

**VOTE FOR LIVABILITY**

I've lived in Eugene almost five years and one of the things I love best about this place is the one- and two-story homey feel of this friendly small town. I intend to stay.

Unfortunately, powers-that-be are working to turn our downtown into Portland's Pearl District. Yuck! Every time I turn around, City Council has said OK to another eight to 10 or 12 story apartment building close to or inside downtown. Save Kesey Square. The South Willamette scheme is a whole other discussion.

In a *Register-Guard* story March 30 we find that the MUPTE's new "affordable rents" can be as high as \$970 for a studio and \$1,108 for a one bedroom. That's not affordable housing! What we need in this town is new, smaller, truly affordable, well-built rental housing for low-income folks. Maybe even some downtown. Horrors!

City Hall must not be allowed to continue supporting big-business interests and high-paid workers downtown at the expense of the rest of Eugene. The question really is, will only tech people be able to afford to live downtown? San Francisco's rents went sky high when dotcoms took over. Most of us who grew up there were forced out.

Voting for local and statewide races might be more important than voting for the president these days — OK, maybe not Bernie — but get educated about *all* the local candidates, make sure you are registered in the right party and vote for our community's health and livability. Ballots coming out soon!

*Robin Bloomgarden  
Eugene*

**LACK OF COMPASSION**

The Springfield City Council has passed an ordinance basically making it illegal to panhandle. Caring people who want to give a hand up to someone in need face a \$50 fine for handing anything of value, even a sandwich, to someone from an un-parked car.

This isn't just ludicrous; it's cruel. Compassion seems to be being outlawed all over the Springfield-Eugene area. The fences they are putting up under bridges are a slap in the face, and this new "safety" ordinance banning panhandling is salt in the wound. Whether people need a handout or a hand-up should not be outlawed; compassion should not be penalized and instead, it should be encouraged.

Many people will scour this society and find many problems, but I can tell you that compassion is the solution. The new ordinance discriminates against an already very marginalized community and will only damage the situation more than it's already damaged. This is discrimination under the guise of law and anyone with half of a heart and brain can see that. The way I see it, the Springfield City Council is saying, "Let them eat cake." What will be the community's response?

*Adam Levon Brown  
Eugene*

**FOUR TO ONE UNRESPONSIVE**

Two Lane County Commissioner seats are up for election on May 17, and the other three seats will be up for a vote two years from now.

I have to wonder who they consider their constituents to be. I've been attending Lane Parks Large Events Task Force and Parks Advisory Committee Meetings for almost two years and have sent the commissioners occasional reports on my observations.

A funny thing: South Eugene District Commissioner Pete Sorenson is the only commissioner ever to send me a reply, and he replies to all of them.

The four other commissioners don't even have the courtesy to acknowledge receipt of my emails. I live in north Eugene, not south Eugene. Am I not considered a north Eugene constituent?

Instead, the four Republican commissioners act as if they only listen to moneyed interests, spending \$84,000 of taxpayers' money to sue the U.S. Bureau of Land Management before its timber harvest report is out, refusing to enforce our state's new gun-sale background check law and objecting to the new minimum wage law as being an unfunded mandate — after giving hefty pay raises to county government managers.

Tony McCown, a Democrat who's running for election to the North Eugene District seat, is the only person in this voting round who might help break the four commissioners' cycle of non-responsiveness. Try emailing McCown, and Sorenson as well. See if they respond. But good luck hearing back from the other four commissioners.

*Ellen Otani  
Eugene*

**CONSTRUCTION CHAOS**

With the Park Blocks and Kesey Square building proposals moving closer and closer, I haven't heard any discussion about the impact of construction. Like any construction zone, these areas will have to be fenced off and closed to the public for unknown periods of time. Then consider that building atop existing buildings around Kesey Square will require demolition of the square itself. Remember, foundation improvements and earthquake prevention mean lots of digging right into the square with big heavy machinery.

Is it possible that both of these public spaces will be fenced off for an entire year or more? Then where will public gatherings and Saturday Market go? I hope you don't say into the hands of the county.

*Robert Howarth  
Eugene*

**GIVE WIG THE GIG**

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) at the UO proudly endorses Chris Wig for Eugene City Council in Ward 1 because we know we can count on him to fight for working families in Eugene.

Two years ago, Chris stood with the graduate employees during our fight to secure a fair contract with basic health coverage and paid family leave. He came out in support of our members during bargaining and led the local Democratic Party to support our strike by hosting our organizers in their office and standing

  
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