

JOHN O'MALLEY WITH
STAFF AND FRIENDS OF
THE WAYWARD LAMB



EUGENE GRAPPLES WITH ORLANDO MASSACRE

PHOTO: ALEX V. CIPOLLE

Orlando has a welcoming LGBTQIA community, but so does Eugene.

Local John O'Malley made this point while addressing a small crowd and TV crews Sunday, June 12, outside The Wayward Lamb — a dedicated queer space and bar in downtown Eugene.

"It affects all of us," said O'Malley, the Lamb's marketing manager who also helped found the bar. "It happened in Orlando; it could happen anywhere."

In the early morning hours of June 12, Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old American man, shot and killed 49 people, before being killed himself, at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida; dozens more were injured.

It is the largest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. As the mass shootings in this country pile up to absurd levels, the degree of separation between those who are directly affected by the violence, and those who aren't, is slowly closing.

Outside Eugene's only dedicated queer space, O'Malley recalled how he had attended college in Orlando and had been a patron of Pulse, even hosting his graduation celebration there. He pointed out that it is no accident that the shooting occurred in June — national PRIDE month.

"Our freedoms began in dedicated queer spaces," O'Malley said, explaining that the LGBTQIA community is no stranger to violent attacks, recalling the Stonewall Riot in New York City, The Upstairs Lounge fire in New Orleans and many more.

"To the owners and staff of Pulse Orlando, and especially the LGBTQIA community of Orange County, Florida, and the impact this will have on all of them moving forward," O'Malley continued, "stay strong and stay proud. The Wayward Lamb family and the LGBTQIA community of Lane County stand in solidarity."

The Wayward Lamb will be hosting "We Are Orlando: A Fundraiser for our Family" all day and night Thursday, June 16. From 11 am to 5 pm, there will be a family arts and craft session; art and cards made at the event will be sent to survivors in Orlando.

That night, O'Malley says that 100 percent of the profits from donated beer kegs will go to Zebra Coalition, a network of organizations that serve LGBTQIA youth in Orlando. From 10 pm to 2 am, local DJs will spin for a dance off, with local businesses donating funds for every dancer on the floor. "We're doing a dance for our fallen families," O'Malley says.

Meanwhile, local artist and activist Gwendolyn Iris organized a candlelight vigil the evening of June 12 at Kesey Square.

"It was actually really lovely," Iris says, estimating about 300 people showed up to the city square downtown. She says there was a wide array of speakers, from University of Oregon student Akilah Powell, who identifies as a queer, black non-binary person, to Rabbi Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein of Temple Beth Israel and Sally Sheklow, a member of the queer community who also writes the "Living Out" column for *EW*.

Rabbi Rubenstein says she told the people gathered that night,

"God is weeping with us, and devastated whenever violence happens in the name of God, by any name."

In a later email to *EW*, Rubenstein stated: "It's most important to be standing with and raising up the voices of those marginalized and victimized by this kind of violence, particularly LGBTQ immigrants and people of color, and to raise up the voices of the vast majority of Muslims who are working and speaking out against hatred and terror. We all have a responsibility to stand in solidarity."

"My sense is that the queer community is definitely in a heightened vulnerability state of mind," Sheklow tells *EW* after the vigil. While Sheklow says attitudes have shifted, she adds: "There's so much anti-gay sentiment that's still rampant in the world, in the country, in our town."

She explains how she and others are struggling with the fact that witnessing two men kissing, as the shooter allegedly did, could incite anyone to violence.

"I'd like to see more men kissing each other on the mouth," Sheklow says, adding that seeing men embrace needs to be normalized. "Why don't we feel safe everywhere? Why can't we be ourselves everywhere?"

Sheklow says that the vigil raised her own awareness "beyond her bubble," listening to young people of color who identify as queer. Iris agrees.

"The fact that the tragedy happened not just at a queer club but on Latin night — that was brought up," Iris recalls of the discussion at Kesey Square. "The queer community of color — they do face another level of discrimination."

