

BANAL BUREAUCRATS

Eugene was once viewed as a progressive city. But no more. If any doubt remained following the \$18 admission fee for our “community” celebration excluding the economically disadvantaged, the County Commission meeting Wednesday removed it. For 20 minutes community members spoke with thoughtfulness, care and passion about the Wayne Morse Plaza homelessness protest. One could hear their beating hearts. Commissioner Sorenson did his best to oppose collective punishment and defend the right to assemble, but all logic, law and care became drowned in a sump of lifeless bureaucratic babble from a parade of figures recognizable from the pages of a 19th-century Russian novel or Daumier cartoon.

Employees and visitors, we were told, complained of not “feeling safe” walking past the protesters. I wondered how safe they would feel living in tents. I’m sure the protesters could keep the upper terrace and north side cleared and provide courteous escorts if simply asked.

There was also much concern about bathroom functions in the absence of readily accessible bathrooms, supporting Freud’s theory about the developmental origins of obsessive-compulsive personality. Perhaps I missed it, but I don’t recall any suggestion that the county provide them a portable toilet. I doubt it would break the county budget. Instead, they are forced to sue again, which will cost the county far more. Daily rental of a portable toilet plus sink with water costs less than one hour of attorney time.

No obstacle described could not be easily solved. Our local homeless are but the harbinger of much more to come as global overheating progressively devastates our economy. We will soon need leaders with far more than reptilian levels of empathy and imagination.

*Jack Dresser
Springfield*

EXPENSIVE DIRT

\$12,500 to clean up the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza because they need to change all the dirt?! I called Honey Bucket, spoke to a very helpful young woman there and found out that for \$12,500, the county could have rented 138 Port-a-Potties for 30 days. That includes the one-time \$50 pick up and delivery fee.

Peace in hard times.

*Walker Ryan
Eugene*

LET THEM SLEEP

As a resident of the River Road area and a taxpayer, I was happy to see folks setting up their tents on the corner of River Road and Northwest Expressway. Within a day Port-A-Potties appeared. I understand there is a screening process to stay there and that, yes, there are some problems, too.

If a crime is being committed then call the police. If it bothers people to see that others have to make different choices, then tolerate it. My neighbors spray pesticides and herbicides next to my organic garden, and I protested the Seneca biomass burning factory — both I have to tolerate.

Many of the folks who are homeless are working and contributing members of

FROM THE MAYOR

Our wetlands are an incredible community asset. They’re a wildlife resource, home to thousands of waterfowl and other birds, rare and endangered wildflowers, reptiles and amphibians.

- They’re a clean water resource, filtering out pollutants that flow into waterways from roads, parking lots and rooftops.

- They’re an economic resource, storing water that might otherwise flood homes, schools and businesses, and they provide millions of dollars worth of flood protection.

- They’re an educational resource, teaching about wetlands habitat and clean water in a hands-on way through the Willamette Resource and Education Network (WREN).

- They’re a recreational resource, featuring miles of multi-use paths along Amazon Creek. If you enjoy biking, walking, roller-blading or observing nature, the West Eugene Wetlands are a great place to visit.

- They’re a national resource. This collaborative partnership, called the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, is a stellar model to other communities with dwindling wetlands due to overdevelopment leaving them vulnerable to devastating floods.

On Saturday, Sept. 28, the city of Eugene, the Bureau of Land Management and WREN celebrate National Public Lands Day through maintaining trails needed for access to the wetlands so visitors of all ages can come to experience dragonflies, butterflies, wildlife and the unique habitat and resources wetlands provide.

Please join me in celebrating the unique and thriving West Eugene Wetlands. Many hands make light work and this project will feel good from beginning to end. Families welcome! For more information contact the Eugene Park Stewards West Region volunteer coordinator at lorna.j.baldwin@ci.eugene.or.us or call 682-4845.

*Kitty Piercy
Mayor of Eugene*

society but do not have the funds necessary to move into a place of their own. The Mission is filled to capacity every night.

People without shelter are not going to go away. The economy is not improving fast enough nor is the job market. Most folks without homes want it to be different and will work towards changing their situation. People need to be able to sleep at night and be safe so they can function. How can we expect individuals who are homeless and wanting to get ahead in their life to accomplish anything if they can’t get good sleep? Perhaps next time we pass someone in a tent let’s think of what a perfect opportunity it is to practice compassion, kindness, generosity and understanding.

