



Bloxi is a new Eugene-based web business startup that appears to be quickly growing an international audience. “Bloxi is a quiz site where anyone can create, take or share quizzes,” says Bailey Koharchick, director of marketing. Find it on bloxi.com or call the company at 505-8044.

The **tax preparation season** begins Feb. 1 and AARP tax aide volunteers in conjunction with the IRS will be helping people prepare basic tax returns for free around Eugene, Springfield, Junction City, Cottage Grove, Oakridge and Veneta. Hours vary and some sites such as Campbell Community Center and ShelterCare require appointments. Walk-in sign-ups are welcome at the Eugene Public Library, Goodwill Industries on Seneca and the LCC main campus Building 10.

Expedia CruiseShipCenters of Eugene has reopened at 1647 Coburg Road next to Walgreens. The travel agency franchise specializes in a wide range of travel services through Expedia. Owner is Matt Velure who can be reached at 653-9220 between 10 am and 4:30 pm.

The Lane County **Children’s Photo Contest** will happen in February and March as a benefit for Parenting Now!, a local nonprofit. Local professional photographers will take traditional or storytelling photos of a child or siblings up to age 12. The photographers are donating their time and discounting their sitting fees to \$49. They include Amanda Reed, Bruce Berg, Tiffany & David Barfield and Sheri Hubbs. More information at parentingnow.org.

We hear **Café Yumm!** opened more restaurants around the Northwest in 2014, including Salem, Lake Oswego, Vancouver, Washington and the PDX airport. A second Bend store is on the way.

POLLUTION UPDATE

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent a warning letter to **Goshen Forest Products** last month for Clean Water Act violations of Oregon’s industrial stormwater discharge permit. The permit requires Goshen Forest Products to sample stormwater discharges four times a year (with samples spaced out in time to better reflect actual conditions over the course of the rainy season) and to submit sample results to DEQ once a year. Goshen Forest Products failed to perform sampling at least 14 days apart during 2013-14. DEQ also sent **Siuslaw Marina** a warning letter last month for failure to collect monitoring data and submit results to DEQ for its sewerage system from 2010 through 2013.

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project

NEWS

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FAIR OFFERS SCHOOL OPTIONS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

It’s National School Choice Week, a time for parents, students and teachers around the country to celebrate and recognize the diversity of school options available to kids. Sometimes all those options can be overwhelming — Eugene School District 4J alone has five alternative elementary schools.

‘It’s a really lively event, and it’s fun because it brings together all these different people who are interested in education.’

— LAURA PHILIPS, EUGENE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Fortunately, the Jan. 31 Alternative Education Fair at the Eugene Public Library is here to help. The fair is a one-stop shopping opportunity for parents and students to chat with more than a dozen representatives from local charter schools, private schools and homeschooling advocates.

According to a 2014 survey by the Center for Education Reform, the number of charter schools in the U.S. has grown steadily since 2000, with an average growth rate of 340 schools per year.

“There seems to be a feeling among parents in 4J that public schools are under stress with chronic financial shortages and mandates from the feds that are pushing all kinds of testing on kids,” says Rebecca Daniels, executive director of Network Charter School. “As a longtime parent who’s had kids in both alternative schools and 4J neighborhood schools, I certainly feel that among the parents I know, there are people interested in looking at what the alternatives are.”

Parents can even find alternatives within traditional public school districts, like 4J, which will table at the fair. “We’re not the only choice in this area,” says Kerry Delf, communications coordinator for 4J. “You can choose to attend a school in 4J, or you can look at a charter school or private school.”

Delf says it’s important to distinguish between alternative public schools and public charter schools. “We have different processes,” she says, adding that the deadline for 4J’s school choice lottery is Feb. 27. “A lot of times parents will assume a charter school is in 4J, but we have separate systems for enrollment. If you’re interested in those schools, talk to those schools.”

She says schools such as Corridor Alternative Elementary, a school that specializes in the performing arts, fieldtrips and enrichment programs while still operating within the 4J district, are opportunities for kids to experience alternative learning styles.

Laura Philips with the Eugene Public Library says the fair provides that very opportunity. “It’s been going on for more than a decade,” she says. “It’s a really lively event, and it’s fun because it brings together all these different people who are interested in education. We usually have a few hundred people visiting.”

