

WIGGLE ROOM FOR SENECA

I talk to many people in Eugene about air quality and their health. This fall, Beyond Toxics completed our second large door-to-door survey in west Eugene. Among the trends we found, this one is troubling: 37 percent of the parents we interviewed said that they judge the quality of the air before they allow their children to go outside to play.

Many parents are concerned about poor air quality triggering asthma attacks. What does this say about kids having opportunities to be active and do all those outdoor experiences unique to childhood?

Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) is about to make a decision to allow Seneca Sustainable Energy their request for a new air pollution permit. The comment period closed Nov. 22, and Beyond Toxics submitted substantive comments on behalf of Eugene's residents and their families who want clean air to breathe. Seneca wants to appreciably increase their pollution of the most dangerous type of particulate matter (PM 2.5), as well as carbon monoxide and hydrogen chloride.

While parents worry about whether it is healthy enough for their kids to go outside to play, LRAPA has indicated that it intends to allow the Seneca biomass plant to emit more tons of fine particles into Eugene's air. Why? Seneca discovered, belatedly,

that its air pollution controls aren't as effective as first promised. They want a new permit with more "wiggle room." They want to redesign the regulations to avoid violating their existing permit.

Exposure to fine particles exacerbates medical conditions such as asthma and causes chronic bronchitis and lung damage over the long-term. As the data has shown, west Eugene children have a very high incidence of asthma compared to children in other parts of Oregon.

LRAPA staff admitted they *could* deny the new permit during a public hearing, but said they *would* give Seneca the higher pollution allowance anyway. To allow the increase of pollutants associated with increased asthma and heart disease when it is not necessary belies LRAPA's stated mission to protect our air quality and protect public health.

LRAPA can't see beyond the banality of their bureaucratic approach. For Seneca and LRAPA, technicalities devised by corporate lawyers come before children's health.

*Lisa Arkin, executive director
Beyond Toxics*

OLIVE STILL CLOSED

I'm a walker and I appreciate living within walking distance of most of the places I need to get to. But if I need to go downtown, my best walking route involves

Olive Street. Now, as we know, Olive has been unavailable for use since last March when it was closed "for a period of six months" by the city to facilitate the Capstone student housing construction project.

Well, here we are going into the ninth month of closure and, except for sporadic and unpredictable openings of one northbound lane, Olive Street is not available for use. And I'm even less enthusiastic about having to detour my walks now that the rainy season has begun.

A friend who has operated a small business in downtown Eugene for many years has told me of being charged several hundred dollars for the convenience of vacating a couple of metered parking places adjacent to his store for a couple of days to facilitate a construction project he recently completed. I would hope that the city has made a commensurate charge to the Capstone people for vacating Olive Street. Or, is this kind of charge reserved just for small businesses in Eugene?

In the meantime, I wonder when Olive Street will be available for use again.

*Jim Dotson
Eugene*

EDITOR'S NOTE: A spokesperson for Capstone tells us Olive has been open for limited vehicle traffic since early October but foot traffic will not be available until sidewalks on Olive are rebuilt in late spring or early summer. City Public Works tells us Capstone has paid about \$26,000 in right-of-way use fees for Olive Street, the sidewalks and a shorter term closure of the alley north of the project.

WHERE'S THE IMBALANCE?

In the Nov. 21 Letters, two north Eugene neighborhood leaders complain that the city purchasing Civic Stadium would add to the imbalance of parks between north and south Eugene. They refer to some facts from the city's database but their argument is very misleading. They lump all park acreages together to try and show that there is more park acreage in the south. Let's take a closer look.

There are all kinds of parks which provide different benefits. Regional parks, like Spencer Butte and the Ridgeline Trail in the south, provide hiking opportunities for all Eugene residents. However, not everyone wants or has the time to go hiking. Neighborhood parks provide a close-by open space for casual use, especially useful for families with small children. As it happens, north Eugene has 32 neighborhood parks totaling 144 acres while the south has 24 neighborhood parks totaling 97 acres (see wkly. ws/1mm). Which kind of park do you think the majority of Eugene residents use? I would bet on the neighborhood parks of which 57 percent are in the north (60 percent by acreage).

What disturbs me the most about the complainers' letter is that as neighborhood leaders, they are supposed to be trying to promote inclusiveness and neighborhood cooperation, not an us-versus-them mental-

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Thanksgiving 2013

ROCKING SOME BIG-ASS RHYMES

My custom each year in this month of November
Is taking time out to reflect and remember
To treasure my blessings, to offer my thanks
For the good things in life, such as not wearing Spanx

No need to contain, or squeeze in, or shape up
And my breasts do not have to live inside a cup
I'm thankful that most of the time I can be
Relaxed and at large, or in other words FREE

My body is fine as it is, I have learned
Though calories eaten exceed those I've burned
And loving myself as I am is an act
That can help change the world, as a matter of fact

Isn't the point to live open and out?
And isn't diversity what we're about?
To live in the world as we are without shame,
Isn't that freedom our ultimate aim?

So loving ourselves is a great place to start
It's a simple (yet difficult) way to take part
In being the change we're so eager to see
Where you're free to be you and I'm free to be me

So, thanks for my body, my shape, and my size
And the jiggle-y stuff on my arms and my thighs
For my midriff and belly — they're hardly petite
So that when I look down I cannot see my feet
But, to honor Thanksgiving, I'd just like to say

I'm happy my body is built in this way
With big honking legs that are healthy and strong
And a butt you would faint if you saw in a thong

I'm so very thankful that feminists teach
We needn't be thin to have fun at the beach
That hating our bodies is wasting our time
Which is much better spent on a new paradigm

Where we're all simply grateful each day that we're here
Where we take equal space if we're fat or we're queer
Where our brains and our love and our humor rate most
And it's fine if there's butter and jam on your toast

So what if I'm bigger than fashion declares
Is suited to model its haute couture wares?
My darling sweet Wifey loves all that I've got
To her I'm voluptuous, silky and hot

What more could a woman request from this life
Than a healthy physique and a good loving wife
A safe secure home and some snuggly pajama's
And health coverage, thanks to this plan of Obama's

I'm thankful for friendships with so many dykes
For community, potlucks and going on hikes
I'm grateful, sincerely for simple delights
And glad that at last queers are getting our rights
Sure, news from D.C. is a source of great stress
With the Koch brothers funding this Teabagger mess

But if we just worry, obsess and freak out
It stifles our juices and fills us with doubt

We need to reflect on how lucky we are
Just to be here at all, to have made it this far
So let us take time to reflect and remember
To give thanks for ourselves as we are this November

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has been exposing her gratitude in EW since 1999.

