

FAIRGROUNDS SHELTER

Let's consider the Lane County fairgrounds as a possible site for sheltering the unhoused. The fairgrounds, close to central Eugene and on a bus route to downtown, comprise 55 acres of land, many of which get little use outside the main events held there annually, such as the fair itself, the logging expo, home shows, etc.

Almost all the sheltering projects developed in the last few years are in the Whiteaker neighborhood. It would be fairer to spread the burden throughout Eugene.

The northwest corner of the fairgrounds is four blocks away from the Lane Events Center, and is rarely if ever used, including during the fair. It is already fenced on two sides. It would be easy to fence off a triangle or rectangle of land to create a dusk-to-dawn camp or tiny village where residents could be separated from the rest of the Fairgrounds.

At a recent Jefferson Westside Neighbors meeting, many neighbors seemed open to the possibility of a shelter site at the fairgrounds. We are in a housing crisis and the luxury of holding 55 acres of property close to the center of town empty for most of the time is a luxury we can no longer afford.

Vickie Nelson
Eugene

DISTURBING CONTRACT

I, like many other EWEB customers, am disturbed and angered at the secret contract with Seneca lumber (Slant, 11/25). I can see in the power climate five years ago the appeal of such an agreement BUT the secrecy and lack of protections for ratepayers/owners is a slap in the face as well as a gross "mistake."

Why are we as consumers obligated to protect Seneca's "competitive edge" when they have absolutely no desire to renegotiate anything about this deal? Why is a publicly owned entity working with any company whose business strategies seem to involve secrecy and law suits? Better luck next time, Eugene.

Michael Shubert
Eugene

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

The upcoming climate talks in Paris will do little to stop the use of fossil fuels. Delaney Pearson (Letters, 11/19) asks, "How many of our policymakers feel the urgency to really change course for a healthier and more just world?" Depending upon one's perspective, the answer has to be: very few, or none.

At the federal level, any person accepted into the executive, congressional and judicial branches of government is

necessarily beholden to special interest groups and the military-corporate complex. Yet we continue to insist "our government servants" make humane decisions.

Oh, they throw crumbs at us from time to time, but it's simply impossible for their venal minds to grasp the concepts of our well-being and our planet's welfare.

Mary DeMocker (Viewpoint, 11/19) says, "The time for speaking up is now. ... Help push the world in the right direction." Many of us did just that on the first Earth Day in 1970 and during subsequent Earth Days, until Corporate America took over Earth Day. Now is the time for action, but we're not going to accomplish anything meaningful by relying on our government stooges to act.

I have a suggestion for Pearson, DeMocker, Peter Kugler (Letters, Nov. 19) and others:

Ride the #66 or #67 LTD bus round trip beginning at the downtown transit station. On this ride, notice the many auto dealerships along the way. Also notice the many parking lots, especially at Valley River Center, Delta Oaks and Oakway Center. During this bus ride (about one hour) — how many cars, trucks, SUVs and vans do you see? Too many to count?

When the fossil fuel-burning vehicles at these auto dealerships are sold, they

will be replaced with more fossil fuel-burning vehicles. In a relatively short time, parking lots throughout Eugene will fill; we'll experience even more road congestion and road rage; and more parking spaces and paved roads will, of course, be needed.

What's the purpose of global marches for climate solutions when there are currently tens of thousands of polluting elephants right here in the room we call Eugene?

What's the purpose of organizing *another* march and pretending this will achieve anything — other than a bunch of like-minded folks having fun?

The members of the various 350 groups really need to deal with their collective cognitive dissonance.

Robert Simms
Eugene

A WAKE-UP CALL

Our book group just read Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Not an easy read, but certainly a must-read.

We have a hard time looking at climate change, Klein says. We are too overwhelmed to change the bigger economic/political systems that are making the crisis inevitable. We are in denial. What can we do?

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Marijuana rules?

WE ARE GOING TO NEED MORE LAWYERS

Thanksgiving is a time for reflection. Hopeful, bloviated thankfulness is in the air. As a Democrat, for example, I am incredibly grateful to the Republican Presidential Debate Club for designing that cute circular firing squad format. This nation of immigrants welcomes their wholehearted endorsement of Latino displacement and Syrian xenophobia. The math is so simple: We deport 11,000 illegal immigrants and we refuse entry to 2,000 immigrants fleeing genocide — 13,000 reasons to demonstrate America's continued commitment to human rights.

I'm thankful for those Republican governors refusing Syrians entry to their states. I mean, after all, Lebanon, a country the same size as Oregon for Christ's sake — four million citizens — has already absorbed over one million Syrians. Even Germany, with its reactionary history, has taken in nearly a million. WTF! How could our president possibly allow 2,000 of these victims into the U.S.? It's probably because Obama is a wimpy sympathetic immigrant himself, having been born in Kenya or Hawaii or some other foreign country. Just ask Donald Trump.

I'm also thankful the Oregon Legislature dropped the ball on marijuana legalization and taxation when they met earlier this year. They could have cleared the air but chose instead to leave the whole debate in a hazy cloud. Thank goodness they let the Oregon Liquor Control Commission make the rules! At least now all of our vices can be controlled by one state agency. If you think Colorado and Washington had problems, wait until Oregon's Legislature approaches state cannabinoid taxation and regulation in 2016. Will they give syntax to sin tax?

Finally, we should all give thanks to the UO law school for remaining open for business. You heard it here first: We are going to need more lawyers! Did I mention that the Oregon legislative branch and executive branch just released 70 pages of new state rules governing recreational marijuana use? As a public service, and after my rigorous preliminary analysis, I offer you, faithful readers, the following observations:

- Oregon students will be required to register to vote in order to legally consume recreational marijuana. That's right, if you test positive for cannibonoids, you *must* vote. Conversely, if you test negative for cannibonoids, you don't have to vote. (But you should probably find a better drug dealer.)

- It is still illegal to toké and drive! Remember: Telling the arresting officer that you had to toké and drive because you were too stoned to walk is probably *not* going to work as a legal strategy.

- You can only get stoned in private. If you get stoned with a friend, then that's a "public" occurrence and you will be placed in a holding cell with a TV showing a looped replay of all the 2015 Republican presidential debates *without* commercials.

OK, now you know what I know about the new laws. Holy shit, Batman, how many bong hits will it take the Court of Appeals to kick it up to Oregon's *highest* court, the Supremes? We'll definitely need more lawyers.

2016 should be a great year for Oregon politics. The general election is less than one year away. The primary election is less than six months away. It is being held on May 17 next year to honor the birth date of Dennis Hopper, the Ayatollah Khomeini and me. (Dennis will be 80, I'll be 67, and the Ayatollah would have been 116, but he's not.) Scariest of all, the Oregon Legislature will convene for just 67 days. Everything that didn't get settled in 2015 will be up for grabs — a revenue shortfall amidst a kicker rebate for Oregon's wealthiest, college tuition increases, a minimum wage increase and a badly needed state transportation plan.

And don't forget about the potential initiatives that could be on next November's ballot: two competing minimum wage measures, a so-called "right-to-work" initiative that would weaken public sector unions by allowing workers to "opt out" of union dues, and a measure by Our Oregon — a statewide coalition of educators, seniors, parents and people who care for needy citizens — to raise taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals. And there is even a ballot measure which would make English the "official language" of Oregon and require employers to verify the immigration status of their workers. If that passes I'll probably need to send for a copy of my Irish birth certificate. But I'll do anything to keep Donald Trump and his supporters feeling safe and happy. Stay tuned.

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a former state senator and state employee.

