



## A CALL TO ACTION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE

Most Eugeneans know that climate change is happening, but acting on that knowledge is a little trickier. On Feb. 10, the Climate Change Mitigation and Preparation meeting at Cozmic will feature a series of short talks followed by roundtable discussions that focus primarily on action.

"The truth is that educating is huge, but people are dying for action," says Pam Driscoll, a facilitator and speaker for the meeting. "We have all the information. Now we need to act on it."

Driscoll says her inspiration for the meeting came after she attended the Climate Reality Leadership Corps training in San Francisco. She and hundreds of attendees from 58 other countries learned climate change communication techniques, including how to do Al Gore-style PowerPoint presentations. On her return to Oregon, Driscoll realized that the problem in Eugene is not a lack of awareness about climate change, but a shortage of tangible action.

"Everyone's frustrated with talking about it," Driscoll says. "Let's not debate it anymore. Let's talk about mitigating and preparing for it."

For the Feb. 10 event, Driscoll scheduled 11 local speakers, including Matt McRae, a climate and energy analyst for the city of Eugene, and

Megan Kemple of the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition. Topics will include climate change resistance, land use, food security and coal trains, among others. Each talk will last about 15 minutes, affording time after the talks for the audience to split off into groups in a roundtable format. The speakers will offer sign-up sheets for those wanting to become more involved.

For Driscoll, it's a unique opportunity to encourage both small and large-scale change. She says now is the time for citizens to push lawmakers into responding to climate change, before it's too late.

The meeting is free and open to the public, with the talks starting at 1 pm at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. For more information see the Facebook page at [wkly.ws/1f7](http://wkly.ws/1f7) — Amy Schneider

**'Everyone's frustrated with talking about it. Let's not debate it anymore. Let's talk about mitigating and preparing for it.'**

- PAM DRISCOLL

# SLANT

- **Bonny Bettman McCornack** is back in our pages this week reviving her City-Zen Journal column. We've missed her strong voice and clear analysis of complex issues. She retired in frustration in 2009 after a memorable eight years on the Eugene City Council and numerous committees and commissions in Lane County. Often she was the only voice in public meetings asking tough questions and calling for accountability and transparency. We called her "Energizer Bonny" in our cover story on her retirement ([wkly.ws/1f9](http://wkly.ws/1f9)) and we wrote that "she fears that with the recession forcing deep budget cuts, the staff's strategy will be to cancel funding for popular programs like the library and parks to force people to vote for tax increases to fund them." It's clear that some aspects of city government have improved during and after her tenure on the council, but as she points out this week, many old problems remain unresolved as the city prepares to ask voters for a serial tax levy. This is an opportunity for all of us to pay attention and "ask the tough questions" about how the city manages its revenues and expenditures.

- The *R-G* broke the story of the **massive proposed raises** for Lane County Counsel Stephen Dingle and County Administrator Liane Richardson on Jan. 24. By Jan. 26 when it was announced that they were deferring the raises "for now," we're hearing that the county's public information officer Jenn Inman was fired. Coincidence? Or did Inman, who's been a friendly and helpful media contact, piss off the powers-that-be during the PR fiasco when the county tried to give \$40,000 in raises while debating a jail tax? The layoffs have been fast and furious at Lane County (as well as the lawsuits) and one angry taxpayer at a recent jail tax public hearing alleged Richardson has laid off a "disproportionate number of employees over age 50." Hey Lane County, times are tight, but you don't save money by mismanaging employees.

- We witnessed a remarkably frank and open meeting Feb. 1 of the City Club of Eugene. Frank Gorelick, North Eugene High School teacher, moderated a panel of six students from North, Springfield High and Network Charter School through a conversation about **emerging gender identity** and the role of gay/straight alliances in local high schools. We heard the startling statistic that 40 percent of the kids on the street, homeless kids right here and across the country, are LGBT, homeless in part because their families have thrown them out or made their home lives unbearable. Looking Glass and its services such as Station 7 were praised as "extremely helpful" places for these kids to go.

- **The Oregon Legislature** is back in session this week with abundant issues that have financial implications for our state. It is possible to boost funding for education in this recession, but we need to take special care to not further erode workers' rights and our environment, or exacerbate the gap between rich and poor. The best way to balance the budget, of course, is to eliminate many of the corporate tax breaks, giveaways and other so-called incentives built into our state tax code. They were justified historically by the idea they would create or maintain jobs, but that theory has been widely discredited. No easy fixes here. Every tax perk has its entrenched lobby and paid-off politicians. The ridiculously low taxes on private forestlands in Oregon are a prime example.

Gov. Kitzhaber and the Legislature are eyeing cuts to PERS benefits, but we should not forget that those "generous" payments to retired teachers and other public servants are due in part to negotiated benefits in lieu of pay raises in decades past. Reducing our prison populations by releasing nonviolent offenders (such as low-level pot dealers) can save money and perhaps even reduce recidivism, but many ex-cons will need social services and other help re-entering the workforce. A renewed hospital tax can help keep state Medicare costs down, but will Republicans get medical tort reform in return? Not a good trade-off. Often a big-bucks legal judgment is the only thing that gets the attention of careless service providers and medical equipment manufacturers. Republicans will push their usual bills to ease up on land-use planning and environmental regulations; fortunately, Democrats hold both the House and the Senate and are likely to kill such bills in committee.

- Speaking of the Oregon Legislature, will our local legislators step up with a bill and **protect Waldo Lake from floatplanes**? The clear lake off Hwy 58 was protected last year from motorboats but the State Aviation Board still might let planes land on the pristine waters.

SLANT INCLUDES SHORT OPINION PIECES, OBSERVATIONS AND RUMOR-CHASING NOTES  
COMPILED BY THE EW STAFF. HEARD ANY GOOD RUMORS LATELY?  
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