

They should continue doing what they have always done — fundraise for Greenhill (a very private facility).

We as a community have an obligation to provide the proper care and space for our most vulnerable and voiceless residents. Maybe it's time for a bond measure to ensure that we will have a public shelter that we can be proud of.

*Cheryl Byer
Rural Eugene*

TESTING, TESTING

I totally agree that the new Common Core test is too much for students to handle. While there are already many exams for all lessons in class, a test that takes approximately seven to eight hours with only English and math sections is meaningless and stressful for students because “new tests and standards set a higher bar, students are expected to do poorly at first, but performance will improve over time.” [“Too Much Testing” cover story, 2/ 26.]

Instead of putting money into more tests, improving the condition of classes and lectures and also teaching methods would be better for not only students but also the schools.

Finally, all parents should be informed about the tests with all details so that they can decide whether their children should take the test or opt out.

*Hai Nguyen
Eugene*

CARBON UNDERGROUND

April through July is the comment period for updating the forest resource management plan for our federal forests.

In Oregon we have some of the best forests in the world for carbon sequestration. We could get paid for not cutting our forests, which would help with

our water quality, habitat for wildlife and many other ecosystem services. Half of the carbon is held in the soils themselves. Any significant disturbance in the forest floor upsets the entire forest's health and takes decades or longer to repair.

Forests that are older with diverse species are more resilient and fare far better in wildfires. Normally there is a 100 percent mortality rate in same-age, same-species forests from forest fires. On natural, diverse forests there is about a 40 percent mortality rate. We are facing larger, hotter and more frequent forest fires here in the West due to global warming. A forest management plan that doesn't take all this into account should be soundly rejected. Transitioning from wood to alternative materials for building such as Hempcrete would create more jobs.

Get more information and find ways to help out at the 350Eugene meetings. Participate in the Earth Day event at 2 pm Saturday, April 25, at Alton Baker Park in Eugene.

*Pam Driscoll
Dexter*

A CLEAR CHOICE

We need a new public shelter. This is clear to anyone who visits the First Avenue facility. But the solution is not to build the new shelter on Greenhill private property, as our community's animal services divisions have been discussing. We need a new, centrally located, taxpayer-owned facility sited on public property. In 2010, a piece of county-owned property on MLK Jr. Boulevard was considered for just such a building. We should revisit that plan again.

Private ownership puts the public at risk of Greenhill dropping the contract and cutting off access to a private facility. Public ownership of the facility would also

allow for the possibility of future public management of animal services.

We should be considering all options that will be the best for our community now, and into the future, and that means a publicly owned facility on public property.

*Sarah Peters
Eugene*

CENSUS OF SENSUS

In Alabama in 2009, a Sensus engineering employee named Don Baker was fired for repeatedly alerting his management to dangerous defects in the smart meter they were manufacturing. He filed a report citing serious flaws in design and functioning that could lead to electrical danger, overheating and/or fire.

Customers are reporting flames shooting from outlets, burned out appliances and fires after installation. Portland General Electric is replacing 70,000 residential Sensus smart meters.

An Arizona utility is replacing 50,000 to 60,000 Sensus smart meters. Meter fires have also occurred in Reno and Sparks, Nevada. Sparks Fire Chief Tom Garrison says, “Meter fires are concerning because they start outside of the house. The occupants inside may not know the house is on fire.”

The Canadian province government of Saskatchewan's SaskPower removed 105,000 Sensus smart meters and Florida's Lakeland Electric replaces more than 10,500 Sensus smart meters and Pennsylvania recalls 186,000 Sensus smart meters after fires.

Word of California's smart meter nightmares have spread across the country and around the world, prompting utilities to place smart meter plans on hold. This is the beginning of a widespread recall of wireless smart meters.

In an unjust, uncaring abuse of the truths that lay before them, EWEB, our citizen-owned utility, is to sign a contract with Sensus to be the manufacturer of wireless smart meters to be used on our homes! EWEB, we tire of rolling this boulder up a hill. What are you thinking?

