

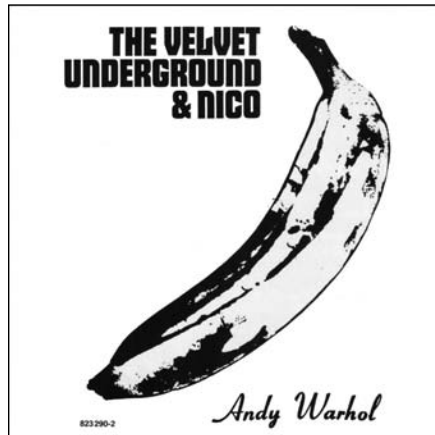
BLAMING THE POOR

While talking with friends I dissed white middle-class values, and they asked why? Well, the conversation about the homeless camp's trash by the river is a good example. Good appearances and respecting the law are white middle-class values. So homeless people breaking the law by existing and littering is, by those mores, bad.

The reality is that bedding and Big Gulp cups washed into the river aren't pretty, but do little to harm the ecosystem. On the other hand, there are some actual serious problems. One is homelessness and criminalization of that already intolerable life situation. The other is rich factory owners pouring poison into the river every day — perfectly legally. If they were made to stop dumping contamination into the river, soon the river would run clean and clear. Can you imagine how beautiful that would be?!

As it is, the salmon are getting extinct, people are getting cancer, the whole length of the river is poisoned. It is easy for some to blame the very poor for society's ills. But I have far more respect for the person living down by the river than the rich man who ruins it.

Kari Johnson
Eugene



BANANA ART

I hope *Eugene Weekly* got consent from The Velvet Underground & Nico to appropriate their album art on last week's cover.

Adam Howard
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: Parody is permitted under fair use laws. But had they told us no, we would have understood that "No means no."

KEEP COE AT EPUD

Emerald People's Utility District General Manager Scott Coe, according to a letter signed by 40 employees, has been doing an excellent job. This letter was presented to the EPUD Board of Directors

at the Nov. 12 meeting.

By the majority of the board forcing Scott Coe to resign, it will cost the ratepayers over \$100,000 and potentially \$200,000-plus.

One board member changing their vote could make the difference. If you live in Patti Chappel's, Penny Jordan's or Kevin Parrish's sub-district, your *people* power is valuable. We encourage you to contact your elected representative. If just one would change their vote we could save thousands of dollars.

We still have a democracy. And you have a valuable voice.

Dick Flynn
Eugene

EUGENE WEEDLY

I moved to Eugene just two and a half years ago. Your newspaper was a huge reason. I so enjoy reading about environmental issues, organic gardening, arts and the odd, unusual stories the other papers seem to always leave out. The changes in the paper this year have made it hard to find these stories. In fact there is very little that I find of value and interest with all the new advertisers. Perhaps it's because I don't have a marijuana drug affliction!

So maybe it's a great time for you folks to consider changing the paper's name to "The Weedy," especially if this is the direction the paper will continue to take. This name would be much more accurate and beneficial to all these pot-selling advertisers that now fill up so much of the paper's landscape.

Please don't forget your non-drug-smoking readers. We might be a very small minority now. We appear to be hugely discriminated against here in Eugene and at *EW*. Discrimination is a very ugly word for a town that prides itself in embracing all lifestyles! Maybe you can consider keeping a few pages pot free. Thank you.

Gita Sturm
Eugene

EYEBALL THOSE STUBS

To follow up on Camilla Mortensen's Nov. 13 cover story "Wage Theft," there is a relatively simple way to catch most "honest" mistakes that account for the vast majority of wage errors: Carefully review your pay stubs.

Oregon law requires that a statement of wages and deductions be provided with every regular paycheck. As a payroll service provider, we see that both employees and

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Thanksgiving 2014

BEAUTY AND GRATITUDE ABOUNDS

Each year at this time in the month of November
I like to take stock, settle back and remember
The good things in life, all the stuff I hold dear
So I stop to say "Thanks!" as Thanksgiving draws near

I know being grateful is good for my soul
So today I say thanks for my cereal bowl
Which I found at Goodwill for just 99 cents
A very affordable household expense

I give thanks for this bowl of organic granola
And try not to fret too much over Ebola
The news is distressing and folks are desirous
Of somebody somewhere to conquer this virus

But wait, lest I fall into panicked distraction
Which causes more fear in a big chain reaction
I'll focus instead on the stuff I can do
To improve things for people like me and like you

I'm thankful for having at least one small voice
To use in support of our freedom of choice
To purchase organics, expose GMOs
Stop spraying our weeds, let our scraps decompose

I'm thankful for all the good people protesting
To bring about more fossil fuel divesting
To keep us aware of the climate change crisis
Instead of obsessing on news about ISIS

In fact my whole point as I started this verse
Was to stop and be grateful, not make matters worse
By failing to notice that beauty abounds
In the bright autumn colors, the scents and the sounds

The birds who are singing outside at my feeder
Whose song makes my morning at home that much sweeter
I'm taking a breath, breathing in, breathing out
Remembering there's plenty to be glad about

I'm thankful for money to cover my needs
With extra for potting soil, compost and seeds
That turn into flowers and bring to my yard
Butterflies, hummingbirds, spinach and chard

My cat is curled up on my lap as I write
The clouds took a break now the sun's shining bright
How thankful I am for this home and this life
With my fabulous friends and my now-legal wife

I'm taking this time to be glad for what's great
Like the freedom to marry right here in our state
And the number of states is consistently mounting
The most recent report now at 30 and counting

Our goal of equality under the law
Is happening now, can I get a yee-haw?
While I'm on a roll, I could go on at length
I'm glad for my body, my health and my strength

For freedom to do all the things I enjoy
For more gender options than just girl or boy
I'm thankful for friendship, for love that's enduring
For hope and support, which I find reassuring

I'm thankful the *Weekly* keeps printing my column
(Notwithstanding some readers who think me a golem)
I'm grateful sincerely I get to express
My thoughts and ideas, for freedom of press

I hope you will join me and give some thanks too
For all of the good things you have and you do
There's so much that's sweet, so much good to remember

We all can give thanks at this time in November

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow is thankful for 15 years in EW.