

• The **Jazz Station** at 124 W. Broadway has a jazzy new neon marquee that makes the all-ages music venue easier to find downtown. The sign was built by Neal Conner of Neon Latitudes with funding by a Lane County Cultural Coalition grant with matching funds from the nonprofit Willamette Jazz Society. Rich and Marilyn Linton, the current WJS president and his spouse, contributed financially to the project as well as providing oversight. The Jazz Station, a project of WJS, promotes touring musicians and bands, local talent and youth performers and provides rehearsal space. The venue also has a rotating art gallery. See [thejazzstation.org](http://thejazzstation.org) for upcoming shows and opportunities to volunteer.



• Eugene native **Mowgli Holmes** is featured in a March 14 *Newsweek* magazine story by former *R-G* reporter Winston Ross called "The Man Mapping the Marijuana Genome is Changing the Weed Game." Holmes, 43, is a geneticist with a Ph.D. from Columbia University and is currently the chief scientific officer of Phyllos Bioscience in Portland. The lab, housed by Oregon Health and Science University, does research on marijuana DNA (not the pot itself) and is working to map the cannabis genome. Find the story online by searching [newsweek.com](http://newsweek.com) for "marijuana genome."

• **Reality Kitchen** on River Road has partnered with the Association of Fundraising Professionals at UO on a project to raise money for a proposed \$6,000 expansion of the nonprofit's retail space. Reality Kitchen operates a bakery and café and provides job skills and other services to adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. A video can be found at [realitykitchen.causevox.com](http://realitykitchen.causevox.com). About \$1,800 has been raised so far. See Activist Alert this week for an event at Reality Kitchen March 25.

• **Fly-fishing businesses** and experts from around the region are gathering at the International Fly Fishing Film Festival beginning around 7 pm Thursday, March 31, at the Wildish Theater in Springfield. Tickets in advance are available at Caddis Fly Angling Shop and Home Waters Fly Fishing in Eugene. True West Custom Fly Rods and Plank Town Brewing are among the sponsors. Ten award-winning, professional fly-fishing films will be shown and an auction will be held starting about 6:15 pm to support Fly Fishing Collaborative, a nonprofit that builds tilapia farms in poor villages around the globe. About 200 people showed up for the festival last year, says Tony Overstake of True West.

## CORRECTIONS/ CLARIFICATIONS

In the March 17 letter from Jason Gonzales it should be clarified that Gonzales is *not* on the steering committee of the Freedom from Aerial Herbicides Alliance and the letter was co-signed by Oregon Wild and FFAHA.

# NEWS

BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

## LOCAL GLASS FACTORY NOT A TOXIC CONCERN

**A**fter moss samples showing heavy metal hot spots near Portland art glass companies drew attention to the possible dangers associated with colored glass manufacturing, anxious local citizens called the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency to see if they had anything to worry about.

In late January it was revealed that moss collected and analyzed in May of 2015 showed cadmium and chromium in areas around two Portland glass companies. Those companies later voluntarily stopped using cadmium, which can cause cancer and kidney problems, and hexavalent chromium, also carcinogenic.

LRAPA spokesperson Jo Niehaus says when the agency first started hearing about the problems in Portland, it began to look at local glass businesses. Aurora Glass is the only place that used any sort of metal additives, she says, but it does not pose the air quality threat the Portland companies did.

Aurora is a part of St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, a social service organization that focuses on waste-based businesses to fund its charitable works. Aurora Glass Foundry and Retail Showroom is located at 2345 W. Broadway.

"We don't have manufacturers in Lane County like they do in Portland," Niehaus says of the glass industry. A February memo from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shows 14 factories nationwide that may make art glass using heavy metals, as Portland's Bullseye Glass and Uroboros Glass did. None are in Lane County and all are exempt from a federal rule designed to limit hazardous air pollution emitted by glass factories.

