

SLANT

• Calls to EW's front desk can be crazy and fun. The latest comes from a reader [maybe] wondering what kind of paper and ink goes into our finished product. He has been using EW to start his barbecue, and the food is tasting bad. Oops! We recommend trying *The Register-Guard* or *The Oregonian*.



• Perhaps, like us, you've been scratching your heads over the proliferation of a symbol spray-painted across town — a circle with a vertical line down the middle and a horizontal radius line. We've seen it downtown, all along West 11th and on the UO campus. The UO police department tells EW that they have seen the symbol, but have no further info. John Hankemeier, a public information coordinator for the Eugene Police Department, says the EPD is not familiar with it. Of course, we have our own working theories, from the wack to the plausible. Could it be "ED" for some ground-level erectile dysfunction awareness campaign, or perhaps an insanely well-coordinated Ellen Degeneres prank? Some folks on the Eugene Reddit page say it's hobo code, others say it's code for LSD and still others say it looks like the medieval "T-O" world maps, which may be referencing the apocalypse. Theories abound about gang activity, but maybe it's just the handiwork of some bored kid? Got any leads? Email alex@eugeneweekly.com.

• Three generations of activists offered an important history of the African-American experience in Eugene and Lane County June 3 to the City Club of Eugene. Panelists were: Willie Mims, octogenarian born in Eugene who is trustee of the Mims Historical Houses, the first black-owned property within the city of Eugene; Erik Richardson, president of local NAACP since 2013; Tarik Richardson, Gilman Scholar and former director of the UO Black Student Union, who will graduate this month; Shaniece Curry, first to graduate in her family of eight, having earned a BS in Ethnic Studies and planning, Public Policy and Management. When asked about the next generation of African-American activists, Mims said, "I have a lot of hope ... simply because we can only go up. We have to work on each and every issue at the time. It takes all of us to lift the boat."

• A cautionary tale comes out of Baylor University in Texas for every American university playing today on the big-time athletic stage. The president, the head football coach and athletic director have all lost their jobs because of a scandal charging the mishandling of sexual assaults against several football players. According to *The New York Times*, the Baylor Board of Regents condemned university leadership that, it said, "created a cultural perception that football was above the rules." One story reported that the president even ran onto the field with the football team. Meanwhile, the judge and the father of the Stanford rapist also have us appalled. Six months because he's a swimmer? "20 minutes of action"? That's the response to a woman who was raped and violated? Despicable. The victim's statement should be required reading. You can find it on BuzzFeed at goo.gl/0Ycb8j.

• As we first reported back in March 2105, there is talk of relocating First Avenue Animal Shelter, which houses animals from Lane County, Eugene and Springfield, out to Greenhill's rural property west of Eugene city limits. Without question, both First Avenue and Greenhill need new kennels. The old concrete runs at both shelters are loud and scary. But for many who have lost a pet or are looking to adopt, heading out to Green Hill Road is a prohibitive trek. We'd like to see discussion of a downtown adoption storefront. Let's make it easy to find our area pets forever homes.

NEWS

BY AMY SCHNEIDER



PHOTO: AMY SCHNEIDER

NATURAL FOODS STORE PLANNED FOR RIVER ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD

John Belcher has a simple dream: to walk down his street to a neighborhood natural foods market and buy cheese.

Belcher, co-chair of the River Road Community organization, is working with members of the River Road neighborhood and building owner Lutfi Thabet to bring a much-needed grocery store to an area of Eugene with few options in terms of healthy, fresh produce.

"This is a neighborhood that has a strong interest in being able to walk and bike to stores," Belcher says. "That's not really available to us now. Within the de facto definition of the neighborhood, other than Grocery Outlet, we only have convenience stores, and they have a purpose, but that's not where you do your once-a-week grocery shopping."

The closest grocery stores include Fred Meyer and Albertsons about a mile and a half away, although they're technically in Santa Clara, not the River Road neighborhood. Red Barn Natural Grocery is about 2 miles away, and The Kiva is 3 miles away.

The nearby Trainsong neighborhood is federally considered a food desert, Belcher says, with even fewer grocery options.

Belcher says he hopes that an empty building at 1015 River Road will fill the community gap. He points to a 2008 survey conducted by the University of Oregon's Community Planning Workshop, which found that members of the River Road community said they would bike and walk more often if more products, services and activities were available close by.

Lutfi Thabet, president of Thabet Management, Inc. and owner of local convenience store franchise Buy 2, bought the building, formerly a Goodwill and a McKay's Market before that, in hopes of col-

laborating with a River Road business owner to open a restaurant and café. That idea didn't pan out, but Thabet still plans to pursue a natural foods store in the spot.

Currently, Thabet and Belcher are looking for local natural foods stores that wish to expand to a new location. They haven't found anyone yet, but say they will continue to seek partnerships over the next few months.

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— JOHN BELCHER

Alternatively, Thabet says, he might renovate the 10,000-square-foot building himself and open his own natural foods store — he's already met with a contractor and an architect, and a preliminary layout shows how the former Goodwill building could be converted, with a growler station, bakery, produce section and delicatessen, offset by a dining area.

"We want to see if we can do a kind of miniature Market of Choice," Thabet says.

In the 2008 survey, many River Road community members expressed their desire for more access to healthy, local food as well as safer crossings and bikeways along River Road.

"Local grocery stores with good healthy products and fresh produce are much needed," one survey respondent wrote.

"Even though Fred Meyer and Santa Clara Square are not that far away, it is definitely not a bike-friendly ride to get there," wrote another respondent.

If unable to find a partner, Thabet says he plans to start renovation this winter.

"We are still open to all options," Thabet says. "We want to be very good citizens of that community, and we want to do what's right. Hopefully we can do something that will make the neighborhood happy." ■