

INDUSTRIAL SEAVEY LOOP

The city of Springfield is charging ahead with plans to industrialize the Seavey Loop area while engaging in a cynical and patronizing exercise meant to show public engagement. As a member of the city's "visioning" workgroup, I participated in four sessions aimed at engaging stakeholders in a discussion of the future of Seavey Loop. During these meetings the city's planning staff resisted any discussion opposing the UGB and even tried to avoid including the modest notion that boundaries might be redrawn to include less farmland. Other curious practices included minutes issued without opportunity for review, meetings that were recorded without informing participants and a final report submitted without opportunity for comment on a draft.

The *coup de grace* was a City Council discussion on March 23 that forbade comment by the public or participants in the visioning sessions. City councilors selected their favorite concepts from the staff report and proceeded to discuss how much better Seavey Loop would be managed when industrialized. There was no mention of significant opposition to the UGB. I felt compelled to point out this omission and was escorted out of the meeting for speaking up.

Springfield council members and planning staff clearly made up their minds long ago and the farms and open spaces of Seavey Loop are now well on their way to becoming a Springfield industrial park. Fortunately, the city assures us that they know best. Take heart, Seavey Loop and Mount Pisgah, Springfield is coming to the rescue.

John F. Helmer
Eugene

MEDICAL FLEECING

Health care provider companies use their local market dominance to drive up costs, and not just a little but as much as 2,000 percent. Unfortunately for consumers, neither the patient nor the doctor is entitled to know how much a test or treatment costs until *after* they decide to buy it. Of the two million per year bankruptcy filings, most

(62 percent) are for medical bills, and 80 percent of those people had medical insurance. Short of bankruptcy, one in five American adults will struggle to pay medical bills this year. Around 40 percent of Americans owe collectors money for illness. Even small medical bills can ruin a person's credit rating.

Enough with secret pricing! Oregon's Legislature has two bills aiming to give consumers the information they need. Senate Bills 891 and 900 would require hospitals and clinics to make bill estimates available in real time and would require the Oregon Health Authority to publish average prices on the state's public website. The bills would not completely fix our broken health care system, but they would help savvy consumers.

Hospitals and insurance companies are lobbying hard to stop this legislation. We need to speak out or continue to be fleeced.

Tom Payn
Florence

WAY TOWARDS PEACE?

As I write, we are about to enter Holy Week, a time when those of us with Christian heritages commemorate the brutal end of Jesus's life and celebrate his resurrection. It is also almost Tax Day, when we focus on our personal and also on government finances. What a juxtaposition!

I am thinking of Jesus the man and the lessons he taught. He lived in a period when there was a rising movement among his people to violently throw out the Roman Empire. They longed for someone to lead them. Instead, they got Jesus. Jesus walked the countryside, speaking out against injustice and corruption and teaching peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers." "The kingdom of God is within."

Meanwhile, our U.S. government airstrikes and drones kill and devastate, multiplying our enemies. Our weapons land in enemy hands. We arm our local police with sophisticated weapons; we spend \$2 billion a year to modernize our nuclear weapons arsenal and send \$3 billion a year to Israel for its defense. Our domestic poverty increases as we spend

billions on wars, weapons and military aid. Is that really the way towards peace?

Where is our heart? Did we ever learn anything from the life of Jesus, who sacrificed his life as he pleaded for compassion? It will take that kind of courage and sacrifice to turn our world in another direction. The least we can do is speak out for a transformation of our government policies. If we pay our federal taxes, we can urgently protest that one-half goes to wars and war preparation. I will join many who will not voluntarily pay our federal taxes. I will redirect any money owed to compassionate and life-sustaining causes.

Peg Morton
Eugene

UNACCEPTABLE SHELTER

Writing as a longtime, current volunteer at First Avenue Shelter, it is clear to me that we need a new public shelter building. The current facility, built in 1978, is horribly cold for dogs and often overcrowded to the point where dogs are housed in crates or staff offices. This is unacceptable.

Writing as a taxpayer, however, I am very concerned about a new shelter proposal being considered by Eugene and Lane County animal services departments: It would combine the public shelter and the Greenhill private shelter into one, and contractually contribute taxpayer money for the new shelter to be built on Greenhill Humane Society's private property.

I wholeheartedly agree that Greenhill needs better dog kennels. Maybe Greenhill could take the \$3 million it has raised from donors and build new ones. But since Greenhill rebuilt its administrative offices and cattery in 2000, it shouldn't need a whole new shelter at this point.

The inhumane First Avenue facility, however, needs to be completely replaced, but the solution is not to combine the Greenhill shelter and the public shelter into one.

Our new public shelter should be centrally located. Our new public shelter should not be located on private land. And taxpayers should not pay for a new shelter building we do not own.

Misha English
Eugene

GOSHEN ON THE SCENE

There is a small district south of Eugene off of I-5 north of Creswell with a rural area. This area has a fire district like no other fire district. It has LCC, I-5 and several residential areas and business. The area I am talking about is Goshen.

In the last several years there have been many volunteers leaving for what has been said unknown issues. This department is over 50 years old, and there's never had to be a "help wanted" sign on the building. People that wanted a full-time career as a firefighter knew that this was the one department to go to. If needed, Eugene/Springfield would be glad to help with training.

The fire district had engines that stood out from surrounding departments; you knew Goshen was on the scene by the color of its equipment (yellow and green). Old and new firefighters were happy to spend time at the station for sometimes hours discussing the last call or calls from years past — or all getting together to watch a Ducks game. We would answer your call, and then leave you with a smile.

That's all changed. Equipment is new, and the building has been updated. Goshen Rural Fire District still is operational.

Jeff Dolgin
Eugene

A PUBLIC SHELTER

The desperate need for a new public animal shelter is apparent to anyone who has seen the current one. It is time to stop talking about a new facility to care for the area's stray and abandoned animals and to step up and get that done. As a taxpayer and a longtime dog walker at the First Avenue Shelter and LCAS before that, I am additionally well aware of the need for a new shelter facility to remain under taxpayer control and independent from private entities. Private and even nonprofit organizations operate under different rules than public ones do. A public facility is accountable to taxpayers, and a private one is not. It is time to build a new *public* shelter on *public* lands so oversight remains in *public* hands.

Kit Duchin
Eugene

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Mia McKenzie
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April 14th @ 7pm UO Global Scholars Great Hall
1710 E. 15th Avenue, Room 123



Mia McKenzie is a black feminist writer and a smart, scrappy Philadelphian. She is a nerd and the creator of Black Girl Dangerous, a multi-faceted forum for the literary and artistic expression of queer and trans* people of color that is read by millions of people all over the globe.

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