

**STOLEN ATTRIBUTES**

I am an older woman now, not the little girl who played in the fountain on the Broadway Street pedestrian mall, but I still feel just as safe and happy when I go downtown. I am a member of two knitting clubs that meet in the evenings less than a block from Kesey Square, and as I walk to my destination, I see interesting people. I like to pet their dogs and ask them about their lives.

I have seen so many of the wonderful things that make Eugene the special place it is stolen from us in the name of progress, and I am just tired of it. Tear out the beautiful pedestrian mall so cars can drive and park. Get rid of the bars so business will come back. The Eugene Celebration — nope, bad for business.

And what did all that get us, the citizens of Eugene? Barmuda and a sleazy backroom sellout to put higher-end apartments on top of Kesey Square.

*Mechelle Coburn Roeske  
Eugene*

**WHY NOT DIVEST?**

The UO is caught in a conflict of interests between the students and faculty and the administration. The disagreement is on the issue of whether or not the university should divest, in other words, remove their investments in fossil fuel companies.

The Climate Justice League, an environmental activist group on campus, is currently engaged in a sit-in in an attempt to urge newly inducted President Michael Schill to publicly support divestment. Although the UO Foundation, a separate corporate entity, manages donor money, a statement from President Schill would show that the university as a whole is in support of this.

The Divest UO campaign has been polling students and faculty for more than a year, and the results are in. The majority of students and faculty support divestment, with over 1,100 student signatures and the UO Senate voting unanimously in favor

of a resolution suggesting full divestment within six months. This resolution was passed on Jan. 14, 2015, yet neither the UO Foundation nor President Schill have done anything.

With only half of a percent invested in fossil fuel companies totaling \$4 million, it is surprising that a school so renowned for its sustainability programs is unwilling to divest. The administration, who state in the university mission statement that they “value our shared change to steward resources sustainably and responsibly” and that they “enhance the social, cultural, physical and economic wellbeing of our students, Oregon, the nation and the world,” are contradicting themselves by fighting divestment so vehemently.

*Joel Benner  
Eugene*

**THE REAL NUMBERS**

I want to apologize to the readers for a typo in my urban renewal Viewpoint March 3. I drew attention to the fact that Eugene’s rent expenses more than doubled between 2011 and 2014, and stated that during City Manager Jon Ruiz’s first three years, rental expense increased more than \$60,000 — a paltry sum compared to the real hit for the taxpayers.

I intended to write “more than \$600,000.” It’s easy to lose track of all those zeros when our public officials are subsidizing developers.

I have since looked up the numbers, and it appears that even a \$600,000 annual increase is an understatement. In fact, between 2011 and 2014, Eugene’s annual rent expense increased from \$665,631 to \$1,431,442, an increase of more than \$775,000.

No wonder we are paying extra for library services.

*Paul Nicholson  
Eugene*

**CARBON-FREE BIRDING**

Globetrotting Noah Strycker [“The Sky’s the Limit” 3/3] might wonder about

the education he is sending out to young people who love birds.

Under the guise of nature appreciation he traipses, carbon-heavy, around the Earth, thoughtless of his own footprint. The facts are in: Species are in massive decline in no small part due to our own penchant to move about freely — however we can afford, with however much petroleum.

Strycker loves the sport, he loves the movement and he loves the math. I’m not sure he loves, respects, nor has compassion for the birds. Funds to education from heavy carbon taxes might in some way ameliorate his exploits.

Happily, there are different ways to bird. I appreciated John Cooney from KLCC’s *The Natural World* for often marveling about species and experiences right in front of us.

There is a trending movement to carbon-free birding. I’d love to see an *EW* article extolling that: a birding method that embraces/supports not just the math, the game, the sport, but the species — and the biosphere that supports them.

*Phil Henderson  
Eugene*

**LIMITS ARE NOT ENOUGH**

In the 1970s, some Oregon timber companies started spraying powerful herbicides from the air over their clearcuts. Rural downwinders led efforts to ban this abuse and stopped the sprays over federal forests in the 1980s, but were unsuccessful at ending this on corporate timberlands.

Now, Oregon’s environmental groups are split between the downwinders who want an end to the poisoning and urban groups who merely seek better regulation. In 2015, Beyond Toxics pushed a bill in Salem to ask the state to determine acceptable buffers even though helicopter sprays drift for miles and mass spraying of forests poisons wildlife. A better bill, not championed by the establishment environmentalists, would have banned aerial sprays. Neither bill became law.

Oregon Wild and Mountain Rose Herbs

staff are chief petitioners for a statewide ballot initiative to limit some sprays of poison over corporate clearcuts. This effort is marketed as a ban but would have loopholes large enough to fly helicopters through. Their initiative would still permit sprays over streams where salmon have been wiped out, where cities do not get their drinking water and where the state determines schools and homes are a “safe” distance away.

It is not too late to rewrite this initiative to prohibit all aerial spraying to protect wildlife and downwinder communities.

A Lane County initiative sponsored by Freedom from Aerial Herbicides would ban aerial sprays, not regulate them. See [FreedomFromAerialHerbicides.org](http://FreedomFromAerialHerbicides.org).

Downwinders do not consent to being sprayed. Allowing the state to designate supposedly acceptable buffers just perpetuates the abuse.

*Mark Robinowitz  
sustaineugene.org  
Eugene*

**SLIMY BILL**

Thanks and sincere appreciation to Lane County Reps. John Lively, Val Hoyle, Paul Holvey and Caddy McKeown for having the integrity and sense of civic responsibility to vote “no” on SB 1573 (see Slant March 3). This is in contrast to all the rest of the Lane County legislative delegation.

SB 1573, written by the Oregon Homebuilders Association and sponsored by Springfield Sen. Lee Beyer, revokes long-standing voting rights for nearly 600,000 Oregon citizens. It was the product of backroom deals and special interest influence since it first reared its slimy head in 2015.

Unfortunately, this bill, which *EW* accurately called “exceptionally flawed,” passed by narrow votes in both chambers of the Legislature.

*Jerry Ritter  
Springfield*

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