In response to a request for comment on the tragedy, a local Latinx (a gender-inclusive word for people of Latin descent) man wrote this to *Eugene Weekly* in regard to the shooting:

"My name is JoseLuis Zamora and I am 20-year-old college student and a homosexual Latinx man. I have been in Eugene over three years now and consider this place my home," he writes.

"I can't put any amount of words to describe how deeply heartbroken I feel to have to hear about a tragic hate crime that cost the lives of so many queer Latinx like myself and injured many more. Since coming out as queer and being accepted by my friends and family, I have felt a sense of happiness in my life. I feel saddened to know that we continue to live in a world where our lives don't matter. I am more proud as ever to be queer and am willing and able to help my community [in] any way possible. We are a strong community that is no longer hiding from the world. We are humxns and please respect our life choices."

Zamora adds: "I want to tell my community that in order to be stronger we must unite to uplift marginalized people to be heard and respected. No more hatred, no more discrimination in our policies. This country needs to change so we can get to a place where love truly wins." ■

To see the full video of John O'Malley's June 12 statement visit *EW* online at ow.ly/dfz-V301gINH.

ACTIVIST ! LERT

- Between 4 and 6 pm on June 19, the **Peace and Dignity Indigenous Runners** will be stopping in Eugene at the Lane Community College Longhouse. "Peace and Dignity Journeys are spiritual runs that embody the prophecy of the Eagle and Condor," according to information from local organizers. "This prophecy mandates that at this time all Indigenous Peoples in the Western Hemisphere shall be reunited in a spiritual way in order to heal our nations so we can begin to work towards a better future for our children and generations to come." The journeys are every four years and Indigenous runners start on opposite ends of the continents, running for six months carrying prayers and communications from community to community. "When the runners meet at the Kuna Nation in Panama City, Panama, it will symbolize all Indigenous Peoples joining together in a spiritual way to manifest the prophecy of the Eagle and Condor."

There will be a Native American welcome and ceremony upon arrival and a potluck dinner to follow. The local community will be hosting these runners on their journey to Panama. And on June 10 the runners will start again, heading to Reedsport and Gold Beach on the coast, and then down to Smith River, California. Donations such as running shoes, running socks, power bars, granola, seeds, nuts and dry fruit are appreciated. Organizers request that any monetary transactions take place outside of the Longhouse. For more info call 541-344-1846. The Longhouse is at the LCC main campus, 4000 East 30th Avenue.

- The city of Eugene seeks public input on its first local comprehensive **transportation plan**. The 2035 Transportation System Plan (2035 TSP) "sets expectations for how the roads, sidewalks, bike paths, rail lines and airport should change with the growing community over the next 20 years," according to a press release. The TSP addresses pressures such as growth and climate change as well as "people's desire for more travel options, convenience and safety."

The final draft of the plan is available at eugenetsp.org. A public hearing is 6 pm Tuesday, June 21, at Harris Hall at 125 E. 8th Avenue, and people can submit comments or suggest changes. Comments can also be submitted to Kurt Yeiter, transportation senior planner, at kurt.m.yeiter@ci.eugene.or.us.

- Common Cause Oregon and more than 35 democracy and environmental organizations have come together to showcase **"how the oil industry tries to influence the state government"** in a series of Dirty Energy & Dirty Money forums. The Eugene forum is 6 pm Tuesday, June 21, at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Speakers include Lane County Commissioner Pete Sorenson, Angela Crowley-Koch from the Oregon Environmental Council, Daniel Lewkow from Common Cause Oregon, Lisa Arkin from Beyond Toxics and Linda Lynch from the League of Women Voters of Lane County. Forums address dark money and how much money the oil industry and its allies give to the Legislature, money spent on lobbying and how "shadowy-organizations used scare tactics and attack ads to try and dissuade legislators" from passing the a recent bill addressing climate change. The Eugene forum is free and open to the public.