

who doesn't have a history of resigning office in anger because of offense taken at something that a fellow office holder said.

That would seem to narrow down the choice considerably.

*Jerry Ritter
Springfield*

ENABLING THE HOMELESS

The Lane County Parks Advisory Committee, the Homeless Coalition and St. Vincent de Paul have presented a plan to eliminate vandalism in parks and give the homeless with RVs and campers a safe place to park and live.

The plan is to utilize homeless people with RVs and campers as "hosts." In exchange for parking, power and water hook-ups they will provide supervision of the area. If there is a crime committed the hosts will not intervene, but instead must call it in to the sheriff's office or park department.

When I read this article I was appalled and quite frankly disappointed. St. Vincent de Paul already has a program in place where homeless people with RVs and campers can park overnight. These programs are set up to help get the homeless back on their feet while they look for jobs. If the county creates these jobs then there is no incentive

to go out and get a real "paying" job and move on. Who assumes workers compensation liability for these workers?

How are these people being vetted? More importantly, how is this being paid for? I am concerned there is too much risk financially and legally from this new program.

*Christopher Lay
Eugene*

PLAN MAKES SENSE

Providing a legal space to help shelter the homeless while keeping Lane County parks flawless over the off seasons is exactly what the Lane County Parks

Committee, the Homeless Coalition and St. Vincent de Paul plan to do.

During the off seasons the 10 full-time employees struggle to check up on and maintain some of the 73 parks that are in our county; therefore, they get robbed and vandalized often. The three organizations came up with a solution to let select homeless people with RVs become park hosts in order to provide security for the facilities. As park hosts, their duties are to report any crimes that accrue to the police and maintain a well-kept RV. In return they are provided with power, water, sewer and a free, legal place to stay.

VIEWPOINT BY GRAHAM LEWIS

Occupy Anniversary

In the week before Oct. 15, 2011, word spread faster than anyone in Eugene expected. We knew something terribly wrong had been developing in America, but it took a Canadian activist group, Adbusters, to rivet attention on Wall Street — Ground Zero for the economic meltdown. Would our government expose and bring to justice the perpetrators who gambled on thousands of real estate loans going bad? No, even their "official" lip service was feeble. Those conniving speculators were rewarded with seven-figure returns while elderly couples and young families lost everything.

To join the throng and clog the street at the world's financial nerve center was an exciting prospect, but as protesters settled in Zuccotti Park, Occupy groups sprang up all over the country. When firebrand UO students threw together preparation for an Occupy Eugene, a hundred of us locals showed up in the rain on Oct. 4 to help birth a movement.

We had seen the many thousands of Egyptians filling Tahrir Square and, as in New York, we were ready to take to our streets. A bunch of us had caravanned to Portland a week earlier and taken over downtown with a General Assembly at the waterfront and a massive march through the inner city. Now it was our chance in Eugene to show the world we could make our voices heard decrying America's horrendous domestic injustices. Fierce anticipation was building.

Gathering downtown on that Saturday and spilling out of the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza, it wasn't apparent how many we were until crossing the Ferry Street Bridge. There it spread, a seemingly endless stream of humanity ahead and behind.

Were you there? Wasn't it a thrill? We were chatting like old friends because we all had something in common: We'd been paying attention. We were mad as hell, and we weren't going to take it any more! Even the children knew something very important was happening. Spontaneous chants grew from one voice to many. We



recognized friends and neighbors and, for all those people, could only wave, smile and share thumbs ups.

I struck up a conversation with an interesting older gentleman who resembled a retired professor. "You look like you should be famous! Are you an inventor?"

"Today, we're all inventing a nation," he replied. "All over again. I've wanted this for a very long time."

"Me too. I'm sick of feeling like Chicken Little hollering into a vacuum. Maybe now people do realize the sky is falling and we can come together — do something huge!"

"Yes, it will take all of us. High time to turn off our televisions and get together in our living rooms and churches and town squares. Find that common denominator that unites us. It's there: the vision of the future we want so bad for generations to come!"

"I was there eight days ago at the birth of Occupy Portland," I had to proudly share. "We completely filled Pioneer Square. Talk about awesome, this was the ultimate epitome of awesome! When people really come together in a common purpose, you can smell and taste it — see it in their eyes. It's happening again today. This is our chance now in Lane County to put aside our differences and egos — to reclaim democracy for 'We the People' once again."

"It won't be easy," he replied. "I was there in Berkeley in the '60s. It took a long time to stop that war." He paused to remember. "But we were damned determined!"

Were you there that day at the Big March of 2011? Wouldn't it be great to all reunite and rekindle that fire? Oct. 15 will be the one-year anniversary of the Big March, and Occupy Eugene is throwing a party to celebrate what we have accomplished, and to chart a course for the coming year. Even if you weren't part of that march, you'll be welcome. There will be great food all day and live music in the evening plus videos from the OE crew who have been producing a series of very stimulating "Occupy TV" programs on Community Television, Channel 29. Please come by. The world needs us! ■

Graham Lewis is a UO grad, political activist and semi-retired graphic artist and writer living in Eugene and Yachats. He serves with the Occupy Eugene Media Group and We the People.



Employment First — Success begins with you!



This is George. He has many interests including cooking, gardening and bowling with his Special Olympics bowling team. George has worked at LCC for several years. Recently George was hired by KBS. He now provides contracted housekeeping services at Macy's Department Store. George says "it's been a great experience, never a dull moment, keeps me on my toes. I like the variety and the people are great and friendly." His supervisor Pat says that George is "doing better than I expected, he's eager to please and fun to be around. We are planning to teach him everything we can." George is just one example of a great worker looking for an opportunity to work. Hiring people with disabilities is not only the right thing to do, it is good for business; lower absentee rates, tax benefits and dependable employees. Contact LCC Specialized Support Services for more information.

Patty Parks, Lane Community College, 541-463-5099 or parksp@lanecol.edu

Employment First is a statewide initiative to help create opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to secure appropriate and meaningful employment.

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