



We wrote about the opening of **Big Slice Pizza** in this column May 14, but now we see the business is closed and owner Glenn Eitelman has not returned an email or answered the store's phone. The "hole-in-the-wall" pizza joint is on 13th next to Big City Gamin' and across from the downtown fire station. A note on the door says, "The landlord has retaken possession of these premises, and claims a landlord's lien on all the property of the tenant located herein." Building owner John Hammer declined to comment when called.

BRING Recycling will get a new executive director, Carolyn Stein, when Julie Daniel retires at the end of May. Stein started her career at BRING in 2008 as education coordinator, then moved to her most recent position as manager of the RE:think Business program, which she developed and launched in 2010. In that capacity, she has consulted with more than 200 local businesses, helping them reduce their carbon footprint and improve their triple bottom line. Daniel has been with BRING for nearly 20 years and was recently named Woman Business Leader of the Year by the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce. Daniel's list of accomplishments includes overseeing a \$3.2-million capital campaign and construction project at its new headquarters and retail facility in Glenwood. Daniel will speak at the next meeting of GreenLane Sustainable Business Network at 11:30 am Wednesday, June 3, at the Eugene Hilton. The program is called "Getting Wasted With Julie: The Goddess of Garbage Talks Trash."

J. Michaels Books at 160 E. Broadway is celebrating its 40th year in business at 5 pm Friday, May 29, with snacks, wine, conversation and special book sales. Owner Jeremy Nissel says "it's been challenging" competing with superstores such as Barnes and Noble, Borders and Walden Books in the early 1990s and then the introduction of electronic books in 1998. An estimated 1,000 independent bookstores have closed in the U.S. in recent decades. "One hundred dollars spent in a locally owned store recirculates \$68 into the local community," Nissel says. "One hundred dollars spent in a chain store recirculates only \$13."

A free workshop on "**Build a Better Nonprofit Board**" with Tim Armstrong will be at 6 pm Thursday, May 28, at the Eugene Public Library downtown. Call 682-5450.

Local biodiesel producer **SeQuential** has announced it is preparing to increase production following the passing of the Oregon Clean Fuels program. The company has upgraded equipment and added operators to enable its plant to produce more biodiesel each month, says Rachel Shaver, SeQuential marketing manager. "With these changes, SeQuential expects it can grow production by as much as 20 percent in 2015," she says. The company has also installed a blending rack to allow customers using biodiesel blends to mix their product onsite. These developments come on the heels of Gov. Kate Brown's signing of SB 324, which fully implements the Oregon Clean Fuels Program.

Cycle Parts of Eugene is expanding its inventory to include the 100-percent electric Zero motorcycles, owner Rod Johnson says. The locally owned shop has been in business for 20 years selling and servicing Triumph, Hyosung, Kymco and now Zero motorcycles.

The annual **Bingo for Babies** event to benefit the nonprofit Willamette Family, Inc. will begin at 5:30 pm Saturday, May 30, at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 13th and Chambers. Proceeds will go to the Child Development Center. Call 684-4139 for more information.

St. Vincent de Paul thrift store is now occupying the old Gibson Motors site 33 Ivy St. in Junction City. The 20,000-sq.-ft. building with its showroom, shop, offices and parking lot takes up a full city block. A big grand opening was May 21. St. Vinnie's is open daily from 10 am to 8 pm.

Dates have been set for the **Northwest Permaculture Convergence** that will happen in the River Road area Aug. 28-30. "This is the most expansive permaculture event of the year in the Northwest," says Jan Spencer, one of the organizers. He expects about 400 people from around the country, and the conference will include tours of local sites demonstrating sustainable living, working and design. See northwestpermaculture.org.

NEWS

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS WIN BACK CITY FUNDING

Eugene has 23 neighborhood associations, and each one works with neighbors, businesses and local government to solve issues in its respective neighborhood. They also work together with the city of Eugene's Office of Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement (HRNI) to secure matching grants for community projects.

