

BRINGING MARGINS TO CENTER

I want to thank the writers at *EW* for regular coverage of the activism and stories of people of color, local and abroad. I was touched by the “Unsung Hero” issue that covered Johannis Tadeo’s important work reconnecting Chicano youth with their heritage, particularly the vulnerability he showed when describing the effects of racism on his life and his dedication.

This inspired me about what local efforts to reclaim our communities can look like and how far-reaching the effects of impassioned activism can be. I also appreciated the “Defending the Defenders” issue about lawyers, all people of color, defending environmental activists, giving a picture of just what we’re up against and who is taking the biggest hits when we fight within the system.

I enjoyed the choice *EW* made to focus on immigrants in the food issue — how smart! Hearing about Phung Tu’s story, the way her community showed up to support her when racist vandalism threatened her business gave me hope about this community.

Thank you for centering the stories of black and brown people in Eugene and Springfield in your journalism. Thank you for giving white community members opportunities to plug into anti-racist efforts.

Let’s bring the margins to the center.

Dusty Bloomingheart
Eugene

THE S-WORD

I agree with Robert Bolman (Letters, May 4) that fake sustainability is super-trendy (i.e., sustainable growth, sustainable cities, etc.). Shameless marketing hucksters relentlessly misuse the S-word, in soaring flights of magical thinking. Ecological sustainability, on the other hand, is the uncomfortable, embarrassing and vitally important subject that our culture prefers to keep locked in the closet.

My third book, *Understanding Sustainability*, is a learning tool. It’s a collection

of 74 reviews of sustainability-oriented books, including a number of classics. This book is now available at the Eugene library, where it joins *Sustainable or Bust* (64 book reviews) and *What Is Sustainable* (a broad introduction).

Richard Reese
Eugene

NOT SO PROGRESSIVE, EW

Hey *Eugene Weekly*, I’m confused by your endorsement of Anne Marie Levis for position 2 on the 4J School Board. I thought you were a progressive publication of the people. Yet you endorse the status quo, a member of the school board that has decimated trust between teachers and families and the district.

You pass over Maya Rabasa, who was our hope to begin to restore those relationships. You endorse a person you say “understands how to leverage” funds. But she’s an eight-year member of a board who did not endorse measure 97 and gave a huge raise and buyout to their disastrous superintendent hire.

Levis is a member of a board that has added more costly administration positions while cutting teachers and allowed countless dollars to be funneled into curriculum purchases while our classrooms swell beyond comic proportions. Hopefully the public has more sense.

Vote for change. Vote for Maya Rabasa.

Sarah Pedersen
Eugene

BETTER SCHOOLS WITH NEWMAN

Judy Newman is the right choice for 4J School Board. There are three good candidates running to replace Beth Gerot, but Judy Newman is best suited to serve the district and community as school board member. She offers the educational expertise and leadership experience needed, along with a strong commitment to education equity.

I worked on several boards and committees with Newman over

the years, including United Way, Success by Six and Early Learning Alliance, and I really appreciate her ability to bring people together around a common goal.

As co-director of Early Childhood Cares she knows what it takes to lead an organization, manage budgets and make personnel decisions, all the while keeping the focus on doing what’s best for kids and families.

Newman will make adequate and stable school funding a priority. She will fight for more local control and less regulation from Salem or Washington, D.C. She will ask the tough questions and seek solutions to the pressing issues faced by the district.

And she will push to include teachers, parents and community stakeholders in critical decisions that affect the future of Eugene schools.

Please join me in voting for Judy Newman for the Eugene 4J School Board.

George Russell
Eugene

ROSIEK IS PROACTIVE

Before running for school board, Jerry Rosiek was already speaking out against the new secretary of education’s policies. With a child in 4J, he’s vested in being pro-active.

Months ago, Rosiek was the only future district 6 candidate to testify to the board about the need to protect undocumented students.

Rosiek was also the only candidate who knew 4J students take 116 standardized tests in K-12, and our district wants to add even more Smarter Balanced assessments yearlong, although they’re not required. He’s already started a conversation with state and local officials about this rather than blindly accept whatever comes.

His broad policy experience is why America’s foremost authority on education policy, Diane Ravitch, has endorsed him. He’s a former high school teacher, now UO education professor and leader of outstanding minority programs. His book on education policy is an award-winner.

I’ve also witnessed his stellar ability to talk with people across the political spectrum. After all, 4J doesn’t serve only liberals; he finds common ground with conservatives concerned about reclaiming local control.

Jerry Rosiek’s proactive and inclusive approach would be a fantastic asset to the Eugene School Board. He stays ahead of the game.

Rachel Rich
Eugene

POLE-ITICALLY INCORRECT

The Oregon Country Fair board of directors recently voted to cancel the raising of the beautifully carved story pole meant to honor the dear lives of four fair members who died in 2012. Hundreds of artists volunteered their time painting and carving the monumental piece, while others donated money. The tall cedar came from British Columbia with the approval of The First Nations.

This was not a commercial project; no financial gain would be realized from it. Tacky “Totem Pole Cookies” weren’t going to be marketed; this has been a work of art.

When Oregon Tribes were originally contacted for feedback on the art project, none responded and the OCF board approved the installation. Now I must wonder if just maybe some OCF Diversity Task Force members may have stirred the pot to get the intended response of outrage and claims of “cultural appropriation” from some in the Tribal community.

I guess I should stop shopping at the Kiva because they’ve appropriated Native symbols. And we should shame the Seattle Seahawks into adopting a generic, more mundane logo than the one inspired by Native traditions. Henna tattoo? Forget it. And if you don’t have at least .05-percent African blood, you damn well better not even think of wearing your hair in dreads.

For thousands of years cultures have been informed by neighboring cultures and those who came before. Cultures have always borrowed beautiful ideas, religion,

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Oregon Country Fair

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