

MAKE IT POSSIBLE

I have been reading with concern of the proposals and letters to the editor concerning the future of Kesey Square. I have been living in a senior apartment community, Olive Plaza, in downtown Eugene. Many of us walk for our exercise and refreshment. There are *no* places where we can go and sit. There is no green, no small park near the area where we live. A new City Hall park is much too far away. Kesey Square remains the one place where we could go, but the benches have been removed.

I personally like the diversity of our downtown neighborhood, and I envision Kesey Square as an attractive public park. There we would find young people finding their way in the world, other apartment dwellers, parents with their babies, some homeless older adults, all passing through.

To make this happen as a city park, there could be regulations. For example, no smoking allowed, and the park could be closed to the public from 11 pm to 7 am, as others are.

Please, city leaders, let's make this possible!

Peg Morton
Eugene

KESEY'S WISDOM

Ken Kesey died in 2002. As a tribute, photographer Brian Lanker led a visionary — and successful — effort to fund and create a memorial: the bronze sculpture "The Storyteller" by Pete Helzer placed in 2003 in Kesey Square.

The fundraising poster and pro-bono ads in national publications appeared with a portrait of Kesey by Lanker. They featured this now-famous quote from an interview with Ken:

"The answer is never the answer. What's really interesting is the mystery. If you seek the mystery instead of the answer, you'll always be seeking. I've never seen anybody really find the answer, but they think they have. So they stop thinking. But the job is to seek mystery, evoke mystery, plant a garden in which strange plants grow and mysteries bloom. The need for mystery is greater than the need for an answer."

May we heed this shape-shifting wisdom whatever we — locals, travelers, councilors, developers and editors! — do or don't do in Kesey Square.

Douglas Beauchamp
Eugene

WHAT EUGENE LACKS

I'm just trying to understand Joshua Purvis' actual viewpoint on Kesey Square Dec. 10. First he states his credentials as a film buff — OK, whatever. Then he opens with a thesis statement with a double negative in favor of development — I guess *that's* his view.

He praises the would-be developers of a publicly owned and used space for actually getting some public input — that's good, but hopefully it's legally required at some point anyway.

He praises/encourages *EW* editors for devoting column space to the issue (borderline brown-nosing). He sums up with a snarky comment about those who actually had a vision for downtown decades ago — a boorish comment.

What is lacking is a vision for Eugene's heart — right now the heart of Eugene is a four-way stop at Broadway and Willamette with a manhole cover where a fountain once stood, traffic-centric not people-centric. Eugene has finally integrated housing, restaurants, retail, art, etc., into downtown in the European model of community, but Eugene lacks the one

thing that brings the community together: a public space (not parking space).

The public square is a solution that has worked for centuries in Europe and has been successfully imported to places like Portland's Pearl District (but with too much car traffic). The vision of an open pedestrian square is a long-proven economic and societal solution for a city's heart. The solution is not to cover Kesey Square with a high-rise but to expand it by creating a car-free pedestrian circle at Broadway and Willamette.

The argument against this seems founded on fear of homeless and transient "others" who might show up. Purvis points out that "natural surveillance" can be developed to counter this problem, and I would also encourage Eugene's police to get out of their cars and walk around downtown and actually smile and converse, not just enforce.

Finally, I would like to thank Purvis for his snide summary comment that annoyed me enough to write.

Mark Barbour
Eugene

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Republicans Trumped

SUPER-PAC BUCKS CREATE CHAOS IN GOP PRIMARY

We all know that *any* political act can spawn unintended consequences. In 2010, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the ban on corporate expenditures for political candidates in the *Citizens United* case. I would argue that the *Citizens United* ruling is the most consequential American political act of this young century. Who would have predicted that, in unleashing *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court would launch the crowded clown college known in 2015 as the Republican Presidential Debate Club?

Clearly Justice Roberts and his conservative Republican colleagues on the Supreme Court knew that *Citizens United* would enhance the power of corporations and their own party while weakening the Democrats. Sure, Obama won by outworking and out strategizing the Romney/Ryan ticket in 2012, but that was an exception that proves a larger rule. Currently, Republicans control 70 percent of our state legislative chambers, and in half of our states Republicans control both legislative chambers. More than 60 percent of our states' governors are Republicans. That's the largest Republican control in American politics since *before* the Great Depression of the 1930s. It's no small irony that the U.S. economy currently displays the greatest income disparity between rich and poor since that same Great Depression.

So you'd think Democrats would be quaking in their boots at this scenario and Republicans would be laughing all the way to the bank. But instead, Republicans are panicking. The circular firing squad has not diminished in size. Normally, losing primary candidates, unable to get their numbers up in anticipation of the primaries next January and February, would be dropping like flies. Instead, super-PAC money is keeping several of the clowns on life support, and it's showing. The leading candidate, Donald Trump, can self-finance because he's a billionaire. But the Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Carly Fiorina corporate campaign support is alive and well — and Ben Carson still gets to hang out on his book tour. As former national Democratic chair Howard Dean recently pointed out: Florida has a winner-take-all primary on March 15 that could wrap up the Republican presidential primary race!

Believe me, as a longtime Democrat, I take little pleasure in hearing South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham call his party's frontrunner, Donald Trump, a "xenophobic, race-baiting, religious bigot." You know those rich Republicans: Boys will be boys. Betcha they'll kiss and make up sooner than Bernie gets a State Department email from Hillary. "Trump" might become a verb. Trump you, too!

Oregon Republicans will be awash in corporate money this campaign cycle, whether in

our state legislative races, statewide races or the ballot measure campaigns, with an anti-union "right-to-work" measure and progressive attempts to increase the minimum wage and increase taxes on corporations and Oregon's wealthiest on the table.

Our gubernatorial primaries have been quiet so far, with incumbent Kate Brown the presumed Democratic candidate and Bud Pierce the Republican. The secretary of state primaries are intriguing. I'm glad to see that two of my least favorite Republicans, Sid Leiken and Dennis Richardson, are running against each other: That means the loser should be pretty much washed up in Oregon politics.

The Democratic primary is intriguing: two men and one woman. These are three good candidates, all progressives in their own way. Sen. Richard Devlin is the current co-chair of Oregon's Ways and Means Committee. Brad Avakian is the current Oregon labor commissioner. Both are midterm in their *current* elected offices. The third candidate is State Representative and former Democratic House Majority Leader Val Hoyle. In the interest of full disclosure, I'm supporting Val because I've worked closely with her for over 20 years on Lane County Democrat issues. No doubt turnout will determine this race.

The Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics held a reception a few weeks ago to honor Margaret Hallock as she retired as its executive director. It was such a treat to see old friends from the UO's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) and so many progressive community educators and leaders. State Rep. Paul Holvey best summed it up for all of us in a note to Margaret after the event: "Congrats on your great career and retiring with the admiration of a broad community of people dedicated to social and economic justice that includes me. Enjoy life!"

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

