



Where would Jesus eat? Many local restaurants will be closed **Christmas Day**. Among the businesses that will be open is Agate Alley Bistro & Bar at 1461 E. 19th Ave., but only from 5 to 10 pm so the staff can have Christmas morning off. If you are planning on dining out anywhere Christmas Day, we recommend calling ahead and leaving big tips. Going to the coast? We once showed up late and ravenous for a Christmas buffet at a fancy hotel near Depot Bay and found only scraps of salmon and halibut, but plenty of mystery meat, soggy broccoli and cold potatoes. Filled our bellies after a hard afternoon of winter beachcombing in the wind and rain.

Speaking of the coast, **City Lights Cinemas**, the newly remodeled four-screen movie theater in Florence, celebrated its grand opening Dec. 18-21. The theater actually opened last August at 1930 Hwy. 101, the old Florence Cinemas theater, but now features all new digital projection and sound as well as other major upgrades, according to owner Michael Falter. City Lights is now serving beer and wine as well as locally made menu items, and includes an art gallery. Contact michael@citylightscinemas.com for more information.

The nonprofit **Beyond Toxics** is planning to expand its organizing capacity in rural and urban communities around the state in 2015, according to Executive Director Lisa Arkin. The expansion is "to protect low-income and minority residents from disproportionate exposure to pollution," she says. "The organization has published research showing higher rates of asthma in environmental justice neighborhoods in west Eugene, and acute poisoning from pesticide sprays in rural communities." Joel Iboa has been hired to head up the Beyond Toxics' Environmental Justice Outreach Program. "Joel brings a deep desire to organize youth and Latino families around environmental health and social justice issues," Arkin says.

FOOD for Lane County reports the Letter Carriers Food Drive in Eugene and Springfield brought in 121,000 pounds of canned and packaged food, 63,000 pounds Dec. 6 and 58,000 pounds Dec. 13. "Our two-Saturday goal for the entire county was 130,000 pounds, so it looks very promising that we have exceeded the goal," says Dawn Marie Woodward of FFLC. "Rural areas typically account for 10,000 to 15,000 pounds during this drive."

We hear the nonprofit **Community Alliance of Lane County** (CALC) has a vacancy coming up for an administration and development coordinator, a 40-hour-per-week position. Interviews will be scheduled on Jan. 21 and 22. Find the job description at calclane.org.

STILE (Skill Training for an Independent Living Experience) is a division of KindTree — Autism Rocks and provides group skills training to adults on the autism spectrum and others with developmental disabilities. The organization is registering for its winter term classes that begin Jan. 5. Volunteer training is also planned for January. See kindtree.org or call 521-7208.

POLLUTION UPDATE

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent **Lane County** a warning letter last month for low pH levels in water pollution discharged from **Short Mountain Landfill**. Low pH means discharges are acidic, and low pH was observed in both initial and follow-up sampling.

DEQ is accepting comments through 5 pm on Dec. 31 on: 1) A proposed "no further action" determination regarding petroleum releases at the **Shell Station** located at **2690 River Road**; 2) A proposed prospective purchaser agreement between DEQ and **Goshen Properties LLC** concerning the former **Cone Lumber** site in **Goshen**, which contains dioxin-contaminated soil (**Zip-O-Log Mills** President **Karl Hallstrom** is associated with Goshen Properties). 3) The industrial stormwater pollution control plan for **Coburg North Condominium** on Coburg Industrial Way. Visit goo.gl/ott3SM for more information on 1 and 2, and goo.gl/IMDQb for more information on 3.

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

- Our **Gilt & Gossamer** story Dec. 18 stated the wrong address. The correct address for the boutique is 873 Willamette St.
- Our cover story on the **Jazz Station** Dec. 18 featured John and Nancy Crider, but Nancy is better known in the music world as Nancy Hamilton.

NEWS

JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF COUNTY IN PROTEST CAMP CLOSURE

Late in the summer of 2013, Lane County closed a protest camp in the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza leading to one of many recent debates on the nature of free speech and whether a government agency can shut it down.

