

SLANT

• Eugene's City Council will vote Monday, July 8, on suspending the enforcement of a **5-cent charge for paper bags**. To change the ordinance before people have a chance to adapt is ludicrous. Without the incentive, people who don't care about the consequences of their own actions on the planet and our descendants won't change their behavior. It's insulting to suggest that poor people won't learn to remember reusable bags, and the idea that Eugene businesses would lose out on grocery revenue because people would spend time and gas money driving to Springfield because they've forgotten a bag is bizarre. Meanwhile, those of us who act responsibly and bring reusable bags would again be stuck subsidizing the paper bags that some believe are magically free.

• Everyone (politically speaking) has an opinion on whether Rep. Peter DeFazio or Rep. Raúl Grijalva ought to have the powerful position of ranking member on the **House Natural Resources Committee**, but it gets down to insider baseball for appointment in the end because the decision is made by Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic caucus. What is important, and what DaFaz should note, is that so many enviro groups and politicians are weighing in on this. From logging Oregon's forests to the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, the greener side of the fence is trying to tell you something, Mr. Congressman.

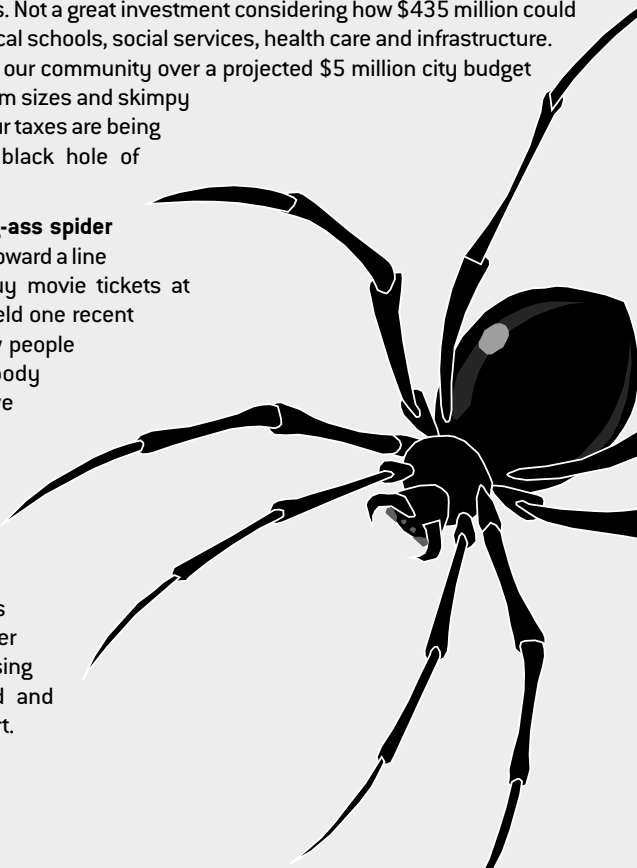
• **Happy Fourth of July!** We love sparklers and pretty lights in the sky as much as the next person, and we like to criticize the good old U.S. of A. almost as much as we love pyrotechnics. Be careful with those fireworks though. Climate change means hot, dry weather and that means more fires, including devastating ones like the Prescott fire that killed 19 firefighters in Arizona this week. While you celebrate, take a moment in between picnics and explosions to ponder why it's so darn hot and think about what changes you can make in this American life to stop global warming.

• **Near death experiences (NDEs)** offer inquiring minds a window into what might be awaiting us after death, one of life's great mysteries. We wrote about Dr. Eben Alexander's talk in Eugene in this column June 20. Alexander is the author of *Proof of Heaven*. In response, some philosophical observations and a critique of our critique are posted on our website (wkly.ws/1i8) by Patric Miller, who organized the event, noting that "a vast majority of us who have experienced NDEs find the term 'heaven' to be limiting, compared to what we experienced. However, it is a starting spot for conversation." Miller also says dozens were *not* turned away, as we reported. He says the event was sold out at 300, but the decision was made to open up some folding doors at the back to accommodate 130 more people. Miller's website is beyondgodandscience.com. Anyone have their own NDE to share? Any NDE skeptics out there?

• EW's fifth annual **Next Big Thing** music contest wrapped up this past week with 112 original songs submitted by 75 bands and individual musicians. Thanks to all the artists and businesses that participated and to the fans who voted online for their favorite entries. More than 8,500 unique visitors spent time on the website. Our judges will be meeting soon and we will announce the top 16 in July. The winner will be announced in August and a 16-song compilation CD will be available in the fall. Stay tuned.

• Our wars and occupations of **Iraq and Afghanistan** have cost Eugene taxpayers more than \$435 million so far, according to costofwar.com, and the flow of dollars and debt will likely continue for decades to come through government contracting and military support services. Not a great investment considering how \$435 million could have been directed to local schools, social services, health care and infrastructure. We squabble and divide our community over a projected \$5 million city budget deficit, growing classroom sizes and skimpy county services while our taxes are being sucked quietly into a black hole of death and destruction.

• We observed a **big-ass spider** crawling across the tile toward a line of people waiting to buy movie tickets at Cinemark 17 in Springfield one recent Saturday evening. A few people freaked out but nobody squished it. Are we evolving in our attitudes towards the animal kingdom? One fellow, apparently familiar with arachnid herding techniques, stomped his foot between the spider and the crowd. The imposing creature turned around and headed for the food court.



SLANT INCLUDES SHORT OPINION PIECES, OBSERVATIONS AND RUMOR-CHASING NOTES
COMPILED BY THE EW STAFF. HEARD ANY GOOD RUMORS LATELY?
CONTACT TED TAYLOR AT 484-0519, EDITOR@EUGENEWEEKLY.COM

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