

Oregon Constitution. It is illegal even if it exempts people on the streets or people on food stamps. It's still a head tax.

If the city of Eugene wants to know what massive refusal to pay looks like, they can go right ahead and impose this unconstitutional head tax. A tax by any other name is still a tax. A head tax is a head tax, no matter what you call it. Unconstitutional is unconstitutional.

Ann Tattersall
Eugene

TIME TO STEP UP

It seems there are two main components in the arguments against the city fee: 1) city government needs to be reorganized, 2) there is money elsewhere to be used. I take issue with both as reasons to vote against the city fee.

Reorganize the government? Seriously? Even if I agreed, I don't see this conversation as being anywhere close to the issue on the ballot; i.e. funding basic services now. This is a complicated and very serious conversation to have in a thoughtful way and not as a reaction to need for funds.

Money elsewhere? The sources I've seen noted are legitimate funds with designated and financially responsible purposes. Raid-

ing other funds in the short term, even if possible, does potential harm in the long term.

Resources are lean throughout Oregon, including Eugene. I'm impressed that we've held basic services together as long as we have. The streets are becoming a joy to travel minus the potholes, and that wouldn't have happened without "we the people" stepping up and passing bond measures.

We need to step up again and pass this safety net for the quality of life in Eugene. The ordinance clearly designates the fee to be used only for homeless and human resources, fire and police protection and libraries and pools; i.e. quality of life issues. Your "yes" vote is needed and is appropriate.

Jay Moseley
Eugene

LIFE UNDERGROUND

We escape from some of our problems by acting like we are gators and crocs living in the sewer systems. It really isn't pleasant down there. The scenery sucks; it's chilly; it's wet; it really, really stinks. Sewers are our dark side, a repository for the things we try to hide from ourselves. We are schizoid: a somewhat pleasant life aboveground, and a life we are hiding from in the sewers — the hidden life of few jobs, endless

war, our kids' empty prospects, planetary population headed to nine billion — and last, and worst, there's the unmitigated global warming/energy disaster. Ugh.

But stuffing our awareness of our civilization's plagues into sewers doesn't work: Now and again we flash on what we have hidden from, and are sick with worry.

Better to do something about the dark side. We need to go down, embrace the dark side, crawl up the slimy, crusty manhole ladders, lift off the manhole covers, look around, crawl out of the sewers and face the future squarely. We need a revolution in the way humans think, feel and live.

Tom Giesen
Eugene

TURN THE DIAL

While listening to the *Brickwall Comedy Show* on All Comedy 1450-AM they talked about a letter of complaint (or it might have been a call) that the station received concerning "offensive material." I want to say that it was such a problem for her then all she had to do was change the channel.

I love the comedy that 1450 brings to the area as well as the choice they give to listeners. The people who run the place are friends of mine and even if they weren't

I would still feel the same. So I applaud *EW* for supporting local radio versus chains. While I listen to both kinds I do think more support is needed to be given to local efforts to bring choice to the people.

I understand that comedy is not for everyone and that some subject are not for everyone. But this in mind: I hope that they don't think that all stand-ups are innocent little angels.

James Ready
Springfield

POOCH PARK POTTY

I am disabled and a dog owner who has limited access to dog parks. I am able to go to Alton Baker Dog Park, but the dog park is not equipped with any Porta-Pottys or restrooms. Other elderly people and disabled people share my frustration with the lack of toilet facilities. Other public spaces are afforded restrooms. I feel that with the frequent use and essential service this dog park provides, the city of Eugene can assist dog owners by maintaining one Porta-Potty. I would like to ask that one toilet be provided for the Alton Baker Dog Park. Thank you for your consideration of this.

Michele Kernes
Eugene

QUE PASA

BY PAULINA ROMO VILLASEÑOR

Día De Los Niños

DIA DE LOS LIBROS

Cuando nace un niño, como de costumbre, se enciende una estrella, para que lo alumbre.
— Eladia Blazquez

I remember how exciting it was to wake up on the morning of April 30, put on my white and gray uniform, my red comfy sweater and my rubber-soled shoes, take the bus and arrive at school for a full day of festivities and treats. The teachers would assemble us in the school patio to read a few short poems and perform a puppet show. Then we would go to our classrooms where an array of tasty goodies, prepared by our parents, awaited us. At the end of the day, we were given a bag full of candies, fruits, pencils and stickers, and still it was not over. At home, my mother would serve my brother and I our favorite dishes, meatloaf for Francisco and chicken in orange sauce for me. El Día del Niño always made me feel special and cherished by both my parents and my teachers.

When I became a mother in this foreign culture, I realized that the celebrations I loved so much would not be a part of my child's upbringing. The happiness I felt on those special dates would not be a part of my son's sense of comfort, appreciation and belonging. I attempted to reproduce elements of some celebrations, but this intent slowly fades away when you don't have a society, or at least a community, that gains a sense of joy from those practices — a joy and that helps build and sustain a cultural imaginary.

Sadly, a gap or disconnect begins to build between a first generation immigrant and his or her offspring. That beautiful wave of bonds supported by a family, a community and a society begins to break, creating a real and a psychological sense of isolation. As the years go by living as an immigrant in the U.S., I recognize that we have to work harder to create spaces and situations in which people like me, from different cultural backgrounds, can experience a stronger degree of integration. I believe that strengthening that sense of integration translates to feeling safe, appreciated and useful to the community.

In Latin America El Día del Niño is a day to recognize the importance of children as the center of family and society. Parents as well as educators coordinate their efforts to make sure that children know they are cherished, loved, and acknowledged. El Día del Niño is not only about pampering children. It is a day about bringing awareness about the rights of children and reminding parents and teachers of their responsibility to safeguard children's well-being and integrity. It is a cultural practice that recognizes the importance of nurturing the younger human beings of our societies.

Worldwide, El Día del Niño became an official celebration in 1954, when the U.N. General Assembly recommended this day to promote the well-being of children everywhere. In the U.S., the first, newly named Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros was observed on April 30, 1997. Community organizations, libraries, and universities worked together to link El Día del Niño with children's language and literacy. The day is now a nationally recognized initiative that emphasizes the importance of literacy for all children from all backgrounds. It also promotes a daily commitment to connecting children and their families to diverse books, languages and cultures. The common goals of the celebration are to:

- Celebrate children and connect them to the world of learning through books, stories and libraries.
- Nurture cognitive and literacy development in ways

that honor and embrace a child's home language and culture.

- Introduce families to community resources that provide opportunities for learning through multiple literacies.
- Recognize and respect culture, heritage and language as powerful tools for strengthening families and communities

Día de Los Niños in the U.S. is not only a cultural event, but also one that has broad social implications in that it brings awareness to the importance of respecting other cultures and backgrounds. It is an annual event that can be placed alongside Cesar Chavez Day, Día de Los Muertos, and Carnaval in terms of inclusion, acceptance, and recognition of multiculturalism as a means to bring ideological wealth to our society. All of these celebrations inspire us to keep fighting for human rights and the understanding and acceptance of difference as a viable way to maintain healthy, prosperous individuals and societies.

Oregon is celebrating Día de Los Niños this year by bringing children and families of different backgrounds together. I am especially happy to see that the celebration that brought me so much joy as a child is alive in this community. What it is saying to me — to Latino immigrants — is yes, you are a welcomed part of this society. ■

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