

MORE REST STOPS

Regarding *EW's* Aug. 6 Slant item on homeless camps and the river:

"The city spends about \$250,000 a year cleaning up homeless camps ... John Brown has some ideas. Anybody else?"

Yes, we have lots of ideas. For starters, spend that \$250,000 on creating legal homeless camps, such as the five existing "rest stops," Opportunity Village, etc., so that people don't have to camp along the river. Provide more port-o-potties and trash bins near where people are camping. Open up more city-owned land for rest stops and villages. Refuse to let public opposition stop siting them.

Right now it's like pulling teeth to find a place where the Eugene City Council will allow them. Put more city money into supporting the legal camps so that the nonprofits presently managing them don't have to work so hard at fundraising. Or have city employees directly manage some camps. Do a lot more to build affordable housing for people who have little or no money. End the camping ban, which criminalizes homelessness.

None of this is hard to figure out. It would help if *Eugene Weekly* would write more about all of this instead of John Brown's lame idea.

See also the reactions to this Slant item

on the Homeless In Eugene Facebook page.

Lynn Porter
Homeless Action
Eugene

THE BLOB

I wish it was just a cheesy sci-fi movie, but "The Blob" is real. A huge patch of unusually warm Pacific water lurking off the coast, from Mexico to Alaska, has appeared. Like the movie blob, it sucks the life out of everything in its path. The Blob's algal toxin, domoic acid, is moving up the food chain. Razor clams, Dungeness crab, sardines, salmon, seals, whales and sea birds are dying.

The Blob is feeding off El Niño's warm water. If El Niño persists, The Blob could spread across the Pacific, causing a mass kill of marine life. Some scientists are alarmed that we are racing toward the sixth great extinction of life on our planet.

"Extinction, as is no longer in existence, having died out, leaving no living representatives." The movie blob was never destroyed; it was subdued by the cold Arctic ice. Our survival may lie in the last line of *The Blob* movie, "Yeah, as long as the Arctic stays cold."

Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain

NOT BY CHOICE

With the pressure that our homeless community is receiving from the great residents of our city, I would like to point out that, without a doubt, a large number of these folks are not living in this manner by choice. There are many factors that contribute to this problem in which many are having great difficulty finding housing that is affordable and without having the burdens of their past reflect on their ability to pass a screening, a criminal background check as well as past references.

With so many of these willing and able men and women out there living in shelters, exiting drug and alcohol centers and moving out of abusive or dangerous living environments to find safe, stable and permanent housing, is it too much to ask for our community to band together and help find a solution to this existing and ongoing problem?

Let me point out that a lot of the services these people seek out have not done much on their part to help! Handing them a piece of paper with a list of places to find food, clothing and free medical facilities does not solve the problem of homelessness, yet at times leads to discouragement.

As for people in active addiction, they must seek out help that is so readily available to them with no cost before they

can do any good for themselves. I would also like to say that I myself was one of the many who we see on the streets today and found a way out of this and by no means encourage homelessness in any way, but I do have sympathy for the ones who are struggling with this dilemma. With the help of our community leaders and the citizens of Lane County, we could all help a large percentage of our houseless citizens of Eugene by being less restrictive of them finding a place called home.

Joey Hensley
Eugene

THEN CAME ISIS

Lest anyone forget Bush's legacy: Endless war! "Bring 'em on!"

Then came ISIS and their ilk.

Marilyn Marcus
Eugene

GOODBYE ROCK PILES

Regarding the letter from Doyle Srader commenting on the beautiful rock-stacking art — I too enjoyed the rock-stacking art next to the University of Oregon bike bridge. Recently, I was watching the river-boarding activities. Four young, college-aged men swam over to them and systematically destroyed them all. They seemed quite pleased with themselves.

VIEWPOINT BY TOM GIESEN

The Die is Cast

WHERE'S THE PLANNING FOR MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION?

Late in the 19th century, we discovered and began to burn crude oil rather casually, as if an epoch-marking discovery of an incredible energy source was a routine event.

It wasn't.

Crude oil is an enormous one-time bounty of highly concentrated energy that developed millions of years ago in the depths of the planet, from a soup of anoxic water, alga, sediment, heat and pressure. We have squandered about half of that gift in just 156 years.

Oil is the most valuable and versatile of the fossil fuels (crude oil, natural gas, bitumen and coal), and I will focus on it. Oil is the powerful change agent that enabled the physical transformation of our planet over about 150 years. However, our choices for oil's use were focused on trivialities — expressions of wealth and power. We failed to plan the use of our bonanza, and that planning is still absent, especially in regard to the global warming that burning oil produces.

The purpose of burning oil and natural gas is the production of incredible amounts of energy, harnessed primarily for transportation. We don't understand how incredibly useful and novel oil is, and we consume it casually, greedily and foolishly.

Today, the U.S. alone uses about 19 million barrels of oil each day — close to 25 percent of global production. We have now produced and burned perhaps half or more of what petroleum geologists believe is the ultimate available resource.

We cannot escape the consequences of burning all that fossil fuel — and producing all that CO₂. Burning oil results in heating the planet plus myriad other negative effects — acidified oceans, melting global ice, substantial sea level rise, widespread extinctions, changed climates and much more. We have made profoundly ignorant and selfish choices by burning half or more of the world's available petroleum without any coordinated attempt at mitigation or the production of replacement amounts of renewable energy.

We are passive in the face of our fossil fuel bonanza. Our oil use history was largely driven by markets. It was all about business: converting petroleum into mobility, machine tools, wealth, toys, comfort and convenience.

As folks began to think about the possibility that oil was finite (and that inescapable fact eluded many) a major PR/disinformation campaign was launched by the oil industry to discredit climate science and scientists — an intense campaign promoting ignorance that continues today.

American "exceptionalism" is a broad and variable claim that we are different from and better than other nations. This self-proclaimed advantage, part of the extreme individualism characteristic of American politics, allows us to imagine we are exceptional. We somehow imagine we *deserve* to burn all that oil, without a thought for others or the future. We haven't set aside any oil for our children, grandchildren, etc., and there appear to be no comparable energy substitutes.

Our progeny will have to take care of themselves.

Now, the die is cast. We did not mitigate and thus we face temperature rises of 4 degrees Celsius and more, along with massive changes in climate, vegetation and species. There are reasons for radical pessimism:

- We don't discuss the problem of warming — talking about it is verboten.
- The global community has done no successful broad scale planning for mitigation — or for adaptation — and we are just waiting for things to "happen" to us. Our rudders are disconnected and swinging wildly.
- We are at or beyond peak oil, when half or more of oil has been burned and the rate of production inexorably slows. Any work on energy transformations must be done soon, because only oil can power a transformation to renewables — there are no electric bulldozers.
- Dr. James Hansen and his coauthors produced a plan in 2013 to quickly reduce emissions 6 percent per year. It is a realistic approach to a difficult problem that will require sacrifices, while doing nothing leads toward total collapse as oil becomes scarce. Unfortunately, Hansen's plan appears to be a non-starter: There is no broad movement to quit using oil. Collapse looms.
- More than 16 million new vehicles were sold in the U.S. last year (and likewise in recent years). We become eunuchs in the absence of automobiles.
- Eighty-two percent of U.S. total energy (2013) is fossil fuels. Reducing that to zero and developing renewables seems impossible. There simply isn't enough will, time or money.
- These are global problems. CO₂ is global in scope and requires global abatement.
- Today most economies are fragile and incapable of creating global change.

It is time we engaged in public debates on these issues on the practicalities, and not symbolically as part of fruitless culture wars. The time to worship those idols is over. In fact, our civilization's time may have passed. ■

Tom Giesen is a retired University of Oregon professor of planning who remains an observer of energy issues, among others.