

# EW'S TOP FIVE 2014 STORIES

According to our web hits and downloads, the most-read story in *EW* this year was a story about the other paper in town ... *The Register-Guard*. More precisely, it was our story "Reporter Fired for Checking Email?" about the termination of popular reporter Serena Markstrom Nugent while she was out on pregnancy disability leave.

That article not only was the most read on our website — it also generated a lot of national attention, with mentions on the journo news site Romenesko and a tweet by NPR's media correspondent David Folkenflik.

The April 3 story was followed by a slew of comments about the issue, including several readers who posted letters they wrote to the *R-G* about Markstrom Nugent's firing, which the daily paper never ran. *EW* will update that story when news comes in about the status of the Markstrom Nugent/*R-G* dispute.

The next most-read story, or really, set of stories, was our annual Best of Eugene issue (Nov. 6), proving that positive stories can beat out shocking or racy ones.

Best of Eugene beat the best efforts of racists nationwide to overload the *EW* website. Our third most read, and definitely our most commented-on story, was a Jan. 20 blog post about local racist Jimmy Marr playing the bagpipes with a sign reading "'Diversity' is a code word for white genocide" during a Martin Luther King Jr. Day march in Springfield. The blog post prompted a storm of comments, mainly from proponents of "the Mantra" who

try to call attention to what they call "white genocide," which they argue is caused by proponents of diversity, with questions such as "Why do you hate little White children?"

The cover feature "Rape U" about the allegations of rape made against three basketball players by a female student at the UO was the next most-read story this year. This is in keeping with the nationwide attention to campus rape that has arisen this year, including a controversial story in *Rolling Stone*.

## Best of Eugene beat the best efforts of racists nationwide to overload the *EW* website.

Rounding out the top five news stories (we didn't count calendar and music listing, as those consistently get high readership year-round) was our Oct. 23 election endorsements. It would appear, in Eugene anyway, people really do care about voting. With marijuana legalization and GMO labeling

on the ballot, people had a lot to think about before they voted.

Two stories written in previous years, Rick Levin's 2012 cover feature "The Restoration Will Be Televised" about the Springfield-based reality show *Graveyard Carz* and a 2013 Shortchanging our Schools column by Ann Bridgman, "Budget Cuts Affect Music, Arts," had big spikes in readership this year. If anyone knows why a show about restoring old Chryslers and an arts education column suddenly got thousands more reads in 2014, let *EW* Editor Ted Taylor know at editor@eugeneweekly.com. — Camilla Mortensen

# ACTIVIST ! LERT

• **Friends of Trees** will be planting native trees and shrubs from 8:45 am to 1 pm Saturday, Jan. 3, near Beltline in the grassy field northwest of Elysium Avenue and Providence Street. Email jenniferk@friendsoftrees.org or call 632-3683 for more information. No preregistration required and gloves and tools will be provided. Weather is expected to be chilly and clear that day.

• **Sen. Ron Wyden** is scheduling town halls in our part of the state and the Lane County meeting will be at 2 pm Monday, Jan. 5, at Sheldon High School Auditorium, 2455 Willakenzie Rd. in Eugene. The Benton County meeting will be at 10 am Monday at Philomath High School Auditorium. Wyden will likely field questions about wilderness protection and federal forest legislation when Republicans take over leadership of the Senate.

• Two **State of the City** addresses are coming up. Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg's annual address will be at 5:30 pm Tuesday, Jan. 6, at the Wildish Theater, 630 Main St. Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy's annual address will be at 5:30 pm Wednesday, Jan. 7, at the Hult Center lobby. Both events are free and open to the public.

• **Health Care for All Oregon** will meet at 7 pm Tuesday, Jan. 6, at First Methodist Church, 12 and Olive St. The group is planning a bus trip Feb. 11 to lobby lawmakers in Salem for universal health care. A rally is expected on the Capitol steps Feb. 11 and about 4,000 supporters are expected to show up. Call 484-6145 or 485-3971.

