

## LOGGING FOR JAIL BEDS?

The Lane County Jail has been releasing prisoners due to lack of space — including one who walked down the street and promptly robbed a bank — and public safety has been on the Board of County Commissioners' agendas lately, but it's not clear if the county is any closer to a safety solution. Sid Leiken, board chair and part of the commission's conservative majority, sent a message this week indicating the board may be backing away from a jail tax and instead blaming budget woes on a lack of logging on public lands.

*'Blaming county financial problems on "lack of management of the federal forests" is an effort to pass the buck'*

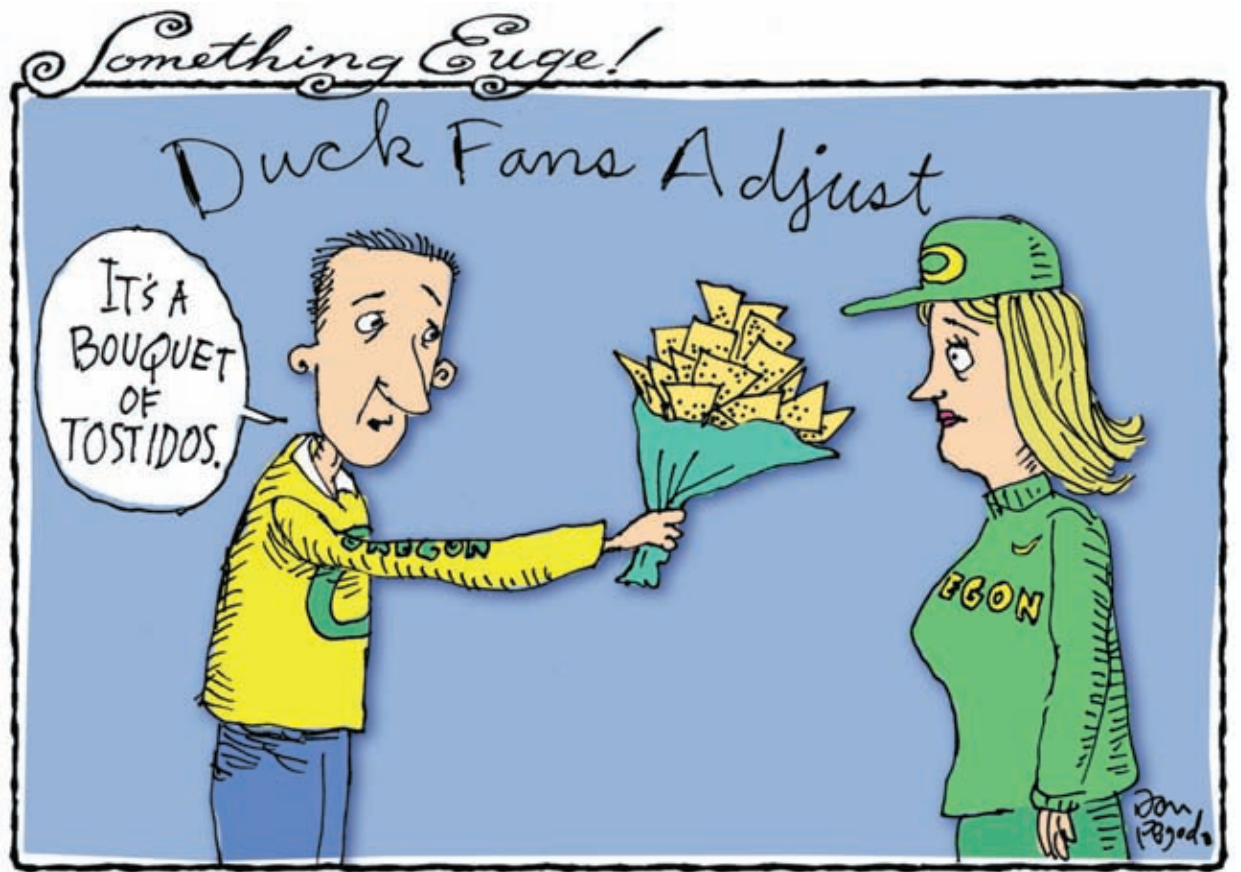
- COMMISSIONER PETE SORENSON

Commissioner Pete Sorenson, who is not part of the majority, responded to Leiken's release, saying, "The decision to release inmates was made by the conservative Republican majority that controls the Board of Commissioners, and determines how much to spend on public safety and on other things."

In his release, which was also published as an editorial in *The Register-Guard*, Leiken wrote, "release of these inmates from the Lane County Jail is directly related to the significant reduction in federal funding and is indicative of the lack of active management of the federal forests that make up half our land base."

