

SLANT

• It's hard to calculate what it **cost the city of Eugene** to shut down Whoville last week, but it had to be a lot, figuring overtime for EPD and maybe others of the 60 or so city employees who were called to participate. Regardless of whether the coordinated action at this scale was justified or not, it gives the city administration a black eye. We noticed a "Fire Jon Ruiz" Facebook page is up as of April 6. The page has lots of posts but as we go to press it only has 59 "likes."

• We knew something pretty big was brewing when fellow *R-G* employees, past and present, took to the sidewalk in front of the daily's Chad Drive offices to hold signs and balloons, or just **hug Serena Markstrom Nugent goodbye**. *EW* was as shocked as anyone to hear that the longtime popular music and entertainment reporter had been fired — allegedly for checking her work email while on pregnancy disability leave. How much she means to this community hit home when the intense traffic to our article on our website crashed our servers. Her story resonated nationwide over the weekend as the story got tweeted, Facebooked, picked up by Salon, Romenesko and other big websites. So now what? Getting rid of valuable, experienced reporters isn't doing the *R-G* any good — we hear retired arts reporter Bob Keefer was told his freelance services were no longer needed after he organized the going-away gathering for Markstrom Nugent. Nobody, and certainly not *EW*, wants to see a locally owned daily news source further shrink; this town needs solid, daily news and arts coverage.

WTF?

Reader Jason T. Pitzl sent us this photo of a sign outside The Barn Light restaurant at 924 Willamette. "I had no idea that downtown Eugene is now the heart of 'Little Portland,'" he writes. The restaurant décor and ambiance was inspired in part by Portland's classy urban scene, but the Portland reference does continue to raise eyebrows. A distinction probably needs to be made between "classy" and "hip." Portland might have more class, but Eugene has always been more hip.

• Speaking of newspapers, that **tiny tabloid** you see on the supermarket stands really is the venerable *Oregonian* newspaper out of Portland. As of April 1, it is about the same page-size as *Eugene Weekly*. The paper is boasting that it merges the 21st century trends of print and electronic, but so far it reads like a thin vehicle for advertising first, news second. Oregon desperately needs the fine in-depth coverage of state government, legal issues and politics that this paper once provided. Where will we get it?

• The **Eugene-Springfield Youth Orchestras** celebrated its 80th anniversary with a well-attended concert at the Hult Center April 5. It was an impressive event with performances by elementary school String Academies through the advanced Eugene Youth Symphony. ESYO programs are in collaboration with our public schools that unfortunately have seen major cutbacks in arts programs in recent times. ESYO helps make up the difference and its alumni have gone on to perform in the Eugene Symphony and beyond. Grammy-nominated recording artist and performer Tracy Bonham Fine of New York (known for her hit song "Mother, Mother") spent six years with the ESYO in her youth and made a guest appearance at the concert, debuting her newest song, "We Are the Future." She writes on her website (tracybonham.com) that "Programs like ESYO are so important in the challenge to keep music in our young peoples lives." We agree and we can't say it often enough: The arts are not a luxury. Arts keep young people engaged in school and develop young brains in ways that significantly enhance both academic learning and success in later life.

• Anybody else growing weary of the constant speculation about what happened to **Malaysia Flight 370**? Full employment for "experts" and conspiracy theorists. Let the search for the plane go on, but we'd like to see some of that intense national coverage turned to issues of the environment, social justice, labor or many other under-reported topics.

SLANT INCLUDES SHORT OPINION PIECES, OBSERVATIONS AND RUMOR-CHASING NOTES COMPILED BY THE EWSTAFF. HEARD ANY GOOD RUMORS LATELY? CONTACT TED TAYLOR AT 484-0519, EDITOR@EUGENEWEEKLY.COM



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