



• The growing popularity of tiny houses is leading Keith Schneider of Eugene's **Bohemian Cottages** to expand from construction into all-day, do-it-yourself seminars locally and across the nation. Schneider and his crew have built or remodeled about 35 custom-crafted tiny dwellings over the past eight years, most 200 square feet or smaller. It's a successful business model, he says, but it also helps provide affordable living space at a time when "there's a serious housing crisis in Eugene and Lane County." Schneider gave free mini-seminars at the recent home show at the Fairgrounds and will be doing all-day seminars locally March 26, April 22 and July 1. A free drop-in "Kickstarter Launch Party" promoting the seminars and the business will be from 4 to 8 pm Friday, March 24, at 521 Market Street in Eugene. Call 541-914-3349 or see photos at how2buildtiny.com.

• **Discount Motorcycle Parts** at 995 Tjinn Street in west Eugene reopened March 11 under new owners, Mike and Shery Wellington. Hundreds of people showed up to support the new ownership and to reminisce about the former owners, Steven and Annette Skinner, who were killed in a traffic crash Aug. 27. "The community suffered a terrible loss with the unexpected deaths of the Skinners, who started DMP in 1992," Shery Wellington writes in a social media post. "I feel like we are the 'benevolent caretakers' of this shop and its customers." A plaque honoring the Skinners was dedicated at the shop March 12.

• Tree Bressen and Stuart Ramsing will be teaching a six-week learning series on "**The Subtle Art of Powerful Leadership**" at RAIN Eugene (Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network), 7-8:30 pm Monday evenings starting April 17. Leaders from nonprofits, businesses and other organizations are invited to participate. Registration is \$90 for the full six-week series. Bressen says, "We are asking people to contact us if cost is a barrier to attendance because we expect to give out several partial scholarships at half price," and RAIN has a grant that will fully fund two younger participants (ages 18-24) to attend for free. Information at treegroup.info/leadership.

ACTIVIST ALERT

• **Ten Douglas County library branches** will close on April 1, and Roseburg's main branch library will close May 31. Douglas County Commissioners have asked for specific input on governing source, funding streams and other library system operating issues. Public comment is needed on long-term solutions to the library system's funding crisis. Whether you can or can't attend the hearing, submit comments by email (commissioners@co.douglas.or.us leif@co.douglas.or.us) or snail mail (DC Commissioners, Courthouse, Room 217, 1036 S.E. Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, OR 97470. Call 541-440-4201 for more info.

• **Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network, ESSN Jobs with Justice**, "is the premier social justice and workers' rights organization in Lane County, with a 26-year history defending the rights of working families: the right to a fair wage, fair rents, fair scheduling and fair treatment," Art Bollman says. ESSN is asking people interested in becoming active to attend its monthly general meeting, at 5:30 pm Thursday, March 30, at the AFSCME Hall, 688 Charnelton Street. Bollman says that ESSN looking for volunteers willing to act as vocal advocates and to participate in direct actions. In addition to workers' rights and support for unions, ESSN is focusing on renters' rights and arts advocacy. For more information email essn@solidaritynetwork.org or visit solidaritynetwork.org.

NEWS

BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

OREGON LEGISLATURE CONSIDERS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BILLS

New laws would boost protection for bees, clean air and clean water

Air quality concerns — after revelations about Portland's glass factories — bee die-offs and longtime worries about the dangers of aerial sprays, are hopefully being addressed via bills introduced into Oregon's Legislature this session.

Lisa Arkin of Eugene-based Beyond Toxics says House Bill 2669, the Community Toxics Reporting Act, would make it possible for cities and counties across Oregon to have programs similar to Eugene's Toxics Right-to-Know law. The law lets Eugene collect and publicize data on air and water pollution.

If Portland had a Right-to-Know law like Eugene's, Arkin says, then the city's population might have found out much earlier about the release of the cadmium and arsenic from art glass factories that made headlines last year.

