

ly knows about it yet, as I am new here and all this attention has been throughout the country and into Canada — just starting to see it venturing into the U.K. this week.

I think it would be a wonderful thing for *Eugene Weekly* to report on and a much-needed vote of confidence to the city that all its efforts to combat homelessness and addiction in the community are not in vain.

P.S. My writing has got so popular that my original blog in its third month is over the 12,000-view mark, and if it keeps the pace set so far this month, it could hit 20,000 views for September. Here is the link to that podcast: goo.gl/UatxFF.

Marc McMahon
Eugene

POWERFUL SYMBOL

On the day the young Our Children's Trust plaintiffs appeared in their court case against the U.S. government and Big Oil, *The Register-Guard* noted that the University of Oregon Foundation had decided to divest of fossil fuels. A *Register-Guard* editorial later called that action largely symbolic. How disappointing.

Yet I remembered how symbols point to something larger, and how an action can become a symbol that inspires further action. Young men burning their draft cards during the '60s became symbolic of the anger many felt about our involvement in Vietnam. Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat to an able-bodied white man became a symbol of racial inequity in our country.

And today, a pro football player kneeling during the national anthem points to the way people of color are treated in our justice system.

Not everyone is comfortable being reminded of the situations that spark these actions. But change is often the result — because they become symbols inspiring others. We ended our involvement in Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. Colin Kaepernick exposes a flawed justice system.

Divesting won't bankrupt the University of Oregon — and it might spark other institutions to do the same. So, thank you, UO Foundation, and thank you, *Register-Guard*.

And thank you especially to the 21 young people standing on the courthouse steps — a powerful symbol of little guys taking on the corporatocracy. May you inspire further action for the public good.

Donna Haines
Eugene

YES ON MEASURE 100

Oregonians love animals and we have a long, proud history of passing laws to protect them. That's why among all 50 states, Oregon is ranked second in strength of its animal welfare laws.

Now we have a chance to continue that tradition by passing Measure 100 to ban the commercial trade in the parts and products of our most cherished and iconic wildlife species.

Federal rules and laws can only go so far in closing down illegal wildlife trafficking. Measure 100 closes an important

loophole in existing law by imposing serious penalties on anyone caught trying to traffic in endangered animal parts within our state, thereby augmenting and bolstering federal enforcement efforts.

With California and Washington having already passed similar laws, passing Measure 100 will mean the entire West Coast will become far less hospitable to the poachers, smugglers and profiteers in search of local markets and driving our world's animals to extinction.

The measure also includes common-sense exemptions for bona fide antiques, musical instruments and use of these products by native tribes.

Oregonians rank the global poaching crisis among their top animal welfare concerns, yet often feel powerless to stop it. Now, with Measure 100, we have a chance to do our part and take a leadership role in protecting elephants, rhinos, big cats, whales and other imperiled animals. Please vote yes on Measure 100.

Scott Beckstead
Oregon Senior State Director
Human Society of the United States
Sutherland

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders spoke consistently about fairness, need and corporate greed. Oregon voters will have a chance in November to make a statement about those matters with Ballot Measure 97. Voting yes will result in schools, low-income health needs and senior citizen services getting around \$2 bil-

lion more a year. It will raise school budgets by an estimated 25 percent.

As early childhood professionals, we support Measure 97. We have mourned the burdens of unacceptable public school class sizes and cuts in vital school programs. Our teachers are doing an amazing job despite many handicaps. Our state has failed its constitutional obligation to ensure a great public education. Both political parties have failed to find long-term financial solutions to correct our lack of strong educational funding.

Some corporations have failed to pay their fair share of taxes, compounding the problem. They as well as their supporters threaten us by saying that, if voted in, they will pass the Measure 97 corporate tax on to customers. As citizens, we can choose where we spend our money by not supporting irresponsible corporate behavior.

Supporting our state public school system is both patriotic and a family value. As President Barack Obama stated in a 2013 speech, "If you think education is expensive, wait until you see how much ignorance costs in the 21st century."

Christopher and Deb Michaels
Eugene

SEMPLER FOR WARD 1

Regarding the Ward 1 City Councilor election, Eugene, 2016:

Folks, we've got two very good people running in the Nov. 8 election for the City Council position. I know and like both Emily Semple and Josh Skov. Emily was encouraged to run, and has been well-sup-

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Unfurling Freak Flags

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY IS OCT. 11

National Coming Out Day is a great time to come out, whether for the first or umpteenth time. It's a day to remember the importance of being open about your true lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, polyamorous, pansexual, asexual, two-spirit, nonbinary, genderfluid, agender or otherwise beyond-the-old-norm self.

It's also a good time to come out as an ally to those of us who are LGBTQ+. Oct. 11 is set aside as a day to make, or renew, our commitment to come out of the closet and be open about who we are, to let people know that we adore our queer friends and relatives, and to expose and confront homophobia, biphobia and transphobia wherever they lurk. Like in, say, the Republican Party platform. Ahem.

As someone who has been *way out for evah*, you'd think I would have no more coming out to do. Since the 1970s I've made sort of a career of being here, queer and helping folks get used to it. As an activist, writer, college instructor and general dyke-about-town, I've dedicated myself to promoting LGBTQ+ visibility and our movement for freedom, justice and fabulousness. So, it's humbling to confess that, even for me, the closet door sometimes slams shut. Yes, though hard to admit, sometimes even I don't let my rainbow freak-flag fly.

Take yesterday, for example. I had taken my car in for a recalled air bag replacement and was shuttled home in a dealership van to wait out the four-hour repair. The driver was super friendly, obviously well-trained in customer service and easy to talk to as he drove me home. We chatted about the changing weather, which led to gardening and whether the tomatoes would ripen, and what to do with a bumper crop of zucchini. Tame, neutral stuff. I shared my recipe for zucchini pancakes, which he said sounded delicious and he'd have to make some for his wife. It was a perfect opening for me to mention *my* wife. He'd mentioned his, right?

But I made the snap judgment that so many queer people have learned to make in every interaction where it's suddenly up to us to come out or not. In an instant, we have to gauge the safety of the situation, assess our support or escape options if the response isn't good and decide whether we are prepared to defend ourselves.

I think a lot of us who've survived years of various anti-gay onslaughts experience this kind of residual homophobia-phobia. It's like a long-lingering PTSD that creeps up on us even when we think we're "over it."

I had to quickly determine if I'd be more uncomfortable being out or remaining in, or whether the driver could or couldn't already tell that I'm not straight. Would I have

what it takes in that moment to be nonchalant, to set the tone that would make him able to at least act like he was taking my revelation in stride? Was I ready to go there? All this was computing in that split second when I opted to hold back, to keep my usually very public life private, and *not* say "my wife."

Frankly, I surprised myself. What was I afraid of? There was little risk of anything bad happening in that Toyota courtesy shuttle van. I was the always-right customer, after all. And I *know* that making queerness normal takes going through these awkward moments again and again until they're not awkward any more. Those of us privileged to not be risking our lives or homes or jobs have a responsibility to stick our necks out when we can. I *know* that. And yet this time I chickened out. My reaction definitely gave me something to think about.

Luckily we have this annual day to reflect upon what kind of people we want to be, to rededicate ourselves to staying out of the closet, to be open about what we know is true and right and good. Next time — you heard it here — I'll definitely speak up. Shuttle drivers of the world, brace yourselves.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has been coming out in *Eugene Weekly* since 1999.