



PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

BEST CONCERT VENUE WE'VE NEVER BEEN TO

We've never been to a concert at the Ant House.
But we hear it's good.
We hear it's got all the blood and guts of a real basement punk venue, which is great because Eugene badly needs a place like that.
We hear it's tiny.
We hear it's dark.
We hear it's shitty — that's what makes it so good.
We hear they do metal shows, too.
And maybe even rap.
We hear Ant House shows are louder than anything.
We imagine it smells like stale piss and B.O. in there.
The neighbors probably hate the Ant House.
We imagine the cops want to shut it down.
We bet it's, like, fire-hazard crowded sometimes.
Most people we know have never heard of it.
Maybe the Ant House wants to keep it that way.
We hear it's near the Taco Bell on 7th.
Taco Bell is the best place to eat when you're drunk at 3 in the morning after a good punk show.
Otherwise stay the hell away from Taco Bell.

BEST PUBLIC ART

What's not to love about the hulking concrete ellipse with whimsical Swiss cheese-inspired peep holes that graces College Hill's Washington Park? And who even calls it "Washington Park"? It's The Cheese Park — or just Cheese Park — and there's no finer place to eat a snack, play with bark mulch or hide from your parents than the ubiquitous cheese. Generations have grown up in its loopy confines, which provide respite from summer sun, and shelter from winter rain. Also, this park has an extraordinary number of bees, and yet they can't seem to get you inside this staggering work of artistic genius. The cheese stands alone.

BEST DOWNTOWN STALWART

Glamour Girls and Guys Hair has been doing business at its downtown Broadway location for 27 years. While downtown is relatively pleasant now, for a long time, with the inception of the closed-street mall, it was a shitty, violent, racist place to be — according to some longtime residents of downtown — but Glamour Girls and Guys Hair stuck it out. "We don't run," says owner Betty Snowden, of *The Betty Snowden Show* — and fabulous hat — fame.

That in itself is enough to earn this title, but the beauty shop is so much more. The business originally opened decades ago for a very simple reason: There was nowhere in Eugene to buy beauty and hair care products that catered to African-Americans.

"We had to drive all the way to Portland to buy hair-care products," Snowden recalls. Then, Snowden noticed a pattern in the '90s — people with cancer kept coming to the store asking for wigs. So, Glamour Girls started selling them. They now have an incredible collection of 600-plus wigs for sale, anything from flowing turquoise mermaid locks to frothy pink afros to regular old bobs in blonde, brunette and gray.

Cassandra Snowden, Betty Snowden's daughter, showcases perhaps the best customer service in a town where hipster or pothead indifference seems to be the norm. If you want to try on a wig, you purchase a \$3 hair net, and then Cassandra will sit you down in a salon chair and gingerly show you how to situate all the styles you want on your noggin.

There's no rush and no pressure to buy. The business has a regular clientele including men as well as women; some families have come in for generations, especially for Betty's hair design.

While hanging out in the shop, a regular comes in. She tries on a voluminous blonde wig that flows down her back and says she comes back for the customer service and the prices. She tells the story of how she came to be a return customer: Years ago, a head injury from a car accident stopped some of her hair from growing back. She came to the shop and they treated her so well, she remembers, gently helping her try on wigs. Since the accident, "It was the first time I felt normal," she says. "To get that back..." she trails off, tearing up.

"Women really do feel transformed," Cassandra Snowden says. And that's the goal.

"We want people to leave inspired," Betty Snowden says.