

# SLANT



• We are in shock at the dawning of a Trump presidency and all that we stand to lose: Roe v. Wade, civil rights, immigration reform, media freedom, minority representation, climate change, the list goes on. The path to resistance becomes clear. Don't circle the wagons; don't snipe at the Bernie voters. It's time to listen to the anger of those who elected Trump as well as to the thoughts and fears of those who are most hurt by the policies Trump has said he will put into place. We won't give in to hate and despair. We will reassess and move forward to create the nation we want to be.

• Did you join Pantsuit Nation? We did and watched the "secret" Facebook group grow to a membership of more than two million in less than two weeks. It's a place where Hillary Clinton supporters could wax enthusiastic about Clinton without criticism. Posts come from ardent progressives to Republicans who don't dare tell their friends they voted for Clinton. It's a rare place for political love, and we hope it continues and inspires. #PantsuitNation.

• Was a valuable teachable moment eclipsed by political correctness at the University of Oregon? A UO law faculty member blackened her face — something she absolutely should not have done — in an attempt to make a point about race. Nancy Schurtz, a highly respected UO law prof for more than 30 years, invited faculty and students to her home for a Halloween party. Her costume was a white coat and blackface depicting Dr. Damon Tweedy, who wrote *Black Man in a White Coat*, a best-selling book about racial hurdles for a medical professional. Schurtz has publicly apologized for her mistake in using blackface. The law dean has suspended her from teaching, 23 law faculty members have asked her to resign and UO President Michael Schill is highly critical in his public statements. Wait. What about due process and facts and the UO's own policies on free speech and academic freedom, the First Amendment? The faculty union, of which the law school is not a member, has written that Schurtz is entitled to a fair hearing, a position that we assume is held by law school faculty other than the 23? Academic politics is also a big player here, but that's another slant.

• Eugene City Club on Nov. 4 addressed, "Should We Worry About Heavy Metal in Eugene's Air and Water?" The takeaway from Merlyn Hough of the Lane Region Air Protection Agency and Brad Taylor of EWEB is that we are looking good, without the cadmium and heavy metals in the air or lead in the water issues of Portland and Flint. We learned if we live in an old home with lead in its pipes we should flush the cold water in the morning when we get up and again when we get home. What we didn't learn was how quickly we would be told if there was an issue with our air. LRAPA is great about giving a head's up about smoky air, but Hough was unclear how fast we'd find out if a study showed a possible problem. Hough laid blame at the feet of the media for causing a "frenzy," but who can blame Portlanders for being angry about the news the state sat on the info about the heavy metals for a year? EWEB said transparency is a priority, and we appreciate that!

• A terrific weekend soup dinner Nancy and Josh Reckord put on at their home for their neighborhood, coupled with this ugly campaign, reminded us that the neighborhood is where we must start to deal with the problems of our divided country. Homelessness, climate change, public education, mental health, drug abuse, public lands, etc., have hardly been mentioned in the last 18 months of shouting. That's all left to our neighborhoods, city, county, state, region.

## 15TH NIGHT PROJECT AIMS TO REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

According to local homeless advocates, 273 students in Eugene were homeless and living without a parent or guardian last year. On top of that, 90 students dropped out, and advocates believe they have moved to the streets.

In response to this, activists and the city of Eugene formed 15th Night, a collaborative approach to help prevent youth homelessness in the 4J and Bethel school districts.

Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz says that if homeless youth "spend more than 14 consecutive nights on the street, there's a good chance they'll become chronically homeless." Thus, the name "15th Night" is about how to intervene and help youth connect with needed resources and programs.

Megan Shultz helps coordinate 15th Night, which started around three years ago, and she works closely with its Youth Advisory Council, primarily made up of kids who have been formerly homeless or students who care strongly about the issue and want to help.

"Some of the questions we asked were, 'What services would a youth have needed to help prevent them from going on the street?'" Shultz says. "Also, 'Once you were on the street, what kinds of services did you need that would have helped you get off earlier than you did?'"

The group came up with a list of about 50 resources and services that would be helpful in keeping young people off the street. These sources are connected through their Rapid Alert Network app, which was launched at the beginning of the school year. The app, still being beta tested, sends notices to providers when there is a student in need with the goal of eliciting faster response times. Some of these providers include Looking Glass Community Services and Hosea Youth Services.

Deborah Dailey, the McKinney-Vento homeless student liaison for Eugene School District 4J, is one of the key resources on the list. The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal program that protects the educational rights of students.

"It is building a rapport and relationship with them, whether it's a counselor, a teacher or me," Dailey says of her position. "I'm looking and listening to conversations with youth about how they can help."

As coordinators talked with homeless students, they found that many of them did not feel they had any kind of relationship to lean on. Homeless youth didn't think they had someone they could trust or someone who cared enough to reach out to them.

According to Ruiz, the Youth Advisory Council seeks to mobilize others in schools through peer-to-peer connections. "We're trying to make this more youth-centered, as opposed to a youth afterthought," Ruiz says. "It's really about their

experiences and their stories as opposed to what we think their stories and experiences should be or should've been."

All parties involved in 15th Night agree that preventing young people from winding up on the streets is a community effort. "Part of our re-

sponsibility is to educate our community on the issue," Shultz says, "but also to inspire them to act."

"A lot of people have stepped up," Dailey says of the individuals and programs that have expanded some of their requirements to allow homeless youths to receive the help they need. "They're willing to give their time, their talent and their money."

Ruiz says he hopes to bring the number of kids dropping out to zero, and he'd like to create a sort of tool kit that the program can share with other communities to help reduce the homeless and dropout rates in other cities.

"We're trying to create a movement or a cause instead of another nonprofit, because we have a lot of agencies and nonprofits that are doing really good work around homeless youth," Ruiz says. "If we focused some of our energy and our resources, we could get to a point where none of our youth have to end up on the street."

For more information, visit [15night.org](http://15night.org) or email [info@15thnight.help](mailto:info@15thnight.help). ■

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— JON RUIZ, CITY MANAGER

## POLLUTION UPDATE

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent the Walmart Supercenter on Olympic Street in Springfield a warning letter for hazardous waste law violations Oct. 3. This facility generates between 220 pounds and 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste per month, and the violations were discovered by DEQ during an unannounced Sept. 28 inspection. Violations cited by DEQ include failure to properly store and label hazardous waste, failing to conduct weekly inspections of waste, and failing to post emergency information. DEQ sent warning letters for hazardous waste law violations to the West

Eugene and Newport Walmarts around the same time as the warning letter to the Springfield facility; however, we have yet to receive those letters from DEQ, despite having requested them over a month ago. Oregon's public records law currently has no hard deadline for agencies to respond to public records requests, however Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum has advised that 10 business days should be sufficient for most requests. Thank you to DEQ's Christina Humphries for connecting us with the letter to the Springfield Walmart.

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project