

A POWERFUL GIFT

I am a Quaker who has participated in Eugene Friends Meeting worship and business with Peg Morton since I moved here in 2012. Peg's death has been a spiritual milestone for me. Her approach to dying — as a spiritual process, in community, through both strong will and submission — has provided me with a new model in a society where death is resisted at all costs and where we have few healthy ways to relate to it or to talk to each other about it. I grieve the loss of Peg as my mentor and elder, but in her death she has given me a powerful gift that will teach and change me indefinitely. It is nudging me, even at my young age, to reassess my fear of death, to envision how I would like to die and to reach out to others to ask the same questions. Peg invited our whole city to witness her process of dying, and I ask Eugene citizens to use this opportunity to talk to those you love about death, to be reflective and to be transformed.

Promise Partner
Eugene

SILENCE AND APATHY

My daughter was drugged and sexually assaulted, left in the mud and rain behind a Eugene bar downtown until someone found her, took her home and called the cops. Everyone can and should take action. I've been warned by other women that this is *common!*

Progressive Eugene, listen up. Tavern owners, question your bartenders — train them to protect your clientele. Women and men, protect each other. Put lids on your drinks. Buddy up and make sure your friends get home safely. Catching this and other predators should be easy. Pay attention. Look for any suspicious behavior. Demand protection from tavern owners and bartenders. Everyone is responsible. And for those who have been traumatized, check out Sexual Assault Support Services online [sass-lane.org]. They provide counseling and support. Silence is deadly. Apathy even worse.

Your downtown is dangerous after 10 pm. This is a call to arms, Eugene. Act!

K. Dunn
Ashland

LAX SCRUTINY

Thanks, Alex V. Cipolle, for your Jan. 7 story on Capstone ("Tax Exempt, Design Optional"). I thought I was alone in faulting our city manager, planning department and ultimately City Council in safeguarding the permit process and MUPTE application requirements for Capstone. Does every builder get such lax scrutiny?

When the MUPTE application stated 5,000 square foot retail space and that space didn't appear, who was guarding the process? Should we see a voiding of the MUPTE tax exemption? Are other MUPTE agreements given such lax treatment? Should we see reprimands of those abrogating their responsibilities? As a footnote, why is the loading dock of the new Whole Foods store, on the City Hall Phases 5 or 7 or 9 corner, 8th and High, our new best street and "gateway to the river project"?

Gwen Bailey
Eugene

IMPROVE, NOT LOSE

While the idea to develop Kesey Square into a taxable apartment might be initially appealing for a space that some deem to be "problem" as a "magnet for vagabond types," the rewards in building yet another largely vacant apartment or retail building in downtown Eugene pale in comparison to the benefits that will be lost by building over the Kesey Square free space.

My friends and I have positive memories attached to Kesey Square. It is a place we use throughout the summer to meet up, play music, play hacky sack, stop on our bikes to share a snack, play a board game. I have done all of those activities in Kesey Square. I own a home, run a business and am not scared of the "vagabond types."

Kesey Square could be improved upon. Perhaps better lighting, perennial berry bushes, more seating and a fountain could improve the ambiance, making the place more inviting. Maybe the city could staff a friendly peacekeeper to hang out down there (think bigger than a rule-enforcing Red Hat). Democracy was

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Malheur Echo Chamber

AN UPDATE ON THE INTRACTABLE WAITING GAME

The Pacific Patriot Network (PPN) issued a press release Jan. 10 regarding a "Proposal for Resolution of the Peaceful Occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by Citizens for Constitutional Freedom." This is the armed convoy that disrupted the press conference I attended Jan. 9 while out in Burns checking out the Malheur occupation.

According to the release, PPN's purpose in Harney County was to "establish open communication towards a peaceful resolution while maintaining civility within Harney County." To do that, PPN would establish a "perimeter of protection for the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge" while initiating discussion with federal agencies.

PPN made three demands in its statement: the occupiers be granted a written grievance process, a criminal investigation of prosecutorial misconduct by the federal government in the Hammond case be initiated and "the transfer and unconditional return of the lands in question to Harney County and Burns Paiute [sic] Tribe."

The statement concluded: "This situation is not conducive to solutions." I agree with their assessment. Two of PPN's three requests will not fly. Even if the FBI agreed to a grievance process to include a written resolution of the stand-off, there's no way they'll agree to a criminal investigation of prosecutorial misconduct in the Hammonds' case — I'm not sure the FBI can even negotiate on behalf of the federal courts. Nor would the FBI consider the transfer and unconditional return of the lands in question to Harney County and the Burns Paiute Tribe — even if its name were spelled right. If it were up to me, I'd give it *all* back to the Paiutes. I trust them. As long as they'd promise not to sell any land to white folks.

The ostensible trigger for the Malheur takeover was the re-sentencing of the Hammonds by Federal Judge Ann Aiken, as was handed down to her by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Eastern Nevadans Ammon and Ryan Bundy represent the face of this militia. They are sons of the infamous Cliven Bundy, the pseudo-patriot, right-wing-wacko-anarchical, seditious super-moocher, public land cattle-grazer who owes the feds \$1 million in back grazing fees — that guy.

As with many of these self-declared "prophets" of their faith, both Ammon and Cliven Bundy have publicly acknowledged it was their direct communication with God in each case that led them to Malheur and their previous armed conflicts with federal agencies. In the case of the Malheur attack, Ammon told OPB's Amelia Templeton "it [the Malheur takeover] was validated by God in the form of a flock of geese he saw flying" (which has significance in Mormon teachings). So that's why all these folks took over a *bird refuge*.

If you want to find out more about how "prophets" in this fundamentalist ideology behave after getting direct "revelations" from personal communication with their

God, read Jon Krakauer's book *Under the Banner of Heaven*. Hint: It's not about Muslim extremists; nor for that matter is it about the vast majority of rational law-abiding Mormons. Just like some on the left, these occupiers only talk and listen to each other. It's all about power, justification and self-reinforcement.

This press release is not a legitimate proposal; it is simply designed to buy time. And I have no qualms about the lead agency, the FBI, taking time to let this develop a bit more. I guess turning off the power and water is not as simple as it seems. There are legitimate concerns about unauthorized use of federal equipment and the occupiers' access to federal records and Paiute cultural sites and property. But I don't mind a waiting game. It's cold over there, and this not-so-well prepared gang arrived and immediately sent out a nationwide alert to militia groups. Turns out they hadn't brought much food and supplies — because guns, ammo and ideology take up so much space.

During this assignment, I ran across some really good writing about the Malheur siege in particular, and the history of the Western cattle conflict in general. Jeff Wright of *The Register-Guard* wrote an excellent piece Jan. 12 about what American terrorism feels like in Harney County: the anxiety of community members being followed around, tires slashed, cars parked outside their houses — creepy stuff. And kudos especially to Steve Duin of *The Oregonian* for his Jan. 8 column describing Republican Congressman Greg Walden's nasty role in this fiasco. Duin described Walden's empathizing with the "militant Mormon tour group perpetuating the farce" while cynically killing the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement in order to avoid a Tea Party challenger in the primary. Stay tuned.

Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a former state senator and retired state employee. He traveled to Burns and wrote of his adventures and observations in our Jan. 14 issue.

