

area (Nov. 15). The fact is, the sharp odor emanates from Lane Forest Products and blankets a huge area of west Eugene from Barger to North Beacon.

Lane Forest Products makes and ships mulch throughout the area. The problem is that the dust is impossible to avoid and makes living near the massive piles at Maxwell and Prairie a struggle.

Residents in the neighborhood are constantly breathing particulates, and many are unable to open windows during the hot dusty summers. Representatives of the company told us to call whenever the dust becomes a problem — which is often — but whenever we do, nothing changes. The watering of the massive piles does nothing to eliminate the awful dust.

Our concerns were brought to Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA), but they seem unable or unwilling to seriously challenge a company the size and stature of Lane Forest Products. Sadly, this is all too common in an era where big business is God and we the people are nothing but voiceless peasants.

Sadly, the company prides itself as a responsible “green” company. This should mean taking into consideration the health of the residents of the area.

The company should relocate their mulch operations to a more appropriate location. We will find out just how “green” Lane Forest Products really is.

*J. Pinney and A. Albright
Eugene*

GOOD DEMOCRATS

I couldn’t help but feel discouraged by the letters from Robert Emmons and Lee Gire criticizing Peter DeFazio (Letters, Dec. 6).

Congressman DeFazio is about as honest and dedicated a public servant as humanly possible. He is incredibly hard-working and a creative pragmatist. He represents a diverse district that covers a large swath of southern Oregon.

Is he perfect? Am I perfect? Are you perfect? We are engaged in a life-and-death struggle (think climate change to start) and we cannot possibly be successful if we quibble among ourselves over the definition of progressive change. It is imperative that we work together or we all are going to lose out to the corporate interests largely supporting the Republican Party.

Let’s remember that perfect is the enemy of good and be grateful that we have one of the best representatives in this country.

*Paul Kaplan
Pleasant Hill*

BY BIKE

Studies have shown that a bike lane — especially a bike lane protected by a curb — is a much safer place than a sidewalk to ride a bike. In fact, many studies have found sidewalks to be the most dangerous type of place to ride a bike.

More important, studies have shown that driving a car is more dangerous to yourself and those around than riding a

bike, and that driving a car also pollutes the air and jeopardizes our economic security by contributing to climate change. These things are true of both electric and ICE cars.

The vast majority of people can make the vast majority of their trips on foot or by