*Eve Woodward-Shaw
Eugene*

PERMANENT WAR

Peg Morton in her “Way Towards Peace?” letter April 2 comes from a Christian heritage and I come from a Santa Claus heritage. But I seriously doubt Jesus or old Santa can help us achieve a peaceful world.

We've been living in a permanent state of war for decades. If we “speak out for a transformation of our government policies,” who is listening? Many of the people running our federal government — the executive, legislative and judicial branches — are psychopaths. They don't care what we say. They don't care if we decide to “not voluntarily pay our federal taxes.”

Just as the big banks never needed to worry about bailout money — war contractors, arms dealers, Israel and our military budget will always receive preferential treatment.

The advice given in the Declaration of Independence tells us what we must do. Unfortunately, most Americans are delusional, selfish and easily pacified.

However, let's not despair. Eventually our original god, the Sun, will erupt with tremendous solar flares. EMPs will wipe out much of our war capabilities and other inhumane technological advances.

After a time, we might even regain our humanity.

*Robert Simms
Eugene*

LIVING OUT! BY SALLY SHEKLOW

It's a Date!

YOUR BIG CHANCE TO EAVESDROP ON HISTORY

What's happening on Tuesday, April 28? I'll pause here for however many thumb taps, finger swipes or page flicks it takes to check your calendar. Nothing? No idea what's happening that date? Any guesses?

No, it's not the launch date for Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda's new sitcom, which doesn't premier on Netflix until May 8. Awesome, and worth noting in your date book, but not the correct answer.

If you guessed that it's one of Wifey's and my many anniversaries, you're getting warmer. It's not, but it easily could be. FYI, our anniversaries are: Nov. 21, 1987, our “Did It” date; April 24, 1993, our March on Washington wedding (symbolic only); June 21, 1998, our Big Fat Jewish wedding (Rabbi approved); March 21, 2007, our legal wedding in Canada (not recognized in Oregon); our Feb. 4, 2008, Oregon domestic partnership registration (legal, but only marriage-lite); and May 9, 2014, the day Oregon overturned its one-man-one-woman constitutional amendment and marriage equality came to our state (woo hoo!). All celebration-worthy dates, but still not the answer.

OK, give up? April 28 is the date the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the freedom to marry. Yep, this is it. The Big One. The long-awaited “all the way to the Supreme Court” event we've barely had the chutzpah to expect in our lifetime. And now it's nearly here. On April 28, the nine justices will listen to two and a half

hours of finely tuned arguments from lawyers on both sides of the marriage equality issue. You can bet these attorneys will be bringing their A-game.

I wanna watch! But no, sorry, no video streaming. OK, then, I wanna listen! Nope, sorry again, no live-streamed audio either. Looks like we'll have to settle for audio recordings and transcripts of the proceedings, both of which are set to be released on April 28 at 2 pm EDT — that's 11 am for us West Coasties.

This is the only time since the Supremes' term began last October that the court has agreed to the quick-release of audio recordings, which, because it allows the public the earliest eavesdropping on the pro and con rationales for the freedom to marry, I take as a good sign. “Reasons” for denying queer Americans this fundamental right simply don't hold up under scrutiny of law, and the sooner the homophobes' bumbling arguments are exposed the better. And 11 am on April 28 is the soonest we're going to get.

On that last Tuesday morning in April, we have the amazing opportunity of witnessing — or as close to witnessing as they'll let us — this ginormously monumental big-deal event. It's the culmination of our decades-long struggle to have our country's highest court decide for the entire nation once and for all whether everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, has the right to marry. The justices will listen to the oral arguments then go off to deliberate and make their decision — due sometime before the end of June.

Don't you want to hear all the clearest and most carefully crafted arguments, the strongest distilled essence of why we all should (or shouldn't) be treated equally under the law? April 28 is the date. And for god's (goddess') sake, put it on your calendar. ■

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has shared her passion for justice with EW readers since 1999.