Aurora Glass does not use cadmium and arsenic, says Paul Neville of St. Vincent de Paul. He says, "We do use a very small amount, about 10 pounds a year of chromium oxide. In the world of glass processing, that's a small amount."

Neville says the Portland factories use gas furnaces, blowing a lot of air through them, while the Aurora furnace is electric with "minimal venting, no blowing air."

Aurora uses recycled glass, Neville says, with the color already in it. "We are committed to protecting the environment," he adds. Aurora recycles old windows and other waste glass that previously didn't have an avenue for recycling, everything from drawer pulls to suncatchers.

Niehaus confirms that Aurora is on a much smaller scale and uses a different process and different metals from the factories causing problems with Portland's air quality. In addition to the chromium, she says Aurora uses about 5 pounds a year of cobalt and about 25 pounds of manganese every two years. This, she says, is very different from the several hundred pounds to tons of heavy metals the Portland factories were using each year.

Niehaus says that LRAPA also got calls from residents worried about nearby glassblowers. She says people living near glassblowing studios don't need to be concerned; glassblowers use pre-colored glass that's melted, and the process doesn't release into the air in the same way the manufacturers in Portland have been operating.

Glassblowing has been linked to respiratory hazards for workers, and Lisa Arkin of Beyond Toxics says she would like to see more investigation into what health effects workers at the Portland art glass manufacturers have faced.

Arkin says she is "really glad to hear" that Aurora is "using small amounts of heavy metals." But she wants more emissions testing as well as "fenceline testing" to see if emissions from glass companies go beyond the boundaries of the property. It's good Aurora is taking care, but, she says, the company doesn't report to the Eugene Toxics Right-to-Know database of companies that use hazardous substances, and the public has a right to know what's in the air.

Arkin says the federal Clean Air Act needs to be modified and reformed for all communities in the country to do a better job of protecting public health.

Neville says that Aurora doesn't report to the city of Eugene Toxics Program because it falls "well short on the threshold of having 10 or more employees."

"We also don't come even remotely close to meeting the criteria of having inputs totaling 2,640 pounds or more of hazardous substances in a calendar year," Neville adds.

Joann Eppli with the city of Eugene says the city is in the process of determining if Aurora Glass fits the requirements of paying the fee for the Eugene Toxics Right-to-Know program.

"It's nice to always know what is coming from facilities," Arkin says, "because these things are cumulative in air and water."

Neville says that Aurora, like other St. Vincent businesses, operates at maximum efficiency reusing and recycling materials and creating jobs in Lane County. Aurora is on "sound environmental footing," Neville says. ■



HAPPENING PEOPLE  
BY PAUL NEEVEL

### CHRIS VELOON

"Someone told me Oregon was beautiful," says Chris Veloon, who grew up in Grafton, Wisconsin, and studied occupational therapy (OT) at the University of Wisconsin, "and that Eugene was a lot like Madison." Since she arrived at age 27, Veloon has worked for PeaceHealth and McKenzie-Willamette hospitals, and, for the past 10 years, for Cascade Health Solutions, a nonprofit community health agency. "I'm an OT in home health," she says. "Two of us cover the county. We mostly see elderly people with health issues. We help them stay safely in their homes." She also pays a weekly visit to Alsco, a facility in Eugene that provides and launders uniforms and linens for area hospitals, restaurants and hotels. "I'm there to prevent and treat workplace injuries," she says. "The plant manager, Bill Inge, believes in an ounce of prevention." When Veloon saw cloth napkins with worn-out hems being thrown into a bag, she learned that they were sent to the landfill since it was cheaper to buy new ones than to re sew them. "I asked Bill if I could find new homes for them, as long as it wasn't a conflict of interests," she says, "and he said, 'Sure.'" She got in touch with Kelly Bell at Lane County Waste Management, who has helped her find many new homes for the napkins, including last year's Whiteaker Thanksgiving Dinner, a design class at LCC that made them into clothing and the Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts (MECCA). "I pick up a couple hundred a month on average," says Veloon. "It feels good to keep them out of the waste stream."