



SCREAMING FEMALES AT THE BOREAL OCTOBER 2016

PHOTO: TRASK BEDORTHA

BEST HOLIDAY HELP: WHITEAKER THANKSGIVING DINNER

As a recent arrival to Eugene, I continue to be in awe by what Eugene, Springfield and the Willamette Valley have to offer. Eugene has all the culture, entertainment and culinary diversity of a big city while maintaining the ease, warmth and charm of a small town. No matter where I want to shop, dine, or relax, I am a mere three to four miles from my destination.

I came to Eugene to lead one of the many diamonds in the area, Lane Community College. Lane has the academic resolve to prepare students for transfer or a dynamic career and to offer wrap-around supports for the area's neediest students. To my delight, I found that LCC was embedded in a community of caring, philanthropic neighbors who truly care about Lane students and their city.

This New Jersey transplant fell in love with my new state when I visited the Oregon Coast the first time and saw the whales playing and the sea lions sunning themselves, and again when I heard a world class symphony at the Hult Center. It was love at first sight when I watched the sun set over the vineyards at King Estate Winery.

But I knew I was home when I saw for myself the hundreds of volunteers, including faculty, students and staff at LCC, giving their precious time off to humbly cook and serve those in need at the **Whiteaker Thanksgiving Dinner**. I could not be more proud to call Eugene home and to be the president of Lane Community College. Wishing everyone reading this a blessed holiday season. — *Margaret A. Hamilton, president, Lane Community College*

BEST LOCAL FILM COMPETITION

Taking part in **Eugene Film Society's annual 72-Hour Horror Film** competition is one of the most exhilarating experiences you can have — heady and frenzied and completely thrilling, like being shot out of a cannon for three days straight. The rules are simple: Handed nothing but a single prop and a line of dialogue, participants — first-time filmmakers and veterans alike, doesn't matter — are given exactly 72 hours to script, cast, rehearse, shoot and edit a three-minute horror film, which is screened and judged, both by a jury of media professionals and the public at large. In an era of mindless mainstream crap and endless Hollywood reboots, it's a blast to see what regional movie buffs come up with when pushed to the limits of endurance as guerilla filmmakers. The winner of the Audience Award, of course, receives a cash prize of \$666. More info at eugenefilmsociety.com. — *Rick Levin*

BEST ALL-AGES DIY SPACE THAT CLOSED DOWN THIS YEAR

Both the popularity and the quality of Eugene's local music scene comes and goes over time, but regardless of the number of local artists we have, or how good they are, nothing matters without a place to play. Back in June of this year we lost a staple in Eugene's all-ages DIY community — **The Boreal**.

As someone who grew up as a part of the music scene here in town, as both a participant and an attendee, and who only recently became old enough to go to bars for live music, I've witnessed how much spaces like The Boreal mean to people. Inevitably, this loss of all-ages venues is cyclical — a burning candle just waiting to be snuffed out, or to slowly funnel all the way down the wick. Take the closing of Springfield's all-ages DIY space, The Gathering Place, around 2012, for example, or the teetering off of show-booking at Petersen Barn around the same time, or house venues that meander in and out of the scene to serve as shelters for shows until they're shut down by one too many noise complaints.

Among the all-ages, community-formed music spaces I've been a part of in Eugene, The Boreal was the first that seemed solid and seemed hopeful. It served as a space for local bands and national and international touring acts to come together. It was a mainstay for various hardcore and alt acts, but it also welcomed all kinds of genres, as well as serving as an art space, a place for movie nights and a small record and zine shop. If history repeats itself, one can only hope that another all-ages venue will rise out of the ashes soon — something even better than The Boreal. But, for now, let's pour one out for another fallen friend. — *Meerah Powell*

BEST COMMENTS AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS: RAGING GRANNIES

My "best" of this year is the **Raging Grannies**. This group of indomitable, tuneful, passionate, cheerful and funny women appears almost monthly before the Eugene City Council. They use their three minutes in the public forum to inspire us to action dressed in homemade costumes to sing familiar tunes with customized lyrics to meet the issue of the day. They have urged us to ban coal trains, reduce our impact on climate change and divest from US Bank. They represent the best to me of working hard for a better world while enjoying friendship, song and silliness. — *Lucy Vinis, Eugene mayor*

BEST NEW NOVELIST

Returning to Eugene from a writer's retreat in 2012, **Jeff Geiger's** car died in the backwater of Washington's Key Peninsula, the kind of middle-of-nowhere bummer that leaves most of us kicking the bumper in frustration. Little did Geiger realize, however, that breaking down would provide the breakthrough for his debut novel, *Wildman*, the story of a 17-year-old high school valedictorian whose '93 Buick goes kaput, stranding him for a transformative week at a motel and roadhouse in rural Washington. Recently released by Disney Hyperion, *Wildman* is a classic coming-of-age story, but it reads with all the breakneck speed of a thriller, even if the suspense is of a distinctly existential and romantic flavor. As an earlier *EW* review put it, "the novel is propulsive in a way that is unput-downable, and its naturalism and immediacy hide depths of feeling that surge just below the surface." If

Ken Kesey put Eugene on the literary map, Geiger's debut might just burnish that reputation for a new century. — *Rick Levin*



PHOTO: TODD COOPER

BEST CHILDCARE: SEVEN STARS CHILDCARE

The search for quality childcare can reduce a parent to tears. Availability. Pricing. And the introductory visit is murder on the nerves: *How old are these wall hangings? Is this person wholly sane? Too sane? What's that strange smell?* **Seven Stars**, by contrast, causes visitors to feel as if they've stepped through a wormhole into a benevolent parallel reality where all children receive the care they deserve. The providers, Deb and Christopher Michaels, work with monastic devotion, rotating books and toys, sparking imaginative play, making it new. They keep their Halloween lights on until December, and their Christmas lights glowing through spring because *it makes people happy*. In pick-up and drop-off conversations, they have inspired parents to start food drives, write letters, participate in diversity trainings, attend protests and join civic committees. Children romp, dance, and say *Daddy, how was your day?* over playroom tunes ranging from Norah Jones to Elle King. In their capable hands, my kids have somehow overcome their paternal genetics to become reasonable, loving people. Seven Stars and the Michaels are among Eugene's most remarkable treasures — the best of the best. — *Jeff Geiger, author*