The commissioners have been discussing putting a public safety tax on an upcoming ballot, a difficult topic for conservatives who have anti-tax platforms. Leiken continued, "Residents have never supported tax proposals of that size, and there is no reason to expect they will now even in spite of the dismantled state of our public safety system." However, an opinion poll commissioned by the board this summer indicated that, if carefully presented, residents would support a public safety measure.

"I disagree with Commissioner Leiken's statement," Sorenson said. "The problem is that federal, state and local taxes — provided to county government from taxpayers — have been reduced over the past few years. Last year, the overall county budget was reduced from \$500 million to \$400 million." He continued, "Blaming county financial problems on 'lack of management of the federal forests' is an effort to pass the buck."



Sorenson said that the board "is strongly supported by big timber's lobbyists," and, citing global climate change, added that federal forest policies should be revised "so that we — as a nation — are investing in federal lands, so we are replanting the forests and protecting them for wilderness, clean water, wildlife habitat and environmentally compatible recreation and timber."

Outgoing progressive commissioner Rob Handy has been calling for a stronger tax on the county's private timberlands, which he says are undertaxed. He said, "While our soils and watersheds are being polluted by corporate timber barons, they ship our forests and jobs to Asia — and handsomely fund politicians like Commissioners Bozievich, Leiken and Stewart — and Commissioner-elect Pat Farr." He questioned why the conservative majority won't "advocate for the canceling of unfair tax exemptions by the state that cost Lane County upward of \$25 million annually? Why won't they admit we can fund a public safety and community health system here in Lane County by making sure those who can most afford it, will pay their fair share of taxes — or a bit more?"

Conservative West Lane Commissioner Jay Bozievich is holding town halls to discuss the public safety issue on Dec. 6 in Santa Clara, Dec. 10 in Junction City and Dec. 12 in Florence. Go to [wkly.ws/1eb](http://wkly.ws/1eb) for times and locations. — *Camilla Mortensen*

## EW STAFFERS TO LET IT ALL OUT FOR SAFE SEX

Some of Oregon's sharpest storytellers will share memories of off-beat holiday mischief and wintry discontent at the annual Planned Parenthood Advocates holiday benefit from 8:30 to 10:30 pm Friday, Dec. 7, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$13 in advance from [CozmicPizza.com](http://CozmicPizza.com) and at the Cozmic box office.

Storytellers include Camilla Mortensen, *EW*'s associate editor, environmental reporter and resident folklorist; Alexandra Notman, *EW*'s arts editor; Laurie Notaro, author of *An Idiot Girl's Christmas: True Tales from the Top of the Naughty List*; Mark Russell, author of *God Is Disappointed in You*; L.J. Sellers, author of mysteries and thrillers; Leigh Anne Jasheway, author and standup comic; Curt Hopkins, journalist and poet; and Trisha Marcy, standup comic. UO professor and funny man Phil Scher will host the evening's entertainment.

The event is a benefit for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, which, in the 2012 election cycle, mobilized activists to fight back against unprecedented attacks on women's personal medical decisions. The organization's political action committee conducted one of the state's most extensive voter-outreach programs to educate Oregonians about where candidates stand on women's health issues.

## IT'S ABOUT TIME BY DAVID WAGNER

**T**hey're baaack! The mosquito ferns have reappeared in the ponds on the east side of Delta Highway. They have been inconspicuous for three years, a normal population fluctuation. We recognize them by the dark, reddish-brown surface mat on the ponds. Duckweed stays green all winter but the mosquito ferns get color in the fall. That they are still reddish brown and not shocking purple tells us that by the beginning of December we still haven't had a hard freeze.

Jupiter continues bright in the sky this month, rising not long after sunset. It will be a sparkling ornament hugging the nearly full moon on Christmas Day. Orion is back in the evening sky when I take our dog out for our bedtime stroll. Orion and the Pleiades are old friends returning from a six month voyage to the other side of the world. If the sky is clear before dawn on the 14th, the Geminids could be the best meteor shower of the year.

The newly uncurled fronds of licorice ferns on tree branches are wonderful to behold. The bright, spring green is magical at a time of the year when most terrestrial herbaceous plants are withered and dormant. These have a reverse cycle from the ferns of the forest floor. I have counted how many sporangium clusters are on a typical leaf, how many spore cases in a typical cluster, and multiplied that by 64, the number of spores in a sporangium. Average production is four to five million spores per frond!

*David Wagner is a botanist who has lived in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches moss classes and leads nature walks. [fernzenmosses@me.com](mailto:fernzenmosses@me.com)*

**LICORICE FERN FROND TIP WITH ONE SPORE CASE CLUSTER ENLARGED**

