

SLANT

• **Our cover story** this week takes a deeper look at the challenges of abundant unwanted dogs and cats in Lane County. Local spay and neuter clinics have helped ease the pet overpopulation that plagues other parts of the country and the world, but Lane County still has thousands of animals that need medical care, food and forever homes. Greenhill is doing a job for the county that no one else wants to do with very limited resources. Concerned pet lovers in the community serve in productive ways: as watchdogs over Greenhill operations and as essential donors and volunteers. See greenhill.org or call 689-1503 to help.

• The city of Eugene is facing a **\$3 million deficit** in its budgeting process for FY 2014 (which begins in July) and we wonder if another phone poll will be done to see what new tax or fee might fly with voters. The last such poll was a disaster in predicting voter behavior — bad questions, worse timing. Voters got educated just before last May's election on a flat fee proposal. The more they learned, the less they liked it.

So how do we fix the budget without new fees and taxes? We have great people on our city staff providing more services than are normally found in a town our size, but it's no secret that city payroll has grown while revenues have not kept up. Payroll needs close scrutiny in the budget process.

Eugene has no independent performance auditor so it's hard to know which (if any) departments are overstaffed or which positions are overpaid, but we can look at nearby Salem, which has a nearly identical population. Eugene has 1,445 FTE employees as of last March; Salem has 1,140 FTEs, a difference of 305 jobs. Eliminating just 30 positions at \$100,000 a year would crack that \$3 million nut. If we don't want to lose 30 talented, hard-working public servants, we can look at how much recent top-level administrative salary bumps are costing us each year. We haven't seen those numbers. How much has the city spent on Envision Eugene? We asked city administration and never got an answer. And why does Eugene appear to spend \$10.7 million more per year on its police department than Salem? We support a strong, efficient city government with well-paid employees, but we are uncomfortable with the gaps we detect in transparency and accountability.

• "Freakish" is the word our wildlife biologist friend uses to describe the **absence of migrating ducks** in the valley this time of year. No ducks at the coast either. No ducks along the Columbia River. Maybe they all passed us by when the ponds froze for that memorable early week in December. If you have a theory, let us know.

PHOTO: ERIC EVANS



• Looks like before playing the Alamo Bowl, the **UO Ducks football** team missed the memo on the nationwide boycott of SeaWorld. After the documentary *Blackfish* called attention to the plight of SeaWorld's orcas, acts including Barenaked Ladies, Martina McBride, Heart, Cheap Trick, Trisha Yearwood, Willie Nelson and REO Speedwagon all canceled appearances at the marine parks. The Ducks however went on a little field trip to SeaWorld San Antonio Aquatica Dec. 27 and mugged with some marine mammals. Might we suggest they follow up that jaunt with a team viewing of *Blackfish*?

• The Portland papers tell us that \$20 million from the feds was allocated to the **public relations campaign for Cover Oregon**, our own technically crippled Affordable Care Act exchange. Imagine a \$20 million campaign to change the tax structure in this state. We can only dream.

• We wrote about **long-term unemployment** in this column last week and a reader pointed out a holiday message from Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, saying, "Real unemployment is not 7 percent. If one includes those who have given up looking for work and those who want full-time work but are employed part-time, real unemployment is 13.2 percent — and youth unemployment is much higher than that." Sanders also notes that "as tens of millions of Americans struggle to survive economically, the wealthiest people are doing phenomenally well and corporate profits are at an all-time high." He says we have not seen such disparity in our nation since the Great Depression. See a video of Sanders talking about the income gap on our blog this week.

A new era for transportation...

Cargo & Family Haulers



Yuba Mundo & Boda Boda, Xtracycle EdgeRunner & kits, Surly Big Dummy cargo bikes. Seat pads, child seats, cargo bags, electric assist motors.

More at facebook.com/arriving.by.bike
2705 Willamette St • 541.484.5410
Mon.-Fri. 11-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5

arriving by bike

Urban Cycling Outfitters



NOW OPEN!

Dress 2 Impress

**EUGENE/SPRINGFIELD'S NEWEST
2nd HAND STORE.**

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AT

3698 FRANKLIN BLVD

ACROSS FROM BIG-B TIRE.

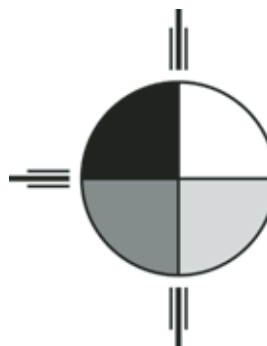
DAILY SALES
UP TO
**75%
OFF!!!**

**WE BUY & SELL NAME BRAND
QUALITY MEN & WOMEN'S**

CLOTHING, SHOES, PURSES & MORE.

FIND THE LATEST STYLES AT A DISCOUNT PRICE!!!

OPEN FRI-SUN 11-7pm



DONALD DEXTER JR DMD LLC
DENTISTRY

*Our vision is simple – we believe
in integrity above all else, and we
serve those who are seeking a
trusted source for their dental care*

Browse our website or call if you have any questions!

We look forward to providing your care.

2233 WILLAMETTE ST, BLDG B • 541-485-6644

www.drddexter.com

**They're All Bold.
But Only One
Will Take the Gold.**

RAINBOW VALLEY
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

GloryBee Foods

life
technologies™

Find out who wins the Bold Steps Award
at the State of the City Event January 8, 2014.

Does your business
have what it takes?



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