



KEPW Eugene **Home Grown Community Radio** is holding weekly meetings at 6 pm Thursdays at the Growers Market upstairs, 454 Willamette St. The group has raised about \$2,500 of the \$10,000-plus needed to get the low-power radio station up and running by late summer. Organizers plan to broadcast local musicians and bands, variety shows, progressive call-in talk shows, environmental news, labor news and more. See enfn.org/~eugpeace or look for KEPW on Facebook.

Speaking of radio, **KWAX** listener-supported classical music radio at 91.1 FM is doing its on-air fundraising this week and is planning to soon expand its broadcasting to the Corvallis area after two decades of planning.

Record Store Day is Saturday, April 18, and local independently owned record and CD stores are celebrating with special events and sales. Participating stores include Skip's Records & CD World, CD/Game Exchange and House of Records. Find out more at recordstoreday.com.

Coming up is the third annual **90by30 Child Abuse Prevention Conference** April 25 at Valley River Inn in Eugene. Scholarships are available for those who cannot pay all of the \$149 regular registration fee or \$50 student fee. Speakers at the conference include Richard Cooke, Lesley Taylor and Charles Martinez. Find a schedule and registration information at conference.90by30.com.

Eugene Yoga plans to open a new studio downtown the week of May 1. Extensive renovations have begun to a 3,000-square-foot ground floor space at 245 E. Broadway, previously occupied by Lee World Travel and across the street from the Eugene Hotel. The new studio will bring a wide range of yoga styles to people of all ages, levels and abilities that live, work in or visit the downtown area, says Diane Butera, who co-owns Eugene Yoga with her husband, Lou Butera. "Yoga is about living vibrantly. We are thrilled to be part of the revitalization of downtown Eugene," she says. The new studio will offer more than 60 classes, running from early morning through to late evening. Diana Butera can be reached at 520-8771 or through eugeneyoga.com.

The **Tap & Growler** at 207 E. 5th Ave. is the first taphouse/bar in Lane County to be RE:think Business certified by BRING Recycling. RE:think certification is awarded to companies in the county that are committed to reducing waste and conserving natural resources. T&G only accumulates one bag of trash per day. The free BRING consulting service helps local businesses evaluate and adjust their environmental performance, saving money and reducing waste. Find out more by emailing info@rethinkbusiness.org or call 746-3023.

We hear space is still available for a fundraising workshop series on **Nonviolent Communication** with Kristin Collier beginning April 18. Register for "Growing Peace Through Compassionate Communication" by emailing julia@eugenepeacechoir.com or call 968-5896. Suggested donation is \$100 for the four Saturday morning workshops, but no one will be turned away.

NEWS

LAWS WOULD REGULATE STUDENT DEBIT CARDS

Bills regulating how third-party firms disburse financial aid to Oregon students got stalled during the last legislative session. Reps. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene) and Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) are working on several bills to make sure students are getting the best and fairest deals.

Since the late 2000s, most public universities and colleges in Oregon (though not the UO) have had contracts with external firms to distribute financial aid, scholarships and loans to students. The idea was that schools would save money. However, many students now feel that the cost "savings" have actually been a cost "shift" to students who are already in debt.

Mario Parker-Milligan, the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association, was a student at Lane Community College when he first discovered what he calls the "predatory" practices of the third-party firms. LCC contracts with Higher One, a Connecticut-based firm that is widely used in Oregon and across the country. Parker-Milligan is now working with legislators to get regulatory laws passed to make sure some of the things he experienced don't happen to future students.

At the first public hearing on the proposed bills to regulate the financial aid firms, Nathanson gave several examples of how the firms have been preying upon students like Parker-Milligan. One way is how financial aid information is explained. Nathanson says it's not clear to students that they don't have to use a debit card the firm provides. The debit card is presented as the default option for students to get their financial aid money that didn't go to tuition.