*Eva Kronen
Eugene*

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSAULT

For a newspaper that usually supports environmental issues, *EW* certainly wandered off the trail in its commentary [Slant, 8/29] about Kaleidoscope, the recent three-day music event at Buford Park. *EW* claims the Lane County commissioners and *The Register-Guard* have complained more about the loud music than the acoustics of rock mining at Parvin Butte near Dexter.

EW commented, “We don’t know about the county, but here at *EW* we have graver concerns over heavy mining than heavy base.”

This is an attempt to dismiss the severity of the noise that assaulted residents in the Seavey Loop area as well as people who live as far away as the lower elevations of the Coburg Hills, Camp Creek and parts of Springfield. Let’s also not forget the frightened wild and domestic animals that

must have been terribly disturbed.

As one of the hundreds of the Dexter area residents who has endured morning, day-time and evening mining noise at Parvin Butte, I can well understand the anger of Seavey Loop farmers who must get up at 4 am to work after listening to the loud vibrations of electronic bass night and day. The majority of commissioners were just as guilty in their support of this outrageous event as they were their decision to allow Greg Demers and the McDougal Brothers to destroy Parvin Butte and let the neighbors suffer noise and dust.

Lane County commissioners should be held accountable for not only Parvin Butte but also their violation of the Buford Park master plan and Willamette Greenway protections.

*John Bauguess
Dexter*

BRIDGING THE GAP

Regarding “Dispatches from Kabul” [cover story, 8/29]: I come from a family of many military people. Five in the Navy, two in the Marine Corps and one Coast Guard.

I have a lot of compassion for those who have already served an enlistment and discharged honorably and then later get recalled to active duty. That seems really wrong to me.

On the other hand, for the 30 percent who are reservists or National Guard members, my sympathy evaporates. My question is, what did they think would happen? Why did they think they were in training?

Michael Mullen, (former) chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said civilians don’t know us (the military). And we don’t comprehend the full weight of the burden they carry or the price they pay when

returning from battle. I think he makes a good point. So maybe Jake Klonoski can help bridge that gap.

*Lisa Tyler
Springfield*

ON WAR AND PEACE

In response to Jake Klonoski’s article [8/29] on being in the military, I would like to remind him that the military teaches you how to kill. If you want to help people join the Peace Corps.

*Chip Duyck
New York City*

BLOCK PARTY SUCCESS

The Whiteaker Block Party is a month past, but for those of us who organized the event, the work didn’t stop there. This year’s block party was a resounding success, bigger and better than ever. I would like to thank the 132 volunteers and 42 staff members who are the backbone of the WBP, without whom we couldn’t function. Also, thanks to our neighbors for being part of such an amazing neighborhood that continually inspires us and the rest of Eugene for showing some love for the Whiteaker and all the amazing things here. Further thanks are owed to the dozens of businesses who donated to our raffle.

The initial estimate we gave *EW* of \$20,000 to put on the WBP was in line with the price tag for last year [Biz Beat, 8/15]. Now, with all the receipts and a final tally I can report that the block party actually doubled in price this year, to \$40,000. This also provides an opportunity to clear up possible confusion about the WBP and how we operate.

Seven years ago we were just some friends who decided to celebrate our neighborhood. It has grown under the vision and leadership of Chris and Zoe Gadsby, and now we are a not-for-profit LLC that consists of four people who meet in our free time to organize. We have never made money from organizing it; we are year-round volunteers trying to constantly improve. That’s our philosophy; do it for free and get better. All of the bands within the official block party borders play for free.

To pay for this event, we raise a lot of money by networking with local businesses. Ninkasi is our largest sponsor, donating all their beer garden sales to the block party. There are also Eye Beam Event Services, Velvet Thunder Sound, *EW*, Cornerstone Glass, Blairally, Braun’s Apple Market, District Security, Health & Safety and Redoux Parlour to thank. Without all of these 100 percent locally owned businesses we couldn’t put together the infrastructure for pulling off the WBP. For all seven years of the WBP it has been organized by the same group of friends and sponsored by mostly the same local businesses.

We at the Whiteaker Block Party, LLC, are committed to maintaining our status as a completely free event that is entirely volunteer run. Next year, look for us to be better than ever, and if you are interested in participating somehow, feel free to contact us. Come enjoy the wonder of the Whit!

*Jason Vanderhaar
Whiteaker Block Party secretary*