

Athletic Director Rob Mullens says the new building is not excessive and I believe him. Of course, he said the same thing about the Spanish Inquisition.

*Paul Roth
Springfield*

NEW RIDE SERVICE

I am responding to the letter Aug. 8, “Drinking in the Whit.” I am hearing more and more that this is becoming the Brewery District, yet there are no programs in place to help combat drunk driving.

I have recently founded Rides for Intoxicated Drivers of Eugene, or RIDE, a service where we will get patrons of sponsor organizations home in their own vehicles. We offer this free to the patron, with the sponsor organizations covering the costs.

We feel that this lets the sponsor organization show that they are committed to reducing drunk driving in the local communities. I wanted to respond so people knew we were out there and looking for sponsor organizations. I would like to ask the community to let the local bars, Ninkasi included, know that they should become sponsors and help bring our service to the community.

We haven’t found our base of operations yet and the Whit could make an ideal choice. It will only happen if the community shows their support and helps to convince the local bars and nightclubs to become sponsors.

If anyone wants to be a volunteer chauffeur or wants to sponsor RIDE, they

can visit rideeugene.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

*Jonathan Russell
Eugene*

ROVING THE PARKS

All the world’s a stage and this summer Eugene’s own itinerant theater troupe, The Roving Park Players, has transformed our lovely parks and open spaces into a delightful stage where children and adult actors prance, dance, prowl and growl while entertaining families in the adorable adaptation of Ruth Gannett’s *My Father’s Dragon*.

Summer lingers and evenings are still long. Perfect for a family picnic at one of the remaining performances: this Thursday and Friday at Peterson Barn Community Center; Saturday and Sunday at Island Park in Springfield. Canopies provided in case of rain. The mission of RPP is to make the magic of theater accessible to everyone; thus, all performances are always free. What a deal. Shows start at 6 pm. Visit website for details, RovingParkPlayers.org.

*Eva Kronen
Eugene*

HUNGRY TIMBER ELITE

Since the enactment of the Northwest Forest Plan in 1993, marbled murrelet and spotted owl populations have declined at a rate of about 2 to 3 percent per year. The Endangered Species Act-listed salmon runs, like the Coho, are likely declining at a faster rate, but Oregon Fish and Wildlife is not tracking this decline for some reason.

Climate change chaos is happening right before our very eyes and yet Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden and Congressman Peter DeFazio want to ignore these inconvenient truths and promote more ecosystem destruction by increasing logging on Oregon’s public lands.

Their legislation calls for clearcut logging and privatization upon 2.5 million acres of BLM-managed O&C lands to subsidize the failing mega-tree-fiber operations owned by the wealthiest people in Oregon. These timber elite have clearcut and exported all of the mature trees on their so-called private lands and at least 70 percent on public lands. Now Oregon’s timber elite are clamoring for the rest of our endangered ecosystems on public lands, and it seems Wyden and DeFazio are ready to hand it to them on a gold-plated platter.

I am sure glad we have Democrats leading Oregon into the abyss at the behest of the big timber elite, aren’t you?

*Shannon Wilson
Ecosystem Advocates NW
Eugene*

BAD DEFAZIO BILL

I am disappointed to see Rep. Peter DeFazio’s proposed O&C Trust Act moving forward. The bill further fragments our public forestlands, takes away public process for forest management and relies on the weak provisions that private timber companies use for their clearcuts.

Though he doesn’t mention it in his recent opinion in the *R-G*, DeFazio’s bill is linked to some of the worst environmental legislation in decades, HR 1526, promoted

by leading Republicans. This legislation would mandate a huge increase in logging on our national forests and would gut environmental laws and prioritize timber production over all other public values.

Our federal public lands provide Oregonians with clean drinking water, fish and wildlife, world-class recreation and scenic beauty. The proposals in HR 1526 — including the O&C Trust Act — jeopardize these values treasured by the people of our state. DeFazio should reconsider his support of the O&C Trust proposal, and our senators should view it as a non-starter.

