

DECLINE GRAVEL PERMIT

On June 11, the Lane County Board of Commissioners will have a hearing to help determine whether the board should review the Lane County hearing official's decision to deny Delta Sand and Gravel a special use permit to mine gravel on land that is zoned for exclusive farm use.

The hearings official carefully spelled out in his 20 page findings that Delta's application for a special use permit did not meet the requirements under law for approval. Unlike the hearings official and members of the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, Lane County commissioners are not specialists in interpreting law.

This case is important to both the applicant, Delta, and to the residents of the Santa Clara community who oppose mining in their neighborhood. It does not, however, possess countywide significance, a requirement for the Board of Commissioners to review the case. Recently the commissioners declined to review the Parvin Butte mining decisions; it would be reasonable for them also to decline review in this case.

The board can save county resources

by declining to review this application for a special use permit, and relying on the findings of the impartial hearings official.

Joel Narva
Santa Clara

TAKING SHELTER

I talked to a homeless man who spends his nights at the Mission and asked him what he thought about the place. His main comment was that the Mission is too crowded and noisy. He can't concentrate well enough to read because of the noise level. He said they're putting mattresses on the floor to accommodate all the people staying there. The food has gotten worse and they no longer give them donuts in the morning, which matters to him because he's about 50 pounds underweight.

The Mission no longer allows them to pay \$2 per night, but requires an hour and a half of work. This is a problem for him if he has to do it in the morning because he needs to get out of there for his "semi-job" selling *The Motivator* homeless newspaper. He said the men have to line up for the showers because there aren't enough of them, and he doesn't like the lack of privacy in taking showers.

He said every high school student

should spend a night at the Mission to motivate them to do whatever they have to so they don't become homeless.

Most of this would probably apply to any mass homeless shelter. It's a whole lot better than having people outside in the rain and cold, but individual micro-housing, such as is planned for Opportunity Village Eugene, is a better idea. Gives people some privacy, the ability to be alone, less regimented.

The problem I see with the Village is that it requires an enormous amount of planning by volunteers, and wading through the city's bureaucracy. The planning and organization required take a long time. The Village will probably be great for its residents, but I think what SLEEPS has in mind, smaller camps spread around the city, may work for more people. Needs to be kept simple, so that it doesn't need so much organization. The City Council has just begun to discuss this, with input from SLEEPS. We'll see how it goes.

Lynn Porter
Eugene

COUGARS ON CHARADE

EW should be commended for its investigative article "Predatory Nonprofit?" [5/16] detailing how the NRA and Safari Club International are funding a push to kill Oregon's cougars with packs of dogs. In 1994 Oregon voters passed Measure 18 which made it illegal to chase cougars with hounds. This law has been a resounding success and no cougars have hurt anyone! But a small group of trophy hunters wants to undo this law so they can wipe out cougars.

Oregon's voters should be outraged that such a self-serving small group is openly coercing the Legislature into undoing a voter-supported law that protects Oregon's wildlife. The Legislature should not listen to scare tactics or allow themselves to be bullied by special interest groups

That article in *EW* blows the top off the Oregon Outdoor Council's little charade. We see this questionable nonprofit for what it is: a cover for national and international groups like the NRA who have unlimited resources and aren't afraid to throw their weight around.

Legislators should beware of anything

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Papa Doc Persists

KITZHABER FIGURES A BETTER DEAL POSSIBLE

Rumors abound in Salem's Capitol these days. Summer is two weeks away and the deadline for completing this legislative session is only five weeks away. Is there a deal imminent? Negotiations for a final budget yet?

It depends on who you ask. A few weeks ago, when Gov. Kitzhaber signed into law the PERS reform bill SB 822, he said it "was a good start." After he got the \$271 million in good news from the May revenue forecast, he said: "We can do better." Read between the lines. Sure enough, the governor upped the ante by laying out a new compromise framework on further PERS reforms coupled with additional revenue. House Speaker Tina Kotek and Senate President Peter Courtney brought their Democratic caucuses back to the bargaining table.

But Senate and House Republicans refused to budge, no interest in coming to the table. Instead they held a medical provider fee bill hostage in the Senate for no apparent reason — \$2 billion in budget cuts to Oregon health care, senior care, mental health services. Economic models show 14,000 hospital or secondary jobs in Oregon are reliant on this federal money alone. Several Republicans are already on record saying they support the provider bill, but *only* with further PERS reforms and with no commitment to end tax breaks for the wealthiest Oregonians. Doesn't look much like a negotiation to me.

Last week, the governor announced it was time to move on: "I regret that Republican leadership has not indicated a willingness to develop a balanced compromise proposal involving both PERS and new revenue." As late as last Thursday (May 29), I checked in with House Revenue Chair Phil Barnhart; he confirmed: no further PERS reform; the Republicans aren't moving on additional revenue. House Majority Leader Val Hoyle is quoted in the papers: "It's stunning to me, from

a strategic perspective," and "PERS is the main thing they want to do, and they're willing to walk out of here without that vote." Meanwhile, groups like the Oregon School Boards Association and Stand for Children — who used to be allies of the Democrats before they started bashing teachers — were freaking out as time ran out, telling legislators that there's still something in the works. Maybe there is.

Dr. John Kitzhaber was first elected governor in 1994, the same year I first got elected to the Oregon House. Before that, Papa Doc served in the Oregon House and then 12 years in the Oregon Senate; eight of those he was Senate president. (I named him "Papa Doc" because his son Logan was born his first term.) I watched him maneuver four sessions in his eight years as governor in his first two terms — while Democrats were in the *minority* each session! Remember, the Oregon Health Plan and the Oregon Salmon Plan were *passed* with Republican majorities in both chambers for his entire eight years. The dude knows how the Legislature works and he loves a challenge. More vetoes than any governor in Oregon history. But he still got stuff done.

Suddenly, last Thursday, out of nowhere, the Republicans came up with a counter-proposal. While it's a partisan piece of crap on its face, asking for \$1 billion in additional PERS savings already rejected by Democrats, it offers \$130 million in new revenue. Papa Doc is a fisherman, and this counter-proposal — weak as it is — is a nibble. Stay tuned.

Earlier in the session, Hoyle introduced me to her counterpart in the House Republican caucus, Minority Leader Mike McLane. Good guy. Mike grew up in Condon, got his law degree from Lewis and Clark and clerked for Justice Mick Gillette, one of my favorites, at the Oregon Supreme Court. He lives in Powell Butte and works for Miller Nash, a prestigious Portland law firm. He has a good sense of humor and doesn't take himself too seriously, unlike, say, Rep. Dennis Richardson.

Although Mike's a rookie, he's a quick read. And he has the benefit of Salem Rep. Vicki Berger, a smart and reasonable veteran, as his Republican caucus whip. (No, your eyes did not deceive you; I just said nice things about two Republicans in one paragraph.) They at least give me hope that Papa Doc will get a good outcome from this session. The Senate Republican caucus is much harder to read. But I'll bet you Papa Doc can poach two votes and seal the deal. *We can do better.* ■

Former state sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is currently a state employee and his observations in this column are those of a private citizen.