Other schools tabling include the Eugene Sudbury School, which helped organize the event, High School Connections at LCC, Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School and West Lane Technical Learning Center. The library will also showcase its free, online homework center for students.

The Alternative Education Fair is 1 to 4 pm Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Eugene Public Library. — *Amy Schneider*

SLANT

- The Eugene City Council is expected to take the next step this week in **expanding our urban growth boundary** to provide more space for industrial land. It appears the controversial 300-acre expansion for housing is not needed, thanks to a math error being discovered. Puzzling. But the

plan to expand 924 acres to create industrial land near the airport is also flawed. Strong arguments against UGB industrial expansion can be found in the Envision Eugene online survey done in December and January. Survey responses raise issues of paving over “some of the best soils in the nation,” adding air pollution to an area “already identified as an environmental justice community” and “our economy should not be based on continued growth.” The survey itself was blasted for being biased — the question on industrial land was all about land for jobs, a park and school; no mention was made of destroying prime farmland or Eugene’s existing vacant industrial land. One critic raised an interesting point: “I’m not sure that it’s even possible to have this expansion get through both 1000 Friends and DLCD” (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development). Will the city’s ill-advised expansion plans withstand dragged-out and expensive legal challenges? Download the survey results at wkly.ws/1wx.

- If you’ve been following *The Register-Guard*, *The Oregonian* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about “Docugate,” you must be wondering, as we are, how the University of Oregon continues to clumsily portray itself as a **keeper of dark secrets**. Granted, the press filter is tricky, but the UO prides itself on public relations, which is supposed to filter the filter. The university should be the bastion of open-minded inquiry. Government agencies and universities should conduct themselves in such a way that they have no fear that something should be exposed — like the memo calling to dissolve faculty power *EW* wrote about thanks to UO Matters, which put it out for all to see. Public records are for the public and archivists should not be punished for doing what archivists do — making archives open to the public. The next chapter will appear in *The New York Times*. Josh Hunt from the *Times* has been in Eugene this month digging through redacted documents, interviewing the players and weaving his story on the UO in Eugene.

- As we go to press, **rumours are flying** that Bill Harbaugh of UO Matters and the UO have reached a settlement over the 22,000 documents. Harbaugh gave us this statement: “My understanding is that there will be a press release presumably from Tobin Klinger [UO’s senior public affairs director]. All I can say at this time is that the archives should contain legal opinions about university governance and other matters and so far Interim President Coltrane has refused to waive that privilege. I’m not sure if the documents really are privileged but in any case it certainly would be helpful for trust and transparency if he would agree to show them to the faculty.”

- What’s with all this early polling and chatter about **candidates for mayor** of Eugene when Kitty Piercy holds that office until 2016? Probably the same bottom line that’s under the horserace for presidential candidates. Money, raising lots of it. That’s ironic in Eugene where the mayor earns only about \$20,000 a year, can work full-time as Piercy has done and shares power strangely in this city manager form of government. Nearly two years out, we predict and hope that more well-qualified candidates for mayor will step up, no matter the money.



- Vandalism plagues the **Nobel Peace Laureate Park** in Alton Baker Park near the Peter DeFazio Bridge. The plaque that honors Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama has been repeatedly damaged by some local wingnut or group (yes, we have hateful bigots among us) and has been removed. A temporary plaque is taking its place. Does this mean victory for the late-night vandals? Not in Eugene. Our best response to hate actions at the park is positive actions at the park. There is more work to be done there, more money to be raised. The Nobel Peace Laureate Park’s volunteer board is planning a kiosk with signage explaining the purpose of the park, more landscaping and new donor pavers. The project, unique in the nation, honors the 24 Americans who have so far won the Nobel Peace Prize. The park serves to remind us of the peace-making efforts that have gone before us. The vandalism reminds us that the work must continue.

- We’ve been following the **EPUD soap opera** for years and in our Nov. 20 Slant we urged the board to rehire General Manager Scott Coe. We’re happy to see Coe back at work and we expect to see a little less drama from the new board going forward. Petty politics have been a distraction for this otherwise excellent and progressive public utility that serves 20,000 meters outside our urban utility districts.