

STOP FAT HATING

As a therapist specializing in eating disorders, I couldn't help but jump at the opportunity to respond to Amanda Franca's letter "Fat and Climate" Feb. 18 and redirect the conversation to the issue of "fat" phobia in our culture. It is disconcerting that body-positivity paired with healthy sexuality could cause such a sickly response. To directly equate our growing climate crisis, capitalism and pathological overconsumption with the size of people's bodies grossly undermines a larger systemic and sociopolitical issue.

BMI is used as a reference point, not a be-all-end-all indicator of someone's health. Sadly, the letter feeds stereotypes that "fat people" are overconsumers, just eat crap and are not socially conscious or responsible. It appears that it is still PC to degrade and slander people because of their weight. There are too many young people suffering from anorexia, bulimia, orthorexia and binge eating disorders, struggling to cope in a world so obsessed with being thin at all costs that they ultimately learn to hate whatever body they are in.

Stop the fat-hating, ignorant, body-shaming rhetoric. Take care of your body, cherish it and love the skin you're in. Check out: feast-ed.org, haescommunity.org and benourished.org.

Rebecca Rose
Eugene

CLARK'S VOTING RECORD

I attended the first mayoral candidate forum, hosted by the Fairmount neighbors, Feb. 16. Audience members posed questions including asking how candidates would address homelessness.

Mayoral candidate Lucy Vinis, who worked for ShelterCare, gave a thoughtful, complete answer demonstrating her deep compassion and understanding of the causes of poverty and homelessness. She laid out some concrete solutions for how we might address this crisis.

She was followed by current City Councilor Mike Clark. His response struck me as lacking sincerity. He has been known to change his tune based on his audience. Of course many people are very concerned about the safety, economic and humanitarian issues associated with homelessness. Mr. Clark's lip service to addressing these concerns does our community a great disservice.

To give some examples: Clark voted against the Bascom Village project (November 2011), voted against exploring potential sites for Opportunity Village (November 2012) and voted against an ordinance allowing temporary camping on city property or at churches (September 2013). I encourage readers to thoroughly explore his record.

Eugene's next mayor must make homelessness a top priority. It's an issue that affects us all, to some extent. No one wants to see our homeless population grow. There's not a candidate in this race who can say they've done more work to tackle this challenge than Lucy Vinis. Her advocacy and experience addressing this pressing social and economic issue make her uniquely qualified to bring our community together and succeed.

Laurie Trieger
Eugene

UNRESPONSIVE COUNCIL

It's unfortunate that someone resorted to a

destructive act to protest the closing of Kesey Square. It's understandable, though, because city officials are notorious for ignoring the will of the people, and the feeling of powerlessness that comes from being ignored can sometimes turn to anger and cause people to vent in unproductive ways.

I gave up on speaking at the Eugene City Council's Monday night open mic when I realized that nothing that people said was being considered in the council's actions. It's not just ordinary people that our officials ignore, either. They also do not heed the advice of the various citizen commissions that they set up. For example, the Eugene Human Rights Commission has been trying for years to get the city to decriminalize homelessness, with little luck.

The proposed closing of Kesey Square seems to be too well orchestrated to not be a done deal. Shortly after Mayor Kitty Piercy brought up the traveler problem to give an excuse for closing the square, our officials brought up the proposed apartment building. Of course they gave people the opportunity to contribute their ideas, but too much money has already gone into the planning of the apartments to actually consider keeping the square.

At least the architects for the Kesey apartments will know to specify extra strong glass for the ground floor windows and doors.

Steve Hiatt
Eugene

DENYING ACCESS

In recent days the city has been destroying shelter and displacing unhoused folks by building a permanent fence on the north side of Washington-Jefferson

Park. The city of Eugene is dehumanizing and harming our community members by thwarting access to this temporary shelter. This action is part of an intent, a decision, by those in power, that unhoused folks do not deserve shelter, do not deserve to sleep, are not part of our community and are only worth moving out of sight.

Actions such as these define our community. It is not only the center of our city (Kesey Square) that needs our attention, dedication and defense, but every corner that provides relief and safety for the most vulnerable in our community.

I am glad to see my fellow humans staying dry, protecting one another from violence (interpersonal, vigilante and police) and creating community. I am proud to be in community with all folks who use common and public spaces, from dog-walkers to drug users, unhoused folks to city officials, ballers to martial artists, children to grandparents. You all bring me much joy, and you are welcome to be a part of my life any and every day.

Thomas Walker
Eugene

FARR'S BAD VOTES

With Order No. 14-05-13-05 on May 13, 2014, Pat Farr, Lane County commissioner for District 4, North Eugene, cast the only vote in favor of retaining contracts for large commercial events in the North Bottomlands (Emerald Meadows) of Buford Park (Mount Pisgah) and against giving the Large Events Task Force a year to complete its work unimpeded. He also voted against waiting until the Howard Buford Recreation Area Master Plan could be amended, with appropriate public input, to reflect any "new policies that may be

VIEWPOINT BY DON GENASCI

Imagination Needed

SOLUTION TO KESEY SQUARE IS MAKING IT BETTER

I am sorry to hear that the small square at Broadway and Willamette will possibly be replaced by a commercial building. Since this square is, I believe, the only hard-surfaced square in Eugene's downtown, it would seem a very unfortunate decision. Most cities value and preserve their public places.

An important value of an urban center is its social, political and economic availability to all its citizens. Cities need places where everyone can meet, discuss and learn from each other. It is hard to conceive a successful town where there is no central public place for citizens to gather.

The square in question is all that Eugene has been able to manage, and now it is threatened by decisions that do not take into consideration the needs of all Eugene citizens. If the square is not as good as it could be, then make it better. Don't destroy a valuable place in the downtown for everyone, in order to benefit a few people.

In order to work well as a square there must be support from adjacent businesses. Shops and restaurants should open directly onto the square to activate it. Active squares that provide residents reasons to use the square will stimulate a mix of people and much

more usage.

Some of the blank walls adjacent to the square should be opened up with windows and doors to encourage interaction with the square and increase usage. The city with its shop-front program could help defray the modest cost to building owners. This example in Eugene demonstrates the importance of good government — to solve problems with imagination and consideration for the welfare of the whole community's interests.

I understand some people think that the space is too small to be viable as a square. This is nonsense. Squares are often quite small, smaller than the square in question, and can still be attractive and viable. Eugene might well someday make a larger square for the downtown, but this does not make less valuable the existing central square. It is fortunate that this place was set aside by previous city governments to offer the opportunity to make Eugene a better place. Please do not squander this opportunity. Imagine how to make it better for all citizens of Eugene.

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