The funds for matching grants have been reduced by the city in recent years. This year, \$35,000 in funding for Eugene neighborhood associations, almost a third of their total funding, was set for the city's chopping block. But the associations, largely coordinated through the Neighborhood Leaders Council (NLC), rallied and convinced the Eugene Budget Committee to vote on May 12 to restore funding to the neighborhood associations as well as to the previously reduced funds for the matching grant program.

According to the spring 2015 mailer sent out by Fairmount Neighbors, this year's funding "was only sufficient to fund one newsletter and two postcards" instead of the two newsletters the funding has covered in the past, and "no public funds were used in the publication of this newsletter."

If the funding had not been restored, the Fairmount Neighbors anticipated having to fund future newsletters using paid advertising.

"One hundred percent of our funding is money for outreach," Southeast Neighbors President Heather Sielicki says. The outreach money is spent by the neighborhood associations on mailers and their associated postage costs. Mailers are sent to each residence in each neighborhood to keep residents up to date on neighborhood and citywide developments.

The Fairmount Neighbors argued that they could not transition their print newsletter to online only, thereby saving money, because 90 percent of residents attending their meetings find out about them through the mailings, and some neighborhood residents don't have internet in their homes.

The neighborhood associations handle outreach for the city, and they're also tasked with finding printers, designing the letters and creating their own websites, Sielicki says.

Over the past six years, the city of Eugene has encountered a budget gap, triggering the attempt to reduce the neighborhood association budget, according to Eugene Community Relations Director Jan Bohman.

"The older generation isn't hip to social media," and it's not reasonable to expect neighborhoods with older residents "to do everything they need to do online," says Whiteaker Community Council (WCC) President Sam Hahn.

While city funding provides money for outreach, the matching grants program helps neighborhood associations take on projects such as elementary school playgrounds, tree planting, traffic studies and more, according to the city of Eugene's website.

Since the matching grants program was implemented in 2000, more than \$570,000 in grants have been disbursed. The matching program started with \$50,000 in annual funding but was put on hold in 2004 due to a downturn in the economy. Eventually the popular program was resurrected in 2007 with \$30,000 in funding, HRNI program coordinator Cindy Clarke says.

Though the matching grants fund relatively small projects, they represent "the little things that help make neighborhoods nice places to live," NLC co-chair Pete Knox of the Downtown Neighbors tells *EW*. "I think it's a real win for neighborhoods that the budget committee recognized how useful the program actually is."

The NLC is an unofficial committee consisting of representatives from each neighborhood association that meets monthly and serves to help with communication between the neighborhood associations, as well as a place where the city and others can be heard by all the neighborhoods, says River Road co-chair Jon Belcher, who was a member of the Funds Restoration Committee of the NLC that created a 14-page document to give to the budget committee listing all the positive things accomplished by the neighborhood associations.

The Eugene City Council must approve the Budget Committee recommendations before the funds are officially restored. — *Mike Bivins*



HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

MAUREEN (MO) ROBESON

"My original plan was to be a high school choir director," says Mo Robeson, who studied music and art at her hometown school, San Diego State University. "That's where I met Denny Robeson." They got married, he joined the Coast Guard and she finished up her degree at the University of West Florida in Pensacola while he went to flight school. She sang with the Honolulu Chorale and Symphony when he was stationed in Hawaii as a search and rescue pilot. They spent five years in Aberdeen, Washington, where he worked in air traffic control and she taught at Grays Harbor College. "I had 26 voice students at one time," she recalls. After they arrived in Eugene with young daughters Wendy and Laurie in 1983, Robeson appeared in Ed Ragozzino musical productions and sang with the Eugene Concert Choir. She began work part time at the state crime lab when the girls entered school and went full-time with the city of Eugene in 1994. She was executive assistant to City Manager Jon Ruiz when she retired in 2013. In 1999, she assembled a choir of city employees for a diversity event. "People wanted to continue," she says, and the City Singers lasted 15 years. "We performed about once a month." Robeson is in her sixth year as director of In Accord Community Choir, a group that often sings at environmental and social justice events. In Accord presents its annual spring concert, "Voices of Life," at 7 pm Saturday, May 30, at Unity of the Valley, 3912 Dillard Road. Look for racewalkers Mo and Denny in the Butte-to-Butte and other local running events.