

UNORTHODOX COMMUNITIES

New book takes inspiration from evolving shelter camps

Years before Opportunity Village came to life at the north end of Garfield Street, the idea of a transitional tiny house community was percolating in Andrew Heben's head. While writing his senior thesis at the University of Cincinnati on the value of tent cities, Heben lived for a month at Camp Take Notice, a forested tent camp in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in which residents were involved in a complex process of self-governance.

"I saw these tent cities as an example of people developing a solution to their problem on their own outside of the reach of government," Heben tells *EW*. "There's this positive social dimension going on there that's not happening in other responses, so I said, 'How can we keep those positive social dynamics and improve the physical infrastructure?'"

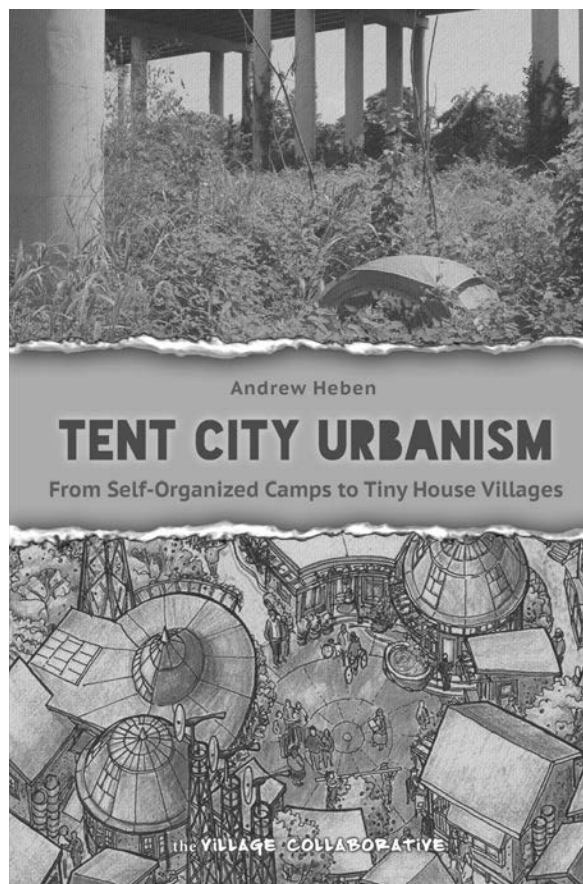
Heben's thesis became focused around the idea of efficient, social communities as a solution to homelessness. In 2011, Heben moved to Eugene just as the Occupy Eugene camp was being shut down, and by chance Jean Stacey, a local advocate for the homeless, read the thesis. Heben soon became one of the principal designers of a secure place for the homeless to settle, now known as Opportunity Village.

Heben overhauled his thesis to put his theoretical and observational research in context of his firsthand experience building Opportunity Village. The result is *Tent City Urbanism*, a self-published book in three parts: a conceptual framing of tent cities, detailed observations from tent settlements in seven cities around the U.S. and a guide to designing and building the social contract,

facilities and homes of a successful tiny home village.

For those who have visited Opportunity Village, the guide section of the book is a fascinating look into how it operates so peacefully. It reveals, for instance, that its buildings are clustered in unorthodox ways as a "pattern language" to reflect the desires and needs of residents. It also includes the text of the Opportunity Village "Community Agreement," the remarkable, open-minded document by which residents govern their community (including the following rule: "What I do will be based on love and respect for myself and others").

The thing that might keep *Tent City Urbanism* from flying off the shelves is that it retains the precise language and structure of a thesis and places emphasis on the broad movement of communities rather than on individuals. But despite Heben's intellectual voice, he is captivating in the theoretical first section of the book, arguing that tent cities



provide a revolutionary new housing model for people at every income level.

"The residents of the self-organized camp are making decisions that directly impact their physical and social organization, and in doing so they are rediscovering key aspects of a sustainable community — most notably self-management, direct democracy, tolerance and resourceful strategies for living with less," Heben writes.