In a Dec. 15 ruling on a motion to dismiss, Municipal Court Judge Karen Stenard writes that the closure in this instance was not unconstitutional under Oregon law. She writes there were "legitimate health and safety concerns." Activists disputed those concerns at the time of the closure and in the months afterward.

The camp was made up of SLEEPS (Safe Legally Entitled Emergency Places to SLEEP) protesters, members of a related group called AWAKE and other unhoused campers, and the encampment sought to call attention to the plight of the unhoused, as have several related camps in the area, such as Whoville.

Brian Michaels, attorney for Michael Gannon and Michael McFadden, who were arrested for returning to the plaza along with Hedin Manus Brugh, says, "It's sad when politics trumps the rule of law."

Michaels cites the email sent to the County Commission by Lane County Public Health Officer, Dr. Patrick Luedtke, which Stenard discusses in her ruling. That email calls the residents courteous and dogs well-behaved and it refers to the smell of urine and the "occasional smell of feces." Luedtke wrote that "the level of disease transmission risk has exceeded my level of comfort. It would be beneficial at this time to thoroughly clean the area in order to best protect the current occupants as well as other

citizens." He then suggests the area be cleaned on a rotating schedule if occupied again.

The judge cites a nearby temporary free speech area that was given as an alternative. It was small square drawn in a nearby gravel parking lot. Stenard writes that it's unclear if its presence was known to all the activists but calls it a "reasonable alternative."

Michaels says he subpoenaed Pete Sorenson, Betty Taylor, Claire Syrett, then-county administrator Alicia Hayes and Commissioner Pat Farr, all of whom he says "testified that things were going fairly well, with only minor problems."

The Lane County Commission voted 4-1 to close the camp on Sept. 4, 2013, and while Stenard upheld that

decision in her ruling, she took members of the County Commission to task for their statements in their meeting, specifically, she writes, the court was troubled by "the statements of commissioners which evidence a belief that free speech should be balanced against a local government's desire for economic growth and development."

She cites then-commission chair Sid Leiken's "alarming lack of understanding about the three branches of government and how the separation of powers ensures fair protection and that an independent judiciary is central to this concept and is a founding principle of our system of government at the administration of justice."

However, she also writes that the County Commission weighed its risks and benefits of the closure and "clearly" took it seriously. *EW* asked Lane County for comment but most commissioners were out this week, according to spokesperson Anne Marie Levis.

A trial date for McFadden and Gannon of Feb. 26 has been set, with no date scheduled as of yet for Brugh.

Lane County has since done work to improve its adversarial relationship with local activists for the unhoused, offering county land for homeless rest stops. — *Camilla Mortensen*

'It's sad when politics trumps the rule of law.'

— BRIAN MICHAELS, ATTORNEY

JOHANNA MITCHELL

"We had an amazing world-lit teacher who introduced us to Greek literature," says Johanna Mitchell, who was then a high school senior in Miami. "There was a lot of mention of planets. That's astrology!" Mitchell went to a bookstore and found *Sun Signs* by Linda Goodman. "I devoured that book," she says. "I knew then that astrology was a vocation." She spent a year at the University of Miami, but dropped out to protest the Vietnam War, and for 10 years worked at retail jobs in fabric and jewelry stores in Iowa City and Berkeley. She also met with astrologers, took classes and moved to L.A. in 1977. "That's where I really got to study with great teachers," says Mitchell, who passed the exam and was certified by the American Federation of Astrologers.

After a first visit to Eugene in February of 1981, she did her chart for Eugene, liked the result, moved in June and opened an office with fellow astrologer Douglas Bloch. The following January, she gave a free talk at the library, titled "Future Signs: The Astrology of 1982." Future Signs has since become an anticipated annual event and a reliable fundraiser. "I focus on what the planets are revealing," says Mitchell, who will offer her forecasts for 2015 in two sessions, from 2 to 4 pm on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 10-11, at Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette. All donations [\$10-\$15] will benefit Laurel Hill Center, a local nonprofit program for adults with chronic mental illness. Since her marriage to Ron Peterson in 1994, Mitchell has seen clients at her home office in east Eugene. Learn more at johannamitchell.com.

Know anyone whose good work deserves attention in this space? Call the editor at 484-0519 or editor@eugeneweekly.com.

HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

