

MIRROR, MIRROR

UO is on the right track launching its presidential recruitment to coincide with the Rose Bowl. Any candidate who doesn't put football as a priority for a career choice shouldn't be considered. The UO is one of the top self-image obsessed schools in the country and proud of it. If an academic-oriented applicant were somehow to slip through the cracks and be awarded the job it would be mayhem and chaos; it could even lead to the reinstatement of UO's free community art classes.

Vince Loving
Eugene

LOVING MY LTD

LTD is on my list of top 10 favorites in my community.

Marianna Glenday [Letters, 12/11] wrote she is saving for a car, and once she gets a car, never intends to ride LTD again. I own a vehicle and actually pay insurance on more vehicles than I care to admit. Once she owns a vehicle and pays for the registration, insurance and repairs, she will have a new respect for LTD.

LTD is the best bargain and value for my dollar. A 10-ride ticket book costs me \$16! Two tickets give me an all-day pass. That pass allows me to ride all day long. Those passes allow me to donate to locals who struggle to get to doctor appointments

or purchase groceries.

I invite you to sit down or perhaps stand up, depending on the time of day, and take a ride. Embrace your local public transportation and give your wallet a rest.

The EmX extension into west Eugene will be wonderful. I look forward to spending money in west Eugene and encourage everyone to support the businesses during the construction project that will transport us into the future.

Shirley Gauthier
Springfield

ELLIOTT OPTIONS

On Dec. 9, Gov. John Kitzhaber, Secretary of State Kate Brown and Treasurer Ted Wheeler made a tentative decision to proceed with the sale of the 92,000-acre Elliott State Forest. Although the Oregon Land Board stated they prefer to sell the Elliott to a public entity or "public-private combination," this doesn't constitute a victory for Oregonians. The state complains that it lost \$3 million in 2013 through management costs, although the state continues to auction timber sales while the market value of timber is extremely low.

A 2010 U.S. Fish & Wildlife carbon analysis report estimates that the Elliott captures and stores about 600,000 metric tons of carbon per year. This is roughly equivalent to the annual CO2 emissions of 200,000 cars.



NOT THIS GREEN

Glad to see your mention in *Slant* last week [12/18] of the *R-G's* littering — aka the viral green *Emerald Valley Shopper* every Wednesday — and in a town that actually "likes" green! Sure, it is a micro issue given all the major topics, but we do notice. I walk daily and I espied this hard-copy message on a south Eugene lawn in October. Someone just said NO! But does the *R-G* read?

Douglas Beauchamp
Eugene

The Elliott also captures, filters and naturally regulates hundreds of millions of gallons of rainwater for salmon and wildlife as well as human communities downstream.

The monetary benefits provided by the Elliott in the form of ecosystem services such as clean water, erosion control, salmon and carbon storage dwarfs the \$3 million the state

claims it has lost.

The only two acceptable options for the Elliott State Forest are maintaining Oregon public ownership and complying with environmental laws or selling it to the U.S. Forest Service.

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

VIEWPOINT BY BEN BRUBAKER

No Room at the Inn

LACK OF OPTIONS LEADS TO CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

A woman with mild developmental disabilities finds herself in an abusive relationship with a man who is also the father of her 8-year-old daughter. Tired of the physical violence and verbal abuse, she files for a restraining order and has the man removed from their shared apartment in a Section-8 housing unit.

The woman still does not feel safe from her abuser and begins to develop an escape plan with her friend who lives in Eugene. The friend promises a new start, a place to stay while she works on getting housing and a job, and convinces her to buy a bus ticket.

When the woman and her daughter arrive in Eugene just before midnight, they are exhausted from traveling. She calls her friend only to discover that the woman does not own a car and really can't house them because she doesn't have the resources to help. The woman is now stuck with her child in a place she has never been before, and it's the middle of the night on a cold, rainy Friday.

Fortunately the kind man at the Greyhound station knows of a service that can at least help her problem-solve, so he calls CAHOOTS.

When the CAHOOTS team arrives, the crisis worker and medic try every route they can think of, but no one has space or the ability to shelter this small family at

such a late hour. In fact, every shelter in town for which the two might qualify now has very specific processes and restrictions that make it impossible for them to provide emergency shelter in this kind of situation.

The only solution is to try to convince the University District hospital to allow them to sleep in chairs in their lobby so, at the very least, they can be warm. Maybe one of the housing services can get them in, but not until Monday.

This story is far from unique, and a lack of options for emergency shelter is a key lack in our safety net, and the hole is growing every day in Eugene.

As that hole grows, more people are swallowed into the pit of chronic homelessness. Some give up; some move to another city that hopefully has more resources; and some keep fighting to find housing, often to no avail.

Mental-health issues further compound the problem. And for many, with or without mental health issues, the constant stress of living on the streets drives them to cope by using substances.

For those who do succumb to addiction, the likelihood of finding any form of housing is even more dismal because Eugene does not have an emergency shelter for anyone who is suffering from substance abuse and/or dual diagnosis of both addiction and mental health issues.

A growing number of folks are discovering that there are simply very few options for emergency

shelter — "no room at the inn." Unless you can carefully schedule the way your life falls apart as you descend into a housing crisis, you are unlikely to find emergency shelter when you need it. The economic downturn — compounded by a lack of funding, zoning laws, NIMBYism and prejudices — have all contributed to our current situation locally.

Additionally, the constant flow of negative sensationalist journalism with titles like KEZI's "Panhandler's Paradise" series (wkly.ws/1v5) has continued to foster dissent against vulnerable individuals who find themselves without a house. It is increasingly difficult to find shelter for those who suddenly find themselves down on their luck and out in the streets at night.

What is needed is more local support for the well-researched Housing First Model, with inclusive shelters and rest-stop sites that would house even those struggling with mental health issues and/or substance abuse.

Until we have these kinds of options for those who find themselves homeless, we will continue to see the problems grow locally, concurrent with the amount of wasted tax dollars and increasing numbers of individuals struggling to survive on the streets.

What happened to the age-old notion of taking care of our neighbors, where communities pulled together to support one another? When did our law enforcement and prison systems become our community's fallback solution to poverty, mental health issues and homelessness?

It's getting cold again in Eugene. The chilly holiday season is here and yet there are fewer and fewer shelter options, and not a manger to be found.

Ben Brubaker work at White Bird Clinic as a volunteer coordinator and crisis worker on the CAHOOTS van.