

LACK OF ENVIRO ENFORCEMENT

Gratifying to see a thorough piece of investigative reporting leave the ivory tower and enter the public arena (“DEQ Has Oregon In Dirty Hot Water,” *EW*, Feb. 23). What the three journalism students learned about Oregon Department of Environmental Quality’s dereliction of its duty to prosecute polluters is sadly representative of other “enforcement” agencies state and nationwide.

While it’s true that most agencies and programs have been starved to impotence if not death by political malfeasance, enforcement has long been more of a paper tiger than an effective deterrent to scofflaws. Lane County’s land use enforcement program, for example, has only one official and a distinct distaste for taking any action that may lead to a costly court proceeding, no matter how egregious the violation and winnable the case. And it exists in an uneasy relationship with a libertarian, anti-regulation majority of county commissioners.

For the most part, the Department of Land Conservation and Development exercises its responsibility as overseer of the state’s land use system by ignoring or refusing to take action against counties and municipalities that routinely facilitate development and growth at the expense of conservation and protection.

At the national level the EPA has consistently been hamstrung by lack of funding and a political unwillingness to regulate corporate polluters. It is therefore ironic and certainly testimony to the dark days ahead that the present occupant of the White House — when he’s not in the Trump Tower — is hell-bent on eliminating already anemic regulation entirely.

Robert Emmons
Fall Creek

¡VIVA LA WEEKLY!

¡Que una maravillosa cover on the Feb. 23 issue! ¡Salud a Johannis!

A heroic image electrifies and instantly cements the values of an isolated and, arguably, a quaintshire sandwiched between stoic farmland and fractious mountain forestries, locales predictably conservative and devoted to maintaining *suppression of change*; but we are right now forced to be change itself under zealous attacks against freedom of press, equality and access to the institutions of the nation.

Every single gesture, attitude, meme, political assembly, song and poem of ours counts in ways that take on lives of their own, and it is especially the honest, brave, unassuming, modest individual expressions in their massive collectivity that are the heart and backbone of democracy — which in part explains why the top-heavy Democratic Party

establishment, while genuinely our allies, are fundamentally, structurally unable to effectively contend with a threat to democracy like the one on the ground currently racing to us like a bullet train.

This mighty little town rises to the challenge by, among other things, supporting a lively news weekly with, for example, the stellar, sharp lacerating wit of Tom Tomorrow’s *This Modern World*. Eugene’s reputation for grassroots sophistication had come to my awareness four decades ago, ages before I had ever set foot.

I’ve only lived in Oregon, in Springfield, a little more than two years, but I can compare the spunk, vigor and relevance of *EW* to other mature, smart and sassy similar weeklies in San Francisco, New York and Vermont, where I have lived most of my (now long) life.

EW is one of my barometers of metropolitan Eugene’s quality of life. Your covers are consistently creative, inspiring, mordantly critical and-or refreshingly engaging raising a curtain each week to the stage of the city’s politics and culture!

¡Salud a *EW*!

Jesse Cox
Springfield

WELCOME TO THE ACCIDENTAL ART HOTEL

We wish to thank Ben Ricker for an incredibly informative and sensitive article

about the artists who live in Benton Plaza, here in Corvallis. Also our thanks to *EW* photographer Trask Bedortha, his portraits were the perfect complement.

To see this as a cover article was all the more amazing. The community response to our exhibit has been incredible, and include an artist who lives in a similar supported housing unit in Eugene, who made it a point to visit.

Our thanks to all who made this possible.

Bruce Burris, CEI/ArtWorks
Corvallis

BUILD A WALL

Perhaps one possible solution to the problem of people acting poorly in the downtown area is to build a wall around the district and make the transients pay for it.

I have read that banning dogs will not work because people could say it is a service dog. Why not ban blankets? These people sit on blankets or have blankets in their luggage.

Blankets were used to kill native peoples by infecting the blankets with smallpox. Perhaps these rude people will do the same. These are blanket terrorists!

As a separate item, I would like to say Eugene Skinner was not here alone. His wife Mary worked very hard, I am certain. The city of “Eugene and Mary,” or “Mary

SHE WHO WATCHES BY KAYLA GODOWA TUFTI

King’s Quarrelsome Quarry

TRIBAL COUNCIL APPROVES RESOLUTION TO PROTECT TV BUTTE

In January the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs of Oregon’s Tribal Council approved a resolution to protect TV Butte in Oakridge. Lane County has nevertheless tentatively approved a zoning change to allow the butte to be mined, ignoring oral history evidence of previous native occupation of the site.

TV Butte in Oakridge is part of a Native American village site, and native burial sites are thought to be near the butte. The Chakgeenkni-Tufti Band of Molalla Indians, whose descendants are enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs of Oregon, lived at the TV Butte site for thousands of years.

For almost a year the Old Hazeldell Quarry project, an investment of Ed King of King Estate Winery, has been advancing through the Lane County Government. The Old Hazeldell Quarry project has applied to rezone 46 acres, the area known as TV Butte, in Oakridge from F1 F2 (forestland) to QM (quarry mining). Nearly 17 million tons of andesite aggregate rock will be extracted from TV Butte if the application is approved.

Since May the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs of Oregon’s Tribal Historic Preservation Office has been submitting letters of concern to Deanna Wright and Lydia McKinney, who are appointed to oversee the application through the Lane County Land Management Division.

The letters point out that “of specific concern are

Indian burials potentially located near the old Charlie Tufti homestead,” and that the tribal historic preservation office “recognizes oral history equally as valuable as results of archaeological survey or archival research in identifying historical land use.”

They add, “Indeed, oral history often sheds light on historical use when survey and other methods cannot.”

The recent Tribal Council resolution reaffirms what was argued in the letters and calls for TV Butte’s protection: “The Tribal Council delegates and authorizes the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-treasurer/CEO to take any necessary actions to fulfill the intent of this resolution, with particular attention to the protection of rights and interest of heirs and descendants who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.”

Historical documents and testimony from direct tribal descendants have been submitted at each opportunity for public testimony in Lane County since April 2016.

Yet the Lane County government and the Old Hazeldell Quarry project staff claim there has been insufficient evidence provided.

In the applicant’s final rebuttal submitted to the Lane County Commission on Nov. 29, Michael Reeder of the Eugene law firm Arnold Gallagher writes, “Some people have vehemently opposed the application. Many of those opponents raise issues that are ei-

ther not relevant to the approval criteria and/or wildly outlandish and misleading.”

He calls the opposing arguments “unsubstantiated and anecdotal claims that have little or no evidentiary support.”

At the last public hearing on Oct. 12 in Oakridge, Rick Minor of Heritage Research Associates presented testimony to debunk and dismiss evidence of tribal occupancy at TV Butte. Minor teaches in Historical Preservation at University of Oregon and has been hired by OHQ to conduct an archaeological survey for the quarry.

HRA’s report was unsubstantial and dismissive of tribal testimony and historical occupancy. The report failed to include anthropological and ethnographic aspects that are extremely important to tribes.

Three meetings have been held before the Lane County Commissioners. On Jan. 12, the commission decided to have a fourth reading/deliberation for Feb. 14. On Feb 12, the commission decided to set a fifth reading for March 12.

On Jan. 12, the Commission tentatively approved the OHQ application on a four to one vote, with Commissioner Pete Sorensen opposed.

The final Lane County Commissioners meeting on the Old Hazeldell Quarry project will be at 1:30 pm Tuesday, March 14, in Harris Hall in Eugene.

Kayla Godowa-Tufti is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and descendant of the Klamath Tribes. Writer, lyricist and Indigenous rights advocate. Resident of Eugene for 20-plus years.