

information, go to oregoncape.org.

Rachel Rich
Eugene

A QUIET ZONE

The city of Eugene is seeking input from citizens regarding its plans to silence train horns in Eugene.

One of the primary issues in planning is how to change current street crossings to be compatible with federal rules for establishing the quiet zone. The current plan calls for a combination of medians, quad gates, one road closure and other modifications.

Citizens are asked to give feedback on the city's plan on their webpage at goo.gl/UCBVbB.

Please let the city of Eugene know you support the creation of a quiet zone sooner than later by signing the petition at eugenequietzone.com.

David A. Caruso
Eugene

EULOGY FOR A TREE

I savored the gentle spring air as it caressed me on my last night of life. The moon was a thin crescent which soon set, the rest of the night dark with stars. I trembled with excitement of a springtime unfolding, anticipating another bright summer tall and proud under the sun.

Too soon, a faint line began to appear on the horizon as birds sang their morning

songs to me one more time. The urban cityscape slowly hummed awake with its bustle, and dawn broke over the east. The bright rays of first light hit me as the woodchipper started its roaring motor. My arms shook as they were bitten down by sharp saws.

I stood here over Amazon Creek giving my gifts for 48 years, and in a few short hours I was gone.

Mike McFadden
Eugene

THE CHOICE IS SEMPLE

My neighbors in south Eugene have appreciated Ward 1 City Councilor George Brown's support in our work to protect Eugene homes from speculators' plans for bulk rezoning around south Willamette. Large Capstone-like structures here would also increase traffic on nearby streets, including Lincoln, Washington and Friendly.

I recently bumped into Councilor Brown at The Kiva grocery store. Brown told me that yes, he was retiring from the City Council. But he added that a candidate had stepped forward who he could heartily endorse for his Ward 1 seat: Democrat Emily Semple.

Semple has raised a family in Eugene. She is a gardener who studied chemistry at Duke and earned a degree in renewable natural resources at University of Connecticut. She later studied forest

ecology at Oregon State University. She is a widely appreciated Eugene community activist.

Most importantly, in working with her over the years, I've seen that Semple understands Eugene's problems and listens to neighbors in the Ward 1 area she will represent.

In contrast, opponents of Semple have acted in lockstep with policy promoted by the Chamber of Commerce and Big Timber. Their record should be looked at closely. One opponent, for example, has opposed the city budget for neighborhood associations and neighborhood newsletters and has worked to greenwash (that is, to give an appearance of environmental acceptability) the Seneca Sawmill incinerator now polluting Eugene's airshed.

For environmental protection, labor and economic justice, affordable housing and neighborhood livability, the choice is Semple.

Ralph McDonald
Eugene

SHAPES AND SIZES

Respectfully, Grant Roberts (Letters, "Calorie Counting," April 7), what "center" are you referring to? If the bottom line is your pocketbook, then please disregard this. If your center includes understanding what obesity actually is, where it comes from and how to potentially change that

system, then let us have that conversation. Let's talk about quality food availability in public schools, socioeconomic barriers and the huge price discrepancies between wholesome foods and processed foods.

Let's talk about food and nutritional education and reintegrating everyday physical activities into our children's lives as preventative measures. *Health* and prevention should be the priority, whether it is smoking or food related. Let's talk about our own biases, ignorance and judgments of people's body shapes and sizes.

'Cause the us vs. them mentality really doesn't get us anywhere.

Rebecca Rose
Eugene

SUNSHINE STREK

Stefan Strek brings a fresh spark of sunshine to Eugene's mayoral election. He's filled with positive energy, he's a soft-spoken soul and a real good listener.

Strek has worked for seven years at Carson Hall Dining at the University of Oregon. It's time we had a working-class person for mayor. Strek has a lot of empathy for others. He helped out a friend by paying his fine of \$50 for not having his dog licensed.

As mayor, Stefan Strek will provide gentle leadership, which our community can certainly benefit from.

