



Eugeneans are still pondering the **boom in student housing** and wondering when it will end. In light of the overbuilding [see our cover story Oct. 10] we predict several big projects on the drawing board will be shelved before groundbreaking. College enrollment has peaked, so the big out-of-state investors have been counting on drawing tenants from existing apartments and houses all over town. That's happening to a degree, but Eugene is not a typical college town. A lot of the students we know are independent, outdoorsy types who prefer a more quiet, laid-back lifestyle with dogs, cats and wooden front porches. What can rental owners around town do to better compete? They might need to rethink their pet policies, for one thing, and property management companies might need loosen up some of their adversarial policies and practices [we hear a lot of horror stories from students]. And future high-rise housing developers might be wise to design a mix of units to accommodate students, families, even seniors. The demographics are changing.

Luna & Larry's Coconut Bliss is holding its annual "Night of Bliss" community celebration from 5 to 9 pm Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 13th and Chambers in Eugene. The event, by donation, is a benefit for the School Garden Project of Lane County and Beyond Toxics. Last year the event raised more than \$3,000 for its selected nonprofits. Live music and activities for children are planned, and other businesses involved are Cousin Jack's Pasty Company, Organically Grown Company and Holy Cow Café. See coconutbliss.com.

National news reports tell us **home mortgage rates** have been climbing due in part to the improved economy, predictions of inflation, the government shutdown and speculation that the Fed will cut back on its stimulus programs. But we hear this week from local mortgage broker Nick Carter of OMT Mortgage that "rates have been creeping back downward with a 30-year fixed in the mid to lower 4 percent range and a 15-year fixed in the mid 3 percent range." Might be a good time to buy.

The **GreenLane Sustainable Business Network** is busy this fall and is planning its third annual Net Impact-GreenLane mixer from 5:30 to 7 pm Thursday, Nov. 14. Net Impact is a sustainable business nonprofit with a chapter at UO. Get venue details and RSVP at walexand@uoregon.edu or call (503) 929-6269.

Friends of Trees in Lane County is beginning its neighborhood tree-planting season this month. It might be too late to register for Crew Leader Training Nov. 7, but volunteers are needed from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays, starting Nov. 17 in Santa Clara and continuing Dec. 7 in south Eugene. Bring gloves and boots. See friendsoftrees.org for information about activities in Eugene, Corvallis and Albany.

Send suggestions for Biz Beat items to editor@eugeneweekly.com and please put "Biz Beat" in the subject line.

LANE COUNTY AREA SPRAY SCHEDULE

- Freres Timber Inc. plans to hire Washburn Contract Services Inc. to spray 20,000 feet of roadsides in Township 15S Range 07W Sections 1, 9 and 11 near **Prairie Mountain** with Forestry Garlon XRT, Accord XRT II, Element 4 and/or Opensight. See ODF notification 2013-551-00474 for more information.

- ODOT is now doing fall **roadside spraying in Lane County** with Aquaneat (Glyphosate), Milestone VM (Aminopyralid), Milestone VM Plus (Aminopyralid, Triclopyr), Honcho Plus (Glyphosate), Payload (Flumioxazin), Esplanade 200 SC (Indazifam), Perspective (Aminocyclopyrachlor, Chlorosulfuron), Pathfinder II (Triclopyr Ester) and/or Gly Star Plus (Glyphosate) or others with surfactants Dyne-Amic, Phase and/or LI 700 or others. Call District 5 offices at 744-8080 to request spray records or call their automated information line at (888) 996-8080 for more information.

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NEWS

MORE DETAILS EMERGE IN LIANE RICHARDSON STORY

The emails read like something from the *New York Post* or *The National Enquirer*, not like messages that would be copied to the Eugene City Council, the mayor and the city manager. Former county administrator Liane Richardson's ex-husband Mark Richardson fired off a volley of angry exchanges with his ex into the public record late in the evening of Oct. 23 and kicked off an investigation by the Eugene Police Department (EPD) and more questions about Liane Richardson's tenure at Lane County.

The "he-said, she-said" argument between the Richardsons, who divorced in May, included allegations from Mark Richardson that his ex-wife had been having an affair with a Eugene police officer, Sgt. Matt Lowen, such as "according to Liane they had sex on the floor of the armory on his sweatshirt."

