

NOT SO LUCKY

Sixteen years ago, I retired from the U.S. Navy. I had great comprehensive health care. Now I have high quality VA care and affordable retired military medical and dental health insurance.

My same-sex partner is not so lucky. She spends hours on the phone each month trying to arrange for the limited care she needs. And just when she has arranged and coordinated with Cover Oregon, the provider's office and insurance reps, invariably some omitted or misrepresented detail undermines the whole plan, and she has to cancel or start all over. So, we're getting married this month and she can enroll in my insurance plans at a very reasonable rate and skip the frustrating process.

The current "health care" system is set up to make money by denying the "subscriber" care; everybody knows it. Who helped write the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act? The big insurance companies. We must put a stop to this insanity before it ruins more people's lives.

We work with a group that meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9 pm at 1376 Olive in Eugene. Our chapter of Health Care for All Oregon is part of a powerful statewide movement to make universal health care a reality for Oregonians. If we work together, we can do this!

Patricia Sue Hine
Eugene

LOCAL GERRYMANDERING

In view of the recent decision by a judge to invalidate a Florida election (Leon County Circuit Court Judge Terry Lewis) because of gerrymandering and a secret Republican plan to defeat the state's constitution, I wonder if this paper would consider doing an in-depth examination of whether recent Lane County elections were tainted by unconstitutional gerrymandering? Looking at what happened in Florida, I have to ask if the same thing is happening here in Lane County.

Numerous people previously have pointed out that Lane County voted Democratic in the last presidential election (60 percent Democrat), yet the board has taken an odd turn to the right. Since a federal court has said that gerrymandering is a crime, not simply a political dirty trick, I have to imagine that the principle applies here in Oregon, even though Oregon isn't part of that court's jurisdiction.

I, for one, would love to see a thorough examination of the question. It could be nothing is amiss, but I am having problems finding the information exactly on how districts are formed for voting. Maybe this paper can shed some light on the question.

Hugh Massengill
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: See our most recent story regarding gerrymandering at wkly.ws/1so.

A CATEGORY OF ONE

As usual, I certainly agree with Sally Sheklow {"Living Out" column 8/7}, in the present context. But I'd like to see it go a big step further.

What's the purpose in today's world of "marriage," creating a category of just one other person who we claim to love far

THIS MODERN WORLD



more than others? I tend to resist seeing things and people in categories, except as each of us, from our own perspective, is a category of one. Suppose instead we de-emphasize that kind of relationship, so we can all love everyone according to our inclinations. Of course anyone could still register as a "partner," of whatever duration, for whatever purpose, with any other agreeable person.

As to the fact that nearly half the people in the country feel differently about gay marriage, I think a lot of that, and much more, is due to our "bi-polar" two-party voting system that keeps us jumping back and forth over the real consensuses.

Dan Robinson
Eugene

BLOCKED FROM VIEW

Out of sight: The ZZ Top concert was. But seated in one of four ADA-designated areas, where there was plenty of available seating, access to viewing the show was not. In order to comply with the American Disability Act to equal sighting, a seating-only buffer in front of the designated areas, maybe 30 by 60 feet, would allow the seated to enjoy the show while still letting the stand-up dancers space to dance their hearts away.

Vince Loving
Eugene

DAMN FINE BEER

I am surprised *EW* printed a one-sentence putdown about the craft beer in this town [Letters, "Beer Shortage," 7/24]. Peter Tildesley is clearly a troll. By printing it, you are trolling for this comment: Eugene craft breweries are pumping out amazing beer. For example the barrel-aged sours of Oakshire, seasonally crafted *saisons* of Agrarian, lagers of Ninkasi, session-able inspirations of Falling Sky and the citrus bliss of Hop Valley ales are all outstanding examples of the talent in this town — and only a portion of it. We make damn fine beer. So enjoy!