Tiny home villages like Opportunity Village, Heben says, make evident the value of these ideas while letting go of the stigma associated with unauthorized tent communities. Heben argues that the broken window theory, which suggests that stopping petty crimes will in turn prevent more

serious crimes (and has been a key argument in the eviction of homeless camps), may be flipped on its head.

"The kind of informal tent community that I am describing actually returns some quality of life to the population within," Heben writes, "and by applying the same logic behind the broken windows positively, this benefits the surrounding population as well." ■



SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN INDIAN CUISINE

BEST OF EUGENE 2013-2014

EW'S BEST INDIAN CUISINE 2013-2014

LUNCH BUFFET

7 Days a Week 11:30am - 2:30pm • Dinner 5-9:30pm • 5 Years in Eugene

EAT & PARK
FREE PARKING FOR EVENTS AT MATT KNIGHT ARENA
WHEN YOU DINE WITH US

* 1525 Franklin Blvd. Eugene, OR 541-343-7944

* 136 SW Third • Corvallis, OR * 541-754-7944





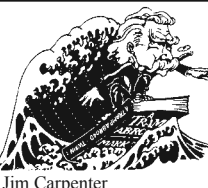
ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES

Now Offering Acupuncture!

2835 Willamette St.
541-345-1544
www.animalhealthassociates.org

Sheila Johnson, DVM
Judy Schroeder, DVM

Local, Independent Veterinary Care since 1947



IT'S OFFICIAL: WE WILL BE AT OUR PRESENT LOCATION IN BEAUTIFUL SOUTH EUGENE UNTIL AT LEAST JUNE 30, 2017

19TH ANNIVERSARY SALE

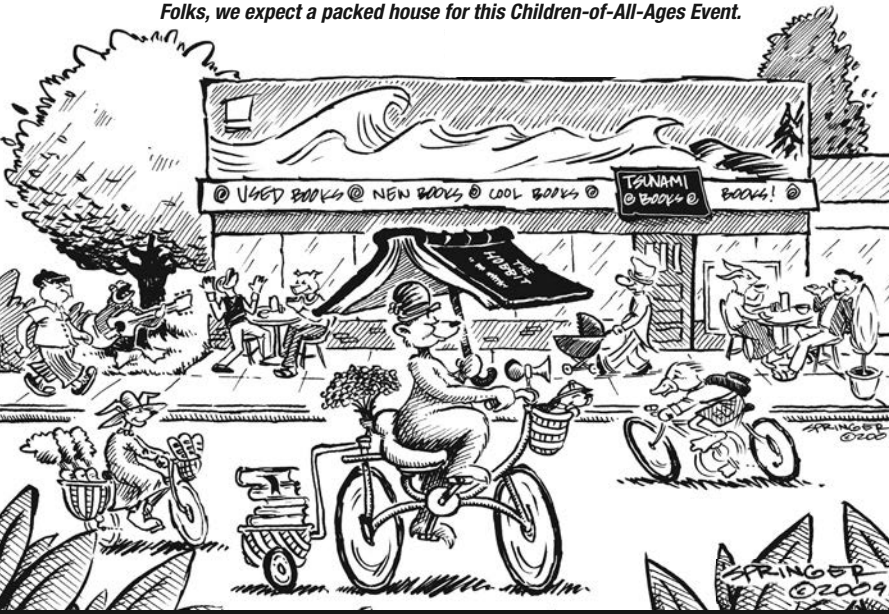
NOVEMBER 23-NOVEMBER 30

20% OFF

all Standard books/records
& all Standard Special orders

Thursday 12/4 7:30 PM: The Patchy Sanders Folk Orchestra
Friday 12/5 8:30 PM: Folksinger extraordinaire Keith Greeninger!
Saturday 12/6 5-7:30 PM: National Steel Guitar Phenom and Country Fair Favorite Baby Gramps

Folks, we expect a packed house for this Children-of-All-Ages Event.



2585 Willamette Street | 345-8986 | MON. - SAT. 10-7, SUN 12-5
Tsunami Books now on Facebook 