*Roxana Monjaras
Eugene*

LOCAL FOOD CONTROL

We are writing to support the Local Food System Ordinance of Lane County. It is important that local communities across this country take control of their food sources.

Corporate agribusiness has gotten state and federal laws to support corporate dominance over local community rights.

People need to work together to regain local sovereignty and rights. To grow, distribute and consume foods free of chemical and genetically modified contamination is a basic human right.

Thank you for helping to put the Local Food Systems Ordinance on the next Lane County ballot.

*Robert M. Jacobs &
Barbara J. Jacobs
Eugene*

VIEWPOINT BY BRENTON GICKER

Rooting for the Underdog

EVERYONE NEEDS AN ADVOCATE

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.

— Karl Marx

Working for CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets, a program of White Bird Clinic) people often ask how we are able to tolerate the bad behavior of some of our clients and still provide them with respect, patience and compassion. They are usually referring to homeless alcoholics and other addicts we serve, not necessarily the many other people we assist with their medical and emotional needs.

They are referring to our “problem clients”; homeless people who are chronically intoxicated and belligerent. These aren’t necessarily people who are temporarily homeless while they work through bad circumstances, such as a foreclosure, a disabling accident, bankruptcy from hospital bills, etc. (though many homeless do fall under that category). These aren’t necessarily people who are homeless as a result of mental illness (though many homeless fall under that category too).

These problem clients are the ones who “give the homeless a bad name”; the ones who “choose” to be homeless (or, more accurately, have resigned themselves to it); the drunks and aggressive panhandlers; the ones you find passed out on the lawn or fighting in the alley; the ones who spend their SSI checks on liquor when they haven’t eaten in days.

Working on CAHOOTS, we know these people well. Difficult as it may be at times, we try to treat them all with unconditional positive regard. We are paid, to some extent, to

root for the underdog. We take our role seriously: Everyone needs an advocate.

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. — Oscar Wilde

We all have low points in our lives. Many of us have had periods of extreme depression or excessive drinking due to whatever crisis we were in (a breakup, the death of a loved one, financial woes, etc.). Most of us can tap into our personal and social resources to get through it and move on. But not everybody does: Some people enter a vicious cycle of crippling self-loathing and self-destruction that doesn’t end for a long time, if it ends at all. Some people seemingly had no chance to begin with. Imagine, for instance, that as a child, your parents passed you around to provide sexual favors to their “friends” in exchange for money or drugs. Imagine if you grew up living in motel rooms watching your prostitute mother have sex with strange men; or going on drug-fueled crime sprees with your father instead of going to school. Imagine if, as a child, your punishment for mistakes was being burned with cigarettes.

Hopefully, you can imagine how enduring such experiences might lead somebody to having little confidence in or allegiance to a society that maybe they never really understood or fit in with, and how those experiences might cause somebody to mask their emotional scars with substance abuse and antisocial behavior. You can also, I hope, imagine how carrying those experiences around with you might seriously interfere with your ability to be a functional person by societal standards.

If you’re going through hell, keep going. — Winston Churchill

There’s only so much that any person can endure. Each of us has a breaking point. I believe the horrors some of the people I’ve described have suffered could cause any of us to end up in similar circumstances. Many people fall apart from much less.

It is easier to be compassionate to people when you know what hell they’ve been through, even when they are behaving poorly and may even be heaping abuse upon you as you try to help them.

I’ve seen people spend years, maybe even decades, digging themselves into a deep, dark pit of addiction and homelessness and criminality and sickness, decide they want something better for themselves and finally change, seemingly moving on without looking back.

There are people nobody believed were capable of changing who proved everyone wrong by not letting the tragedies of their past taint and define their present and future. These people inspire me to continue rooting for the underdog.

Brenton Gicker has worked for White Bird Clinic (whitebirdclinic.org) for eight years and CAHOOTS for five years. His views do not represent those of White Bird Clinic or CAHOOTS. He can be reached at beg977@yahoo.com.