

DEAD MURAL

A big wag of my finger to the stodgy business owners of South Eugene who killed Rachel Mandala's gorgeous mural outside of Amazon Organics on Friday, Oct. 7.

To EW readers who didn't have the pleasure, this (now lost) piece depicted a powerful woman with flowing blue hair against a backdrop of orange flowers and an eclipsed moon. During the work's six weeks of life in my neighborhood, people continually stopped to marvel at its originality and to take pictures.

The one (lightly) questionable attribute: The woman with blue hair had a sparkling cloud flowing from her lips and a monarch butterfly in her fingers which, by the way, is not out of place adorning the façade of a legal pot dispensary. Instead of working to make the mural more palatable to prudish sensibilities — say, painting over the cloud of smoke — these unnamed business owners moved to demolish one of the best murals in the city.

Even the two kind men commissioned to cover the art with dead gray paint lamented this blow to creativity, taking no pleasure in their work.

A tip of my hat to those in Jiffy Market and Amazon Organics who wanted to make South Eugene a more beautiful place. I'm sorry some sterile puritans voted to bulldoze your most noble of dreams.

And my deepest condolences to Rachel Mandala, whose ineffably stunning work of art moved me and others.

Jocelyn Blore
Eugene

SEXIST DRESS CODE

The majority of Oregon schools enforce a strict dress code policy. While some prohibited items are reasonable (no offensive language, political or religious mockery, etc.), others are overtly sexist.

At most middle and high schools, girls are forbidden from wearing short skirts, low-cut tops and even spaghetti straps because they are "too distracting" to male students. This teaches young girls that their education is not as valuable as their male peers.

Additionally, it teaches boys that it's acceptable to disrespect girls and misbehave if they can see her skin. Instead of teaching boys that they are responsible for their own actions, it teaches them that girls

are responsible for them. We should not be instructing girls that they need to tailor how they act and dress to be respected.

I hope the educators and activists of Oregon can work to eliminate this incubator of rape culture and misogyny in the near future.

Jane Brinkley
Eugene

PROGRESSIVE CAUSE

Emily Semple's opponent has frequently claimed that he is the true "progressive" in the Ward 1 City Council race. I find this to be a very odd assertion. It is true that Semple has a strong record of criticizing specific city projects, but being a rubber stamp on every city project is hardly progressive. In fact, the results can be un-progressive.

Semple has criticized the renewal of MUPTE and the Downtown Urban Renewal District, and the ongoing and expensive City Hall fiasco. MUPTE and other tax-abatement programs, she argues, are basically subsidies to private interests and often do not provide tangible public benefits.

The City Hall fiasco, Semple has ar-

gued, raises issues about Eugene city government that are indicative of more than just "communication problems" between the city manager and City Council.

Most Eugeneans agree with her, and the unprogressive results come when the city is forced to go to the voters to make up for lost and misspent revenue to maintain basic services. Voters, upset at what they see as mismanagement, often vote against them.

The narrow passage of the Eugene Public Library levy last year is an example of this. I was glad when the levy passed, but I understood why people voted no. And the reasons had nothing to do with the Eugene Public Library.

Spending money wisely and accountably is a progressive cause. And it is necessary in order to maintain trust in our public institutions. Without this trust, progress is impossible.

Electing Emily Semple to council will be a progressive step for Eugene.

Art Bollmann
Eugene

ART FOR ALL

Oregon's graduation rate is one of the lowest in the country. Public schools are

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Bloomin' Lawnsigns in 2016?

RECORDS MATTER!

Two things happen in Oregon in even-numbered years. We hold a general election, and invasive alien biennial weed species (*Lawnsignicus obnoxious*) appear in the Willamette Valley. These weeds first blossomed near Creswell on a local site known as Idiot Hill, for some reason. Suddenly there they were, crowded into their limited ecological niche, a dairy farm. They apparently thrive in cow poop. Four signs of the time: Trump/Pierce/Robinson/Richardson all held up by the same wooden stakes. Birds of a feather flock together.

Trump's campaign speaks for itself (voluminously). Ditto Republicans Bud Pierce and Art Robinson, running respectively for governor and the 4th congressional district. But why do we care about the Oregon secretary of state race? Why care about Republican Dennis Richardson's run against Democrat Brad Avakian?

The first question was answered dramatically on Valentine's Day, 2015, when Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned early in his 4th term and was replaced by then-secretary of state Kate Brown, in accordance with the succession plan in the Oregon Constitution. We have no lieutenant governor. The answer to the second question is apparent when you look at the public records of Avakian and Richardson.

Both men were first elected to the Oregon House in 2002, so 2003 was their first legislative session and my last. As a legislator and later as labor commissioner, Brad developed a reputation as a leader on labor issues and women's rights. He fought for pay equity, an increased minimum wage and paid sick leave for Oregon workers. This included a record settlement against Daimler Trucks due to racial discrimination and harassment of workers.

Avakian is the only secretary of state candidate endorsed by NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon PAC and Planned Parenthood PAC of Oregon. There's a reason for that: Dennis Richardson led the pro-life charge as a legislator.

Dennis Richardson was an extreme Tea Party guy before there was a Tea Party movement. He first showed up on the Medford political scene taking out a moderate Republican incumbent, Cheryl Walker, in the primary because she had the audacity to co-sponsor a bill requiring insurance companies to provide contraceptive coverage in their health insurance plans. Although he didn't mention it when he ran against Kitzhaber in 2014, pro-life politics was the biggest reason Richardson won his first race.

Richardson also voted against providing funding for programs for victims of domestic abuse, stalking or sexual assault, and against funding for legal representation for domestic violence victims. He once suggested sending undocumented immigrants to private prisons in China and compared gays and lesbians to drug addicts and alcoholics. Dennis was also caught using official government agency lists to gather email addresses of hundreds of thousands of Oregonians to spam them with offensive right-wing propaganda and even ask them for political donations.

One of my favorite moments in my last senate session in 2003 involved Dennis. That 2003 session was the longest in Oregon history. The Senate was tied with 15 Republicans and 15 Democrats, and the House was narrowly controlled by Republicans and by Speaker Karen Minnis. Her husband, Sen. John Minnis, and I were co-chairs of the Senate PERS committee.

With no compromise between chambers, a joint committee of four members was chosen to reach a deal. Co-Senate leaders, Republican Lenn Hannon and Democrat Peter Courtney chose John Minnis and me. Speaker Minnis chose Republicans Tim Knopp and Dennis Richardson. After final negotiations with Gov. Kulongoski's office, we reached a compromise. With a quick 3-1 vote, Knopp voted with John Minnis and me to move the bill to the floor for a vote. In his freshman arrogance, Richardson continued to argue for a 401K plan for state workers. We started calling him "TIAA Cref."

With the possible exception of Sen. Gary George, Dennis Richardson was the most supercilious man I ever served with in Salem. To imagine him one heartbeat away from the governorship by virtue of constitutional succession is a scary thought.

My choice for secretary of state in the primary was Val Hoyle. She lost to Brad Avakian.

But Val served with Richardson in the House and with Avakian as labor commissioner: She is an unequivocal Avakian supporter. Records don't lie.

This is the most important statewide race for progressive Oregonians because of the contrast. This race could have huge consequences for Oregon's women and workers. Stay tuned.

Former state Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a retired state employee.