Mark Richardson alleged the affair with Lowen "was in part conducted during his duty hours and included sex in a shuttered county building." He also alleged the incident occurred after Liane Richardson went on a ride-along with Lowen. She responded to him and the city officials via email: "My ex has no proof of Matt Lowen and I doing anything inappropriate during Matt's work hours or in any county-owned buildings, because nothing inappropriate happened during work hours or in any publicly owned properties."

Melinda McLaughlin of the EPD says the department cannot comment ahead of the internal affairs investigation into the allegations.

Lowen was one of the officers involved in arresting homeless campers under the Ferry Street Bridge in April after police spray painted "No Trespassing" on the bridge. Liane Richardson was frequently criticized by homeless advocates for shutting down their protest at the publicly owned Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza, a shutdown that was found to be unconstitutional. In 2010 Lowen and the city of Eugene were sued by former EWEB commissioner and current County Commission candidate Joann Ernst over a police raid on her home.

The suit sought damages for the use of "paramilitary activities, personnel, tactics and equipment" while executing a search warrant at Ernst's home. The city paid Ernst \$87,000 to settle the suit.

At the county, there is no investigation yet into any possible misuse of county funds, properties or other misconduct in regard to the emails because, according to Lane County spokesperson Anne Marie Levis, "The emails didn't reference any misuse of county funds," and she adds, "Also, Ms. Richardson has been fired."

One of the county issues that did arise concerns Liane Richardson appointing Lowen, a non-county employee, to an internal committee on deferred compensation. Internal committees report to the county administrator and, according to Commissioner Pete Sorenson, often give advice on arcane technical issues. The issue of improperly using deferred compensation is part of what led to Liane Richardson's termination three months ago.

Sorenson says Liane Richardson did not leave a list of how many internal committees she had, who was on them and if any other non-county employees were appointed. Acting County Administrator Alicia Hays is now trying to make such a list, Sorenson says.

On Nov. 3, Sorenson wrote an email to board Chair Sid Leiken that cited the "virtual refusal of the Board of Commissioners to oversee the operation of the county government." He said the board over-delegated to the former county administrator and "time after time refused reasonable requests by me to improve this situation."

Sorenson says he thinks it's "worthwhile to express outrage at some of these revelations, particularly the point I raised about the abuse of the process involving the deferred compensation matter."

At the Nov. 5 commission meeting, in response to Sorenson's email, the board discussed such issues as the politicization of the county administrator's position, or as he says, "the political way she did her job," and the county's failure to appoint an independent performance auditor. Sorenson says an internal auditor program is funded in the 2013-2014 county budget, but it's not clear if an auditor will be appointed and who that person would report to — the commissioners or the county administrator. — *Camilla Mortensen*

IT'S ABOUT TIME BY DAVID WAGNER



YOUNG WILD TURKEY, MELEAGRIS GALLOPAVO

This fall there is a new flock of nine turkeys that circulate through our neighborhood, snooping down our street every other day. Their core must come from the ones that nested on the butte above our home this past spring. The turkey chicks that left the nest in April are now the size of their parents. We are not sure what they find to eat in their foraging; hope their menu includes slugs and snails.

All our garden hoses are rolled up and watering timers put away. I haven't drained the mower yet because the warm fall might keep grass growing for another few weeks. The zucchini in the garden yielded their last three fingers as I pulled the vines up for compost. I like zucchini because they don't have to ripen; they taste good from peanut size on.

Working in the garden along the street creates opportunity to talk to neighbors who walk by. It is interesting how folks seem comfortable asking about what I'm growing or comment on the nice pea trellis I have. It would seem that gardening in front of your home is a basic, ancient form of social media.

Leaves fall from our broadleaf trees in November having gone through their best colors in October. Parasites and symbionts like the gall wasps on oaks and tar spot fungi in bigleaf maple will wait out their dormant stage in decaying leaves on the ground. If the leaves get raked up, their life cycle is broken.

David Wagner is a botanist who has lived in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches moss classes and leads nature walks. He may be reached at fernzemosses@me.com