

WHAT'S IN A NAME? MANY 'TRAVELERS' ARE LOCAL

There's a growing list of names for downtown Eugene's houseless population, and the word "travelers" is the latest description. The houseless and their advocates say that identifying the unhoused as travelers is a distraction from the real problem.

"I think that's the denial that every community has," says Sue Sierralupe, Occupy Medical clinic manager, "that these are strangers."

Occupy Medical is a mobile clinic that sets up at the Park Blocks on 8th and Oak every Sunday to help anyone in need of medical attention. On average, Sierralupe says, about two out of every 50 patients they see at their Sunday clinic at the downtown park blocks are what Mayor Kitty Piercy calls "travelers."

"I have heard them refer to themselves as travelers. It is a descriptor," Piercy wrote in an email to *EW*. "I would suppose that some travelers might be homeless and some homeless might be travelers."

Ján Sawyer, an unhoused resident of the Ninth Ward protest camp, also known as OURS Camp, disagrees with the notion that the majority of the houseless downtown are travelers and questions the legitimacy of the word.

"Whether or not I'm a traveler is debatable, because I lived here for three years before I was homeless," Sawyer says. "So, does that make me a traveler or not?"

He says he believes the mayor is scapegoating. Sawyer says, "They just don't want to fix the problem and are looking for any excuse to not do it."

Donna Riddle, Occupy Medical's intake manager, concurred, saying the majority of people she sees are locals.

Piercy isn't the only person raising awareness of the houseless in downtown Eugene. "The owner of Sizzle Pie who has put up a lot of stink about the unhoused is from Portland," Sierralupe says. "He's a traveler. He doesn't live here."

Mikey McKennedy, co-founder of Sizzle Pie, says of the idea that he is also a traveler: "I just think it's a really unfair comparison to make. I'm from Portland, but the people who run that shop all live in Eugene. The people who are the heart and soul of the shop are from Eugene."

McKennedy adds, "We're not being unsympathetic to the causes of the issues, or the nature of the issues. All I care about is the people who work for me, and they are not travelers."

Sierralupe says that while Occupy Medical's numbers don't correlate with Piercy's count, whether or not the houseless in Eugene are locals is irrelevant. "No matter where people are from, if people need help, you help them," she says. "That's our job as human beings, and that's why we're here." — *Mohammed Alkhadher*

WEED ADS PISS OFF PRUDISH POSTAL SERVICE

Some readers call us *Eugene Weedly* thanks to our pot ads, so it's no surprise *EW* has gotten calls from other media wondering if a recent U.S. Postal Service (USPS) notice about pot advertisements will affect the paper.

On Nov. 27, the Portland district of the USPS gave the *Chinook Observer*, a small coastal newspaper in Longview, Washington, a warning that if a "mailpiece" contains ads for marijuana, it is "non-mailable." The *Observer* is published by EO Media Group, which also publishes papers in Oregon.

The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association (ONPA) was notified of the issue and sent a warning out to its members and associate members, including *EW*, saying it "strongly discourages members who use the U.S. Postal Service as their method of delivery from running any type of marijuana advertising."

Editor Ted Taylor says *EW* only has 17 paid subscriptions and another dozen or so that go to other newspapers and libraries, so if the USPS "requires us to stop mailing the paper, it's not a big issue for us."

The Oregonian, which has also taken pot ads, said in a recent article that its mail subscribers are a "fraction of the overall subscribers." Many small rural papers, however, are largely mailed, and those papers might be more severely affected.

Members of Oregon's congressional delegation weighed in on the issue, sending a letter to the U.S. postmaster general, saying, "Small businesses and community newspapers rely on advertising to be successful," and the politicians seek a clear understanding of the Postal Service policies so the businesses don't violate the law.

Sens. Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenauer ask: Is the policy being enforced in all 50 states? What discretion does a regional postmaster have? What authority does the USPS have to regulate the advertising of legal marijuana, if the ads aren't promising to mail any marijuana? How will it enforce the rule when Congress prohibited the U.S. Department of Justice from spending money prosecuting federal marijuana crimes in states with legal weed?