• **Cascadia Forest Defenders** is having weekly meetings at 5:30 pm Mondays at Growers Market, 454 Willamette St. Find the group on Facebook for more information.

# SLANT

• **Oregon's minimum wage** goes up 15 cents an hour to \$9.25 in January, thanks to a ballot measure in 2002 that tied the minimum wage to inflation. But of course an extra \$26 a month in pay won't bring Oregon's estimated 72,000 working-poor households out of poverty. Seven out of 10 poverty-level families have at least one parent who is employed, often full-time at minimum wage or above. The Oregon Legislature in 2015 is expected to try to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and Republican die-hards will object, saying thousands of jobs will be lost. We remember the Oregon restaurant industry adamantly making such dire claims years ago, but restaurant jobs have steadily increased along with the minimum wage. Put more money in people's pockets and they go out to eat more, and disposable income feeds our entire economy. Employers also benefit from higher wages through happier, more productive workers who stay on the job longer.

• Here's a **fun diversion** for a fidgety family over the long winter holidays. First, we walked through Elijah Bristow State Park near Pleasant Hill and then we nearly overwhelmed Killer Smoke BBQ and Bakery, a mobile food cart in the parking lot of the Pleasant Hill Feed & Farm Supply off Hwy. 58. Pulled pork, baked beans, sweet tea, all the fixings. Killer Smoke will cater, but while it's parked there, enjoy a good walk followed by good food. A Mexican food cart can also be found there occasionally.

• **We all come into the world messy**, covered in bloody goo. Some of us grow up to be tidy and others remain messy for life. Who do we blame for the trash left by the homeless along the riverbanks? The homeless, the city, the county, the railroad? All of the above? The disadvantaged among us include some who clean up after themselves, some who do not. Some mansions are filled with trash. Fishing holes in paradise, way up the gorgeous McKenzie River, are often littered with beer cans, food wrappers, cigarette butts and plastic worm containers. Some conscientious fisher-folks leave the trout to bite another day, and bring home a bag of goeey trash instead.

• We looked back at our **top five news stories** this year (see News Briefs) and were gratified to see that our readers care about the media, elections and education. It's fun to see what readers click on, but *EW* isn't driven to write clickbait; we strive to call attention to what goes un- and under-covered and what other media misses. As we look ahead to 2015 we will continue our coverage on the environment, climate change, local politics, education, the unhoused and more. What else should we delve into?

• **The power of if?** The UO's newly revamped homepage (uoregon.edu) is touting "We believe in the power of 'if,'" and the possibilities are endless. What if the UO paid its faculty better? What if the UO put its efforts into academics instead of football? What if the UO fixed its sexual assault process and actually protected its students?

• It's jolly that **Saturday U.S. mail delivery** will continue in 2015, but with Republicans browbeating both chambers of Congress, the outlook is not so rosy. The U.S. Postal Service is one of the greatest public-service institutions in America, dating back to Benjamin Franklin in 1775, but to many conservatives it smacks of damned socialism and should be replaced by private-sector carriers — regardless of cost or quality of service to rural areas. Meanwhile, the Postal Service is on track to close 80 more mail processing plants in 2015. Centralizing distribution is not very green or efficient. At this rate, you will someday mail a Christmas card to your neighbor across the street and it will go to the North Pole and back, arriving sometime in January.

• We were exceptionally tickled and delighted to find out that **"Just Wear It:** How the UO-Nike partnership set the pace for uniforms in college sports," an October cover story written by Bryan Kalbrosky while he was interning for *Eugene Weekly*, made the "Best of 2014: 100 writers select their own favorite piece of writing" list by Alex Wong (aka @Steven\_LeBron) — a contributor to *Rolling Stone*, *Grantland*, *GQ* and *VICE* and host of the podcast Steven LeBron Radio. Tickled

and delighted because, as a small newspaper, we usually opt out of Ducks fever and leave the sports coverage to our neighbors in print. Kalbrosky's piece rubs shoulders with stories from *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *Deadspin* and *The Atlantic*. To see the full list, visit [wkly.ws/1vg](http://wkly.ws/1vg).

