

## MANAGING THE HOMELESS

There are more than 2,000 homeless persons living in Lane County, and I'm one of them.

Our sleeping shelters include the Eugene Mission, women and family shelters and Egan Warming Centers when it's cold. Due to the magnanimous decisions of city and county governments, a few outdoor refugee camps have been approved for tent and car camping. A constantly moving, unauthorized Whoville — rightfully flying an upside-down American flag — is also an alternative place to sleep.

But all of these require rules and/or invitations to reside within their boundaries. The number of homeless persons taking advantage of these offerings represents about 10 to 15 percent of the homeless population. The rest of us are forced to create our own accommodations.

A major problem not receiving the attention it deserves is the dominance of church-affiliated organizations purporting to assist the homeless and make life better for us. This may be the result of George W. Bush's federally funded faith-based programs. In fact, religious salespeople are incapable of helping homeless individuals without somehow promoting their own brand of religion.

The Christians' primary goal is to save our poor wretched souls. And in order to be saved, we must accept Jesus into our hearts — or we're screwed and going to Hell.

The Eugene Mission is the best example of this, demanding one listen to a ridiculous sermon before dinner and sleep become available to anyone. For many years, the only indoor shelter for homeless men has been the Eugene Mission. Why are there no other options?

How can god-fearing, guilt-ridden sinners help the homeless achieve self-reliance, self-esteem and respect for our natural world? How can developmentally disabled adults teach real-life survival skills when the most meaningful activity in their lives is submission to a jealous god?

Religious faith is merely a lazy person's excuse for not having to think. If the sons and daughters of Abraham were not afraid to conduct objective research into the origins and history of their beliefs, at least a few of them would realize the truth: Throughout human history, organized religions were invented and established by the wealthy and powerful elite to dumb down and control the masses. It's that simple.

In this New Year, we must all consider the harm being done to vulnerable residents of Lane County by religious groups allowed to "manage" the homeless.

Robert Simms  
Eugene

## A HEALING PROCESS

I have read the Sept. 18 *EW* cover story "Dark Angel" about Tracy Sydor many

times. Each time I cry. I am a survivor of abuse myself, 23 years in an abusive marriage, remarried now for eight years to my best friend.

I applaud Sydor for sharing her work, and her tenacity. You go girl! An awakening is taking place. For all of you who have a problem with it, too fucking bad. Try walking a mile in someone else's shoes, being dealt life-impacting circumstances that follow you.

Sydor has found a way to rise above and heal from the atrocities she has endured, and helping other survivors to do the same. Lois would be proud. I cannot thank you enough!

Lanell Baker  
Tide

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The story and multiple photos by Tracy Sydor can be found in our web archives at [wkly.ws/1vb](http://wkly.ws/1vb).*

## WORTHY NONPROFITS

It was gratifying to see the *EW* devote its cover story Dec. 24 to the many Eugene nonprofits worthy of our donations. But I was disappointed that the story didn't include two of the most impactful organizations in town: Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Oregon and the local chapter of the ACLU.

Both organizations provide an amazing amount of benefits to the community. Planned Parenthood offers health care to those who need it and sex education to many school children. The ACLU fights for

our civic rights and free speech in courts and in the public square. They should get the plaudits they deserve.

Arnold Ismach  
Eugene

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Despite the large size of our *Give Guide* there are always worthy organizations that don't make it in, and so we always encourage readers to write in and let folks know what groups are deserving of their support.*

## A BETTER GIFT

The letter Dec. 24 "Giving is the Best Gift" by George Beres expresses wonderful sentiments. Children should be taught that giving is the best gift. But I do believe that Beres' charitable recommendation, Heifer International, is ill advised.

Sending live animals to third-world countries to be raised to minimize hunger can be counterproductive. The animals require feeding, bedding, shelter and veterinary care, which underdeveloped areas often cannot provide. Plus, many die in transit over bad roads and from lack of food and water.

Drought-resistant crops should be the focus to help the communities feed themselves.

Heifer International encourages zero grazing, which means the animals must be kept confined, the basis of factory farming. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization believes that "the introduction

## DESIGN MATTERS BY JERRY DIETHELM

# Jerry's Predictions for 2015

FROM THE RIVERFRONT TO CITY HALL TO ALLEY OOP

**K**etchup (from the 17th-century Chinese *kôe-chiap* or *kê-chiap*): the Rs in Congress will be playing it for the next two years, and BO in Washington will be rampant.

When Hillary Clinton is elected president in 2016, she will nominate Barack Obama to the empty Thurgood Marshall seat on the Supreme Court.

In 2015, the city of Eugene will lose its fear of open space and at long last create a concept plan for Downtown Park and Open Space. By popular demand and following Springfield's long lead, a Eugene Parks and Recreation District will be established, and a long-buried Eugene Parks Department will be rescued and released from its prison in Public Works.

A New Riverfront Commission will appear from on high and shepherd a public path toward building an EGC (enhanced greenway corridor) that brilliantly ties and binds the riverfront from Eugene to Springfield together as one.

The sidewalks around Capstone will magically widen and apartments will be removed to create pocket parks, community art, music and commerce, and a full renaissance of healthy street life. Walls all over downtown will be rededicated for sitting. And Ken Kesey will do a fiery tango with Betty Taylor in a crowded Kesey Square.

In a new MUPTE: The city will take an equity position and require a design review for all projects that require city subsidies to promote civic values and interests.

The R-G will shrink its paper size again to 8 1/2 x 11 inches and further reduce costs by dropping papers in the middle of blocks near customers.

Civic and Religious Insurance: New EIT policies (enhanced insurance testaments) will be offered in the new year for protection against fatwas, curses and excommunications, nightstick rape, reformations, godly pranks, spiritual fraud, xenophobic backlash, polychromic crazyisms and forced gourmet anal nutrition.

Torture: The ADC (Anti-Dignity Coalition) will continue their Torture for Freedom, Choke for Change and Debase the Desperate campaigns.

Texas will add old *Alley Oop* cartoons to its biology textbooks to enhance students' understanding of evolution, geological time and the Kingdom of Moo.

EWEB will continue to try to justify SDCs (system development charges) for infill at the same rate it charges developers for BPP (boundary pushing projects) and FAS (fringe-area sprawl), and



for secretly paying three times as much for biomass energy generation as it pays for solar.

The city of Eugene will consider asking its citizens if it supports present plans for a new City Hall and then think better of it when the early polling shows that people would prefer downtown toilets,

baths and showers, in emulation of Pope Francis' latest additions to St. Peter's Square in Rome.

The new mental hospital in Junction City will be chosen as the site for the remake of the movie *Bleak House*. And Nurse Ratched will roll over and go coo-coo in her nest.

A YouTube video will go viral showing euphoric spirits in phosphorescent gauze wrappings with joyous hearts and laurel wreaths dancing in the Amazon Headwaters' swirling mists.

And a new CCC will arise, a Continuously Caring Community, to renew a public commitment made 76 years ago (remember that spirit) to the 10 civic acres that await new life, sport, health and all-age recreation at Civic Stadium. ■

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