. Donations requested. The film is part of events at Reality Kitchen surrounding Banned Books Week Sept. 30 to Oct. 6. Call 337-1323 or visit realitykitchen.org

- The monthly **Conversations on the Forest** will continue at 6 pm Monday, Oct. 1, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. in Eugene. Topic this month will be "Is the Forest Practices Act Working?" Led by Lane County Commissioner Rob Handy, public interest forester Roy Keene and *ArchitectureWeek* editor Kevin Matthews. Email rob@robhandy.com or visit conversationsontheforest.org

- Circuit Court **Judge Richard Baldwin**, candidate for the Oregon Supreme Court, Position 3, will appear from 5 to 7 pm Tuesday, Oct. 2, at Territorial Vineyards & Wine Company, 907 W. 3rd Ave. in Eugene. Visit electjudgebaldwin.com for more information. His opponent in this November runoff is Nena Cook and her website is nenacookfororegonsupremecourt.org

- A resolution opposing **coal trains through Eugene** will be on the City Council work session agenda at 5:30 pm Monday, Oct. 8, followed by an evening session at 7:30 dealing with the Downtown Public Safety Zone, the West Eugene Enterprise Zone and an ordinance concerning bikes on sidewalks downtown.

- **Canvassing for Betty Taylor** is now happening Saturdays with an 11 am gathering time at the Democratic Party of Lane County Office, 228 E.11th Ave. Call 484-5099 or 914-5603.