

Regardless of outcome, council members told city manager Jon Ruiz that the process needs to slow down.

During the public forum, some citizens pointed out the ongoing absence of supporters who favor privatizing the square speaking at City Council meetings.

"I keep waiting to see hordes of people showing up in defense of the development," Save Kesey Square activist Gwendolyn Iris told the council.

Out of 30-plus citizens who came to speak about Kesey Square Feb. 22, not one spoke in favor of development.

Jeff Geiger, also the co-founder of improv theater No Shame Eugene, says he found this absence troubling as well. On Feb. 16, Geiger invited blues musician Tommy Castro to sing at the square before performing at The Shedd. Castro sang a duet with Norma Fraser; both musicians spoke about saving the square.

"People unanimously spoke in favor of keeping the square public," Geiger tells *EW* of the council meeting.

Geiger continues: "It seems obvious that there is another side to this discussion, and they are dialoguing with the council," he says. "Is that format as accessible to the folks who want to keep the square public?"

Geiger and Iris wondered why people who want to develop the square don't feel the need to argue their case in front of the council.

"Those who want to keep the square public should have the same access to City Council as the people who want to develop the square," Geiger says. "The developers are in a position to court the opinion of the council and the city manager in a way that the public is not equipped to do."

Geiger urged the council to appoint someone to manage the space (currently no one in the city is tasked with this); many others have volunteered to help program the square.

"This community is so flush with artists, good thinkers and people who can make things happen," Geiger told *EW* after the meeting. "To think that your citizens aren't capable of that is insulting." Geiger says he wants all sides of the debate to have a transparent, constructive dialogue.

In other news, the Democratic Party of Lane County announced Feb. 19 that it voted in a resolution to keep Kesey Square public.

The council is scheduled to discuss the future of Kesey Square again March 14. — *Alex V. Cipolle*

## WHO FUNDED THE MALHEUR OCCUPATION?

The occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by anti-government activists was expensive on a number of levels, from law enforcement costs to loss of revenue stemming from the refuge. Also costly could be the Bundy's and other occupiers' legal fees and possible restitution, and there are questions about how the ranchers were able to afford to be away from their jobs and ranches for more than a month from Jan. 2 to Feb. 11, when the last four militants surrendered.

The armed militants could owe quite a bit of money. In early February, Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer introduced legislation in Congress that would require the federal government to swiftly reimburse local and state agencies for law enforcement. It would also allow the federal government to pursue civil legal action against the occupiers to get the money back. Blumenauer told Congress that the estimated cost of the occupation to local and state law enforcement was \$100,000 a week.

The Malheur Field Station told *EW* the occupation resulted in loss of income, cancellations, damage from break-ins and theft from two buildings and redirected staff time that cost the environmental education facility \$30,000 in the past six weeks.

>>> CONTINUED ON P. 10

## NPR EDUCATION REPORTER TO VISIT EUGENE IN MARCH

When NPR education correspondent Claudio Sanchez visits a town to give a lecture or public talk, he likes to take something back home with him — a story.

"I try to report on something local every time I'm invited to one of these things, because I think it's a great opportunity to get to understand the community better," he says.

On March 2, Sanchez will speak at the University of Oregon about his experience as an education reporter. His visit is sponsored by KLCC and supported by the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics.

Sanchez has covered education for NPR for 25 years and reports on a range of topics, from his yearly predictions of big education stories to watch — this year's list included charter schools and student debt — to snapshots of education on the local level.

Sanchez says he most recently wrapped up a story about Arizona, which has a model program for teaching gifted Spanish speakers. Kids learning English as a second language are often given little opportunity to show how intelligent they are, Sanchez says, but a small school district in Arizona has crafted a program to identify this subsection of gifted learners.

"I've always maintained that the best, most powerful stories are the simple stories," Sanchez says. "Often, education coverage is not simple. It's complicated to explain a school bond or how a school board works. At every corner you find all kinds of complexities. But I love hearing young people or teachers, people in the trenches who don't have a political ax to grind."

When asked why K-12 education hasn't been high on the list of topics addressed by presidential candidates this election cycle, Sanchez responds that education can lack the immediacy of other popular debate topics like ISIS and immigration.

"There's an extraordinary amount of education reporting going on highlighting some of the problems, but they're second-tier or third-tier stories in most newspapers," Sanchez says. "You'll see Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton on the front page instead."

At his public lecture, Sanchez says he'll address education and the election, as well as touch on his 2016 education predictions. During his visit, he'll also meet with students and local school superintendents.

This will be Sanchez's first trip to Oregon, and he says he hasn't decided yet which story to pursue while he's here. Although, he adds, "stories that don't get a lot of coverage are the ones that intrigue me the most."

Sanchez will speak at 7 pm Wednesday, March 2, at the Knight Law Center, Room 175, on campus. The event is free and open to the public. — *Amy Schneider*

**'I've always maintained that the best, most powerful stories are the simple stories.'**

— CLAUDIO SANCHEZ, NPR



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