She calls the matter an environmental justice issue and says that the bill would cover more than 1,500 chemicals, which is much more extensive than the 52 chemicals the Department of Environmental Quality currently tracks. Detailed and accurate toxic pollution data can be used to map toxics hot spots, Arkin says, many of which are near low-income communities. And data reporting helps people stay informed about possible public health risks, such as the release of heavy metals from the Portland glass factories.

Arkin also points to the case of Hollingsworth & Vose, a glass fiber plant near a residential neighborhood in south Corvallis. It operated for almost 20 years under the wrong class of an air pollution permit before the DEQ determined it was exceeding its allowed levels of fluoride and carbon monoxide emissions.

Another right-to-know bill is Senate Bill 892, which would require advanced notice for aerial sprays of pesticides and prompt reporting of what pesticides were used. "It's time for communities to know what toxins and poisons are being thrown at them," Arkin says.

SB 892 would require forestry land owners or operators to

give seven days notice on the Forest Activity Electronic Reporting and Notification System (FERNS), managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry, of aerial sprays and say what chemicals were actually sprayed within five days of the application. Right now aerial spray applicators do not have to notify residents, schools, health care facilities or communities before spraying chemicals on nearby forestland, Arkin says.

Also on the legislative agenda is SB 499, which "creates exceptions to limitation on liability for certain farming and forest practices for actions for serious harm to human health and loss of use of residential property or domestic drinking water." In other words, the bill would amend ORS 30.936, Oregon's "Right to Farm and Forest" law, to give people recourse if farming or forest practices cause the loss of use of residential property or domestic drinking water.

For example, if a chemical spray were to affect the water a family drinks, the family would have little remedy because the current Right to Farm and Forest law says a person must prove death or serious physical injury, such as a loss of a limb, to seek damages from pesticide exposure harm.

Also addressing pesticides is SB 929, a bee protection bill that would require Oregon's Department of Agriculture to classify neonicotinoids as restricted-use pesticides. "We would be the second state in the nation to restrict consumer use," Arkin says. Oregon banned neonics on all tilia (linden tree) species after several massive bee die-offs. And, she says, the state bumped up its applicator education program, but this means, "You are educating your applicators but not Ma and Pa Jones running to Bi-Mart" to buy pesticides.

A hearing is scheduled on the bill March 27, Arkin says.

Sen. James Manning is a cosponsor of the bill, and he thinks it's a good bill. "So far I haven't had anybody come to me in opposition," he says. "It sends a good message and help protect our farmers" whose crops might be affected by pollinator die-offs, the senator adds. ■

DAVID MONK

"My parents were the children of sharecroppers in the panhandle of Texas," says David Monk, who was born in Texas but was reared from age 6 in Las Vegas. "My dad worked at underground construction, digging tunnels for sewers and hydroelectricity." After high school, Monk came to Eugene to study Russian at the University of Oregon. He took three year-long breaks to work underground, in a coal mine and a hydro project, on his way to a 1983 degree in political science. Afterwards, he went to work for a carpenter friend in Eugene, then got licensed and became a contractor, building and remodeling homes. "I never had to look for work," he notes. In the late 1990s, Monk got his start in civic activism, serving on the board of Friends of Eugene and the steering committee of Citizens for Public Accountability. In 2001, he was hired as executive director of the new nonprofit Oregon Toxics Alliance, now known as Beyond Toxics. "I took the job for the six weeks of paid vacation," he maintains, "but I didn't get two weeks in four years." He was succeeded by administrative assistant Lisa Arkin after he stepped down, but he still serves on the BT board, returning after two three-year terms on the board of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency. Notable achievements, among issues he has addressed, include a DEQ vapor recovery mandate for gas station pumps and the field-burning ban enacted by the state in 2009. More recently, he is co-founder of a new non-profit called Checks and Balances, aimed at providing fiscal oversight of corruption in the city's funding decisions. Read about it online at checks-balances.org.