Misha Seymour
Eugene

LIVING OUT! BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Chicken Slacks

LEGALLY MARRIED AND NOW LEGALLY RIPPED

Off a major thoroughfare, the freshly painted storefront sits at one end of a well-lit parking lot, next door to a busy Dari Mart. A graying couple exits their parked Corolla, license plate registration sticker current. They hold hands, gold wedding bands glinting, as they cross the tarmac and push open the lobby door. They're greeted by a friendly receptionist and ushered into the sales room.

Where are we? This scene could be happening anywhere in America: Just a normal, law-abiding couple on a normal evening in a normal town. Except this town is in Oregon where recreational pot can now be bought over the counter in 315 registered marijuana dispensaries. And who are we? These normal-looking people, legally married as affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, are two big ol' raging feminist dykes. And they are us.

"Good evening, ladies, how may I help you?" says a cleancut young fellow in a bright-blue polo shirt, utterly unfazed by our queerness. I'm too stunned by the surroundings to bother making this a teachable moment and pointing out just how UNLADY-like we are. I'm sure he sees all kinds in here. We'd have to be a lot weirder to be too weird for this place.

Wifey and I give each other the "can-you-believe-this?" look, and proceed to gaze slackjawed into the shiny display cases, shelves lined with apothecary jars filled with big fat cannabis buds.

How surreal can it get? Here I've been an outlaw since I toked my first joint back in high school, joined the counterculture and let my freak flag fly. I've also been queer as a three-dollar bill since I came out in college in the 1970s, swore off men and charted a course as far from the nuclear norm as I could get.

Like the rest of Queer Nation, I've been subject to discrimination. Now, suddenly, I'm in a legal marriage and my wife and I are legally buying weed in a nice store from nice customer-service professionals. It's hard to wrap our heads around. Very trippy.

Maybe it's the fumes. The clerk opens jars so we can sample the rich, resinous aromas of the various products — Abracadabra, Incrediberry, Sensitiva. He explains the effects of different strains, the body high of indicas and the cosmic high of sativas. Talk about kids in a candy shop!

We settle on Bubba Kush, an indica good for overall relaxing, and an indica-sativa blend called Animal Cookies, for paranoia-free giggles. The clerk uses steel chopsticks to remove the buds from the jars and pack them into airtight plastic vials. We're prepared for the "cash only" transaction, but for those who aren't, this store even has an ATM.

Back at home I dig out the old water pipe, untouched for god(dess) knows how many years. Wifey loads it with a plump pinch of Animal Cookies and we fill our lungs. The smoke is not at all harsh — another plus of these artisanal strains. We adjust the pillows and get comfy on the homo-sectional. Wifey turns the TV to the music channel, we agree on an oldies station, turn the lights down and snuggle up.

The indica part of the blend is definitely working. We are re-laaaaaaxed. We sink into the cushions and become one with the music of our teens. Every song evokes a story. We tell each other how empowered we'd felt by Lesley Gore's liberating "You Don't Own Me" and how we'd both been politicized by "Eve of Destruction." Nothing against May-December marriages, but there's definitely something to be said for being born the same year as your partner — like coming of age to the same music.

Sam Cooke's "Twistin' the Night Away" comes on and we sing along, "Dancing with the chicken slacks, she's a'movin' up and back."

Wait. Whuuuut? I'd partied and twisted to these lyrics a kazillion times but never understood them.

"What the heck *are* chicken slacks?" I wonder aloud. This is where the sativa part of the blend kicks in. We start guessing what chicken slacks could possibly be. I have a notepad handy and sketch a chicken in tight pants. Wifey describes feathered trousers, flapping to the beat. Good thing we peed before we smoked!

Wifey's laptop within reach, she Googles it. "Chicken slacks" turns out to be one of those commonly misheard lyrics. It's really "Dancing with the chick in slacks." Chick. In. Slacks. Jeeze.

Any other time I'd probably go on a rant that *women are not chicks!* But tonight — who cares? Wifey and I are having too much fun being a normal old married couple enjoying a normal evening at home.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow and her Wifey live a completely legal life in Eugene, Oregon.