

NEW LEADERSHIP RISES IN THE WHIT

The Whiteaker neighborhood underwent something of a Velvet Revolution April 23 as residents of Eugene's artsy neighborhood elected a total of 13 new members to the Whiteaker Community Council (WCC), including incoming chairman Sam Hahn and secretary David Nickles, author of the recent Whiteaker Manifesto.

Driven in large part by concerns over rumors of a proposed noise ordinance and zoned parking, more than 75 residents packed the small meeting room Wednesday at the Whiteaker School, mirroring a scene from two weeks prior when a strong showing by many of the same people inspired outgoing chair Brad Foster to reschedule the April 9 annual elections.

The tone of the WCC elections was for the most part cooperative and progressive, as nominations for new board seats were proposed and candidates offered brief campaign pitches. Many of the incoming board members called for an open dialogue among residents about the direction the Whit is taking in development, growth and livability, with issues of noise created by live music and the parking crunch coming to the fore.

Hahn, a co-owner of Blairalley Vintage Arcade, said he's encouraged by the growing involvement among residents. "The election turnout is an indication that people are willing to erase some of the lines that have been drawn in the sand in the neighborhood," he said. "As chairperson of the most diverse board that the WCC has seen in years, we have an opportunity to protect and serve one of the last little slices of Bohemia left in America."

Along with Hahn and Nickles, residents elected vice-chair Jevon Peck, proprietor of Tiny Tavern, as well as returning treasurer Dennis Ramsey, who has served on WCC the past two years. Also re-elected to the general board was outgoing chair Foster, as well as a maximum limit of new members that includes Justin Sheppard, Emily Nyman, Jason Vanderhaar, Sarah Beaulieu, Christine Anderson, Chris Gadsby, Jerry Davis, Rio Towner, Marsha Knee and Cathy Kapelka.

Ramsey said he's encouraged by this burst of interest in the WCC and the neighborhood in general. "We have been struggling for years to get the community to become active and aware around issues of parking, noise and zoning, and we've had a lot of difficulty because people are very apathetic here," he said. "I feel wonderful about what happened, because we finally have the community in dialogue with each other. And from that only good can come."

WCC next meets 7 pm Wednesday, May 14, at Whiteaker School. For more info, visit Whiteaker Neighbors Open Group at wkly.ws/1qk. — Rick Levin



TURDUS
MIGRATORIUS,
AMERICAN
ROBIN,

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

believe there is no bird call more joyous than a robin at sunrise. Chickadees are definitely cheery this season but robins deserve the main stage for pure joy. Enthusiastic males declare to any lady robin in hearing distance that he offers the best territory. Once eggs are laid, it is the crowing of fatherhood.

Flowers are blooming, bugs are out: Nesting season has begun. Nesting works well now because the food source is emerging. Feeding nestlings is easy as over-wintering insect eggs hatch and turn loose hungry larvae on tender greens breaking out from winter buds. The food chain has all its links forming and interlocking at a dizzying rate.

Out in the woods the deer and elk are dropping fawns. Remember to leave a fawn alone if you encounter one hunkered down in a mountain meadow. It is not abandoned, just waiting for mommy to return from her foraging. Seal pups on the beach are similarly just fine, waiting for return of their nursing mother. They may look stranded but should not be disturbed. A too-close presence will keep the mothers away.

Local nurseries should be experiencing their best money-making season. New varieties of colorful flowers tantalize the garden designer. Note: The availability of native species is increasing as sensitivity to attracting native birds and butterflies grows. My favorites are blood currant, red elderberry and penstemons. And fringe-cup is hugely underappreciated because although its flowers are modest, its evergreen foliage warrants a patch in ferny plantings.

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 fernzenmosses@me.com.

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