Often, the debit card sign-up form is mixed in with many other forms they sign on registration day. Instead of learning that they have the option to get a direct deposit or check for their financial aid package, they sign up for a debit card with scores of fees and rules.

Higher One has a 50-cent "swipe fee" for every time the card is used. Some cards have withdrawal limits that are lower than an average monthly rent payment. Nathanson says students have been charged reloading fees, transfer fees, even a \$19 inactivity fee — leaving students already strapped for cash burdened even further.

One of Nathanson's bills, HB 2832, would require that contracts for these debit cards be published on the university or college's websites. Nathanson says they never even "see the light of day." Another idea being floated in the Legislature would give the

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) authority to approve contracts. They would have to meet certain requirements — like providing a clear and concise fee schedule, and having no swipe fees.

Nathanson's other bill on the issue would give full authority to the State Treasurer or the HECC to negotiate contracts. That has been met with some resistance from schools who want to be able to negotiate on their own.

Several students testified at the public hearing on these three bills. Students from LCC recounted horror stories of lines at the only two ATMs on campus that distribute financial aid without charging an extra fee.

Ashley Jackson, a student at LCC, alleged that students are "lobbied" by enrollment officers to use Higher One. She voiced concern that the various fees students pay to Higher One go out

of state. Eric Noll, an intern with the Oregon Student Association, described how the cards look like something the school provides, sometimes even doubling as an ID card. Cheryl Hiemstra, assistant attorney general of the Oregon Department of Justice, testified that students don't have the opportunity to make a free market decision, because not enough information is given.

Parker-Milligan is fairly confident legislation will actually go through this session. He says the main focuses are to make the contracts available to the public, and to make sure the choices for opting out of the debit cards are explained clearly.

In 2014, Parker-Milligan says Higher One hired a lobbyist who argued the federal government was going to act to regulate financial aid disbursement firms, so state regulations wouldn't be necessary. He thinks they might do something similar but adds that legislators see there is still urgent reason to act locally.

"We are really concerned that there are millions of dollars of public funds that don't have oversight," Parker-Milligan says.

HB 2832 has a work session scheduled Friday, April 17. Nathanson and Holvey have been working to amend the bill to include provisions and ideas from the other proposed laws. If not passed out of committee by Tuesday, April 21, the bill will have no future in this session. — *Lucy Ohlsen*

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NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER TO VISIT EUGENE AS PART OF PEACEJAM CONFERENCE

Nobel Peace Prize recipient Rigoberta Menchú's 1983 memoir, *I Rigoberta Menchú*, opened the eyes of the world to the atrocities committed against the indigenous Mayan population of Guatemala at the hands of its U.S.-backed right-wing government.

The prolonged civil war ended in 1996, but Menchú's efforts to spread peace have not, and she is coming to Eugene for the 2015 PeaceJam Northwest Conference, a program that connects Nobel Peace Prize winners with teenagers.

Although her family perished, Menchú — a Quiche Mayan — survived and became a target after working to organize indigenous resistance, eventually going into a self-imposed exile, according to PeaceJam's website.

Menchú received the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize for encouraging peace and reconciliation between the leftist guerrillas and the right-wing government, becoming the first indigenous person awarded the prize.

Menchú will work directly with the kids at PeaceJam and give them feedback on their projects. PeaceJam started in 1994 in an effort to bring Nobel laureates and kids together. The kids design a service project pertaining to a key problem and then address the issue on a local level, says Darren Reiley, regional coordinator for PeaceJam.

"The key [to] it all is that the students come up with it. It's not adults telling them, 'Here's what you need to do,'" Reiley says. "It's the students who study these issues and [then] get excited about something — they create the project." Examples of past PeaceJam projects include creating sustainable water infrastructure for villages in Central America as well as Tibet.

The conference is April 18-19 at the UO campus; \$100 for kids aged 14-18 and their teachers or adult advisors. Menchú will also give a public lecture at 6:30 pm Friday, April 17, at UO's Beall Concert Hall; free. Register at peacejam.org. — *Mike Bivins*