Finally, they ask if the USPS cooperated "with anyone at DEA or DOJ in establishing this policy?" and if it did, then "please detail the nature of the cooperation."

Wyden's office says it is waiting on a response.

Taylor points out that there are many unresolved issues in federal and state law when it comes to marijuana. He says a bigger issue when it comes to legal pot is "the difficulty these new businesses have in dealing with federal banking regulations," something he hopes to see resolved on the federal level. — *Camilla Mortensen*

ACTIVIST ALERT

The Eugene Sustainability Commission **Climate Change Committee** will meet at 2 pm Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Atrium Building, Room 250, 99 W. 10th Ave. Call 682-5017 or email babe.osullivan@ci.eugene.or.us.

- The Eugene **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee** will meet at 5:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Atrium Building, Sloat Room, 99 W. 10th Ave. Call 682-5471 or email lee.shoemaker@ci.eugene.or.us.

- The Eugene **Police Commission** will meet at 5:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 10, at EPD Headquarters, Kilcullen Room, 300 Country Club Road. Call 682-5852 or email carter.r.hawley@ci.eugene.or.us.

- The annual "Gifts to the City" program at City Club of Eugene this year will include speakers Adam Wendt, Carmen Urbina, Jan Elliot, Don Tykeson, Kenya Luvert, Brittany Quick-Warner, Mark Roberts and one more to be announced. City Club meets at noon Friday, Dec. 11, at the Downtown Athletic Club, 999 Willamette Street. \$5 for non-members.

- A vigil for "Climate Red Lines" regarding protecting our children with a climate justice movement, will be from 11 am to 12:15 pm Saturday, Dec. 12, at the Fairgrounds Holiday Market lobby. "Let's show kids where we draw the line," say organizers. Call Patty Hine at 343-5091.

- The next meeting of the **ESSN Action Mobilization Committee** will be at 4 pm Saturday, Dec. 12, at 688 Charnelton Street. The meeting will focus on the campaign for City of Eugene Temporary Workers, along with upcoming actions and bargaining for SEIU.

- **Cascadia Wildlands** annual Wonderland Auction is from 6 to 10 pm Saturday, Dec. 12, at the LCC Center for Meeting and Learning on the main campus on 30th Avenue. See cascwild.org.

- **Basic Rights Oregon** is on a statewide organizing tour and will be in Corvallis from 6 to 8 pm Sunday, Dec. 13, at Grace Lutheran Church, 435 N.W. 21st Street. The Eugene meeting from 6 to 8 pm Monday, Dec. 14, at the UO College of Education building, Room 176. A Eugene phonebank is being planned from 6:30 to 9 pm that same day at SEIU. Call (503) 222-6151 or email info@basicrights.org to sign up.

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

In last week's story on the UO rally in support of Syrian refugees we incorrectly stated that Sen. Ron Wyden was in support of the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act. He is in fact against it.

GARVAR BRUMMETT

"The prison experience was a blessing for me," says Garvar Brummett, who left his San Fernando Valley home at age 17 to escape an abusive stepdad and an alcoholic mother. He fell into a cycle of addiction, alcoholism, homelessness, bank robbery and incarceration that lasted 20 years. He served five years in prison, part of it in Illinois, the rest at the Sheridan federal prison in Oregon. "I read a lot of self-help books and religious texts," he says. "I started going to AA meetings. I got a GED in prison." Shortly after his release, Brummett arrived in Eugene where he lived in a recovery house for two years, then ran a recovery house for a year. He studied at Lane Community College and became a certified drug counselor. Since 2004, he has worked as a counselor at Sponsors, Inc., an agency that provides transitional housing and reentry services for men and women released from prison. "It's a walk-in kind of thing," he says. "I just guide people through things they have to navigate." Brummett began to write stories while in prison, gritty vignettes, with no expletives deleted, from his own life on the street. His self-published book of stories, *The Scent of Jasmine Cools the Rage*, illustrated with his own drawings, made its debut on Amazon in July. "It took me 20 years to write it," he says. "There was a lot of emotion behind it. I wanted the reader to see where addiction comes from." Brummett will read from his book at 7 pm Thursday, Jan. 21, at Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette Street in Eugene.

HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