Dana Robles
Eugene

SEETHING RAGE

Recently my husband and I were enjoying a lively conversation and leisurely stroll into Down to Earth when, upon being followed closely by a woman with her head down and arms stiffened, we were rudely interrupted by her saying, "excuse me" — implying that we should let her squeeze through the tiny little section of the store where we were standing rather than simply going around us.

When my husband let her pass, we were both a little taken aback, and he said, audibly, "Couldn't go around, huh?" She came back to confront us and said that she was merely being "assertive" and that she was sorry that my husband couldn't handle assertive women.

It was not so much the content of this interaction that bothers me, but the evident rage seething just under the surface of this young woman; I certainly hope that she is not what passes for assertive in our society. An assertive woman knows how to ask for what she needs in a way that is fair, not obtrusive and rude; an assertive woman, in her shoes, would simply see the alternate route and take it, rather than barge through.

Amy Mills
Eugene

BEHIND WHOLE FOODS

The Eugene City Council's recent hearing about their sale of public land for a "Hole Foods" store in Eugene drew only three citizens to speak against it (I was one of them). Two previous attempts to bring Whole Foods were intensely controversial; one hearing was the most crowded I've seen. *EW* had a great cartoon about this on its cover, archived at sustaineugene.org/hole-foods.html.

Whole Foods is "the Walmart of health food." CEO John Mackey is a union buster who has said, "The union is like having herpes. It doesn't kill you, but it's unpleasant and inconvenient and it stops a lot of people from becoming your lover."

The local real estate company bringing us Whole Foods is owned by the Giustina family, a major donor to George W. Bush.

Giustina also hires helicopters to spray poison on their clearcuts in the south hills. Will their association with Whole Foods inspire them to switch to non-toxic forestry, or is it just another example of "sustain-a-bullshit" greenwashing? Are their herbicide bottles half full or half empty?

The council also recently passed a Climate Recovery Ordinance that declares city operations will be carbon neutral by 2020. The ordinance bypassed mention of plans to widen Beltline to 11 lanes. Public funds will be given to consultants who market the sweet lie of "carbon credits" that supposedly neutralize fossil fuel pollution. A serious examination of this fraud is at carbontradewatch.org and a satirical view is at cheatneutral.com

Mark Robinowitz
SustainEugene.org

A CALL FOR DIPLOMACY

Civilians have paid a horrific price in the ongoing violence in Gaza. I hope my members of Congress will support and work for a lasting ceasefire that includes lifting the Israeli blockade of Gaza. The U.S. has particular responsibility to help end the killing since U.S. weapons are fueling this conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross has called the blockade collective punishment against a civilian population.

U.S. policymakers must call for lifting the blockade to ensure a durable ceasefire. While it's imperative to address the immediate crisis, I also hope the U.S. will support long-term stability by shifting from a militarized approach in the Middle East to one rooted in inclusive, diplomatic solutions. The success of the ongoing nuclear talks with Iran and the agreement to destroy Syria's chemical weapons demonstrate that the world can be made a safer place through diplomacy, not more bombing.

Trudy Maloney
Eugene

SHOWDOWN IN FLORENCE

Trouble is brewing on the coast as Florence residents discover what is in store. Florence received a grant from ODOT [Oregon Dept. of Transportation] to construct a wide, multi-use paved pathway extending less than a mile. It calls for bulldozing trees, native plants and topsoil, including the wild rhododendrons that Florence celebrates every spring.

Private land will be taken. Homeowners will be paid as the state decides, then left with a fenceless backyard open to the highway. This grant does not repair collateral damage to neighborhood homes that also face a similar decline in value due to the removal of vegetation. What looked like an ODOT gift may end up being costly, but to whom?

A petition against construction already has 2,200 signatures and opponents have picketed City Hall. At 7 pm Monday, Aug. 18, a showdown is predicted in the Florence Events Center during the final City Council discussion of ODOT's multi-use path before a vote.

Many residents are shocked at the lack of city concern about increased noise, less safety, tree replacements or even a wild rhododendron rescue. Most worry about