

TIME TO WEIGH IN

Have you protected your right to vote? The Nov. 3 ballot will include three very important issues. They are the Eugene Five-Year Library Local Option Levy, renewal of the Springfield Fire and Life Safety Local Option Levy and South Lane County Fire & Rescue District Obligation Bond measures.

Voting is our opportunity to make our voices heard on the questions that matter to our communities. We all need to weigh in.

Registered voters must update their registrations if they have moved, have a new mailing address or changed their names. Fortunately, updating your registration is easy and you have until 8 pm the day of the election. You can re-register by going to lanecounty.org/elections and clicking on "Online Voter Registration." That page has links to the Oregon Secretary of State's voter registration pages and provides additional information, including a form to check the status of your registration and whether you need to re-register. Another option is going to the Lane County Elections Department office at 275 W. 10th Ave., Eugene. You may have to do that if you have waited until close to the election date.

*Rhonda Livesay
Voter Service Chair
League of Women Voters of Lane
County*

CONSUMER CULTURE

The problem with investing in kids ("Give Them a Chance," Oct. 15 cover story) is what to invest? Indoctrinating them with a firm belief in the consumer culture with its planetary sized swath of ecodevastation won't secure their security. Not by a long shot. Drying apples and spinning wool, however, promises a more comfortable winter.

Neuroscience will soon discover, I predict, the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex achieve a pinnacle of survival development in a culture of subsistence rather than consumption. Humans habituated to purchasing solutions to all their needs and desires lose not only the immense gratification of invention, but the core ability to produce the beauty and comfort they crave. They think someone else should undertake the tedious, often painful process by which a raw material is converted into something delightful. I furnish the craving, says the craven consumer, longing for something she can't afford.

Being ensnared by the blandishments of the consumer culture is like being tied to an abusive spouse. That culture is going to beat up the sacred ground with industrial agriculture, pollute the rivers and acidify the oceans. That culture obviously doesn't care much for children and synthesizes stress as a structural component of its economy. Makes a poor boy crave a safe shelter of subsistence and simplicity.

*David Hugh Tyson
Eugene*

RASOR'S EDGE

Those who know the value (and rarity) of Oregon white oak trees and stands, and those who appreciate the nature and beauty of the Willamette Greenway, may be disappointed to learn that a lovely Greenway parcel containing at least eight large oaks is on the market (or perhaps already sold), and likely subject to development.

This parcel is adjacent to Razor Park and is described in the park master plan as the highest priority for acquisition because of its habitat and aesthetic value. Most people assume the lot already is part of the park.

Oaks of this size don't grow overnight. It would be a sad loss if some or all of these beautiful trees are cut down to make way for development — but this seems inevitable if a home or duplex is built on the lot. The remaining white oak fringe within the park would be more vulnerable to weather and urban impacts.

This parcel arguably is one of the most valuable to be conserved anywhere along the west bank stretch of the greenway — for habitat value, aesthetics and protection of the riparian edge. Adding it to the city park would ensure that there is a more ecologically functional buffer between existing development and the river.

It will take a major outpouring of community support, including fundraising, if this lot and its white oak grove are to be protected. Please write to Philip.S.Richardson@ci.eugene.or.us and

other Eugene officials today. Visit Friends of Razor Park on Facebook for more information.

*Becky Riley
Friends of Razor Park
Eugene*

LEAGUE BACKS LIBRARY

The League of Women Voters of Lane County urges voters within the city limits of Eugene to support the levy for improved library services, Measure 20-235.

The proposed levy offers more hours, more materials, more resources, shorter wait times for popular items, all at a low cost of about \$3 per month for a typical homeowner. The most important aspect of the levy for the League is that it promotes equity in access to library services and resources. It helps our community narrow the digital divide between households with and without internet access. It helps our city provide more equal service across the neighborhoods. In short, it makes access to library resources more fair.

This is the only question on the city of Eugene ballot. It is important to remember to vote — you will not be bombarded with TV ads or phone calls to remind you. Please vote "yes" for our libraries.

*Linda Lynch, President
League of Women Voters of Lane
County*

ECONOMIC PRESSURES

I'm writing with regards to the South Willamette Special Area Zone (SW-SAZ).

MIC CHECK! BY KEN NEUBECK

Get Ahead of the Courts

TIME TO END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS

My family moved from Long Island, New York, to Falls Church, Virginia, in 1956 when I was about 14. I didn't realize it then, but Virginia had adopted a policy called "massive resistance" in response to the 1954 Supreme Court decision calling for desegregation of all public schools systems in the Southern and border states. Virginia refused to desegregate and schools remained either black or white, with some white schools closing down entirely and their students enrolling in private "segregation academies."

The response of the city of Eugene to calls for the decriminalization of homelessness reminds me of that period of massive resistance in Virginia. In our case the city is resisting responding to statements by U.N. bodies proclaiming criminalization of homelessness to be a violation of human rights, and a Department of Justice Statement of Interest in a court case against a camping ban in Boise, Idaho, that calls camping bans a violation of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, insofar as people are being punished for sleeping in public spaces even though there are not enough legal shelter beds to accommodate them.

Eugene's "massive resistance" to decriminalization will end, just as Virginia's massive resistance to school desegregation was forced to cease by court actions. But how praiseworthy it would be Eugene to get out ahead of the courts right now and find ways to end criminalization of homelessness in a manner that reflects the



humanistic and progressive impulses that drive so many good works going on in our community.

The City Council and city manager must accept that criminalization of homelessness has significantly failed as a public policy in Eugene and elsewhere, that it is ineffective in addressing and reducing homelessness, significantly more expensive for taxpayers than sheltering and housing these same homeless people, and extremely damaging to the mental and physical health of those who are homeless, unsheltered and besieged by police citations for which they do not have the money to pay.

The police records that result from criminalization make it even more difficult for people who are homeless to be accepted into apartments by landlords or into job openings by employers.

"Massive resistance" to desegregation did not work in Virginia. Similarly, intransigence and resistance to addressing decriminalization will not work in Eugene or in other cities in Oregon. It's time for the Eugene mayor, City Council and city manager to sit down and make concrete plans for sheltering and housing all people who are homeless and stop expecting the EPD to take care of homelessness as a law enforcement issue. ■

Ken Neubeck is a Eugene human rights activist and advocate for the homeless. He currently serves on the Eugene Human Rights Commission. Mic Check! is an occasional column representing views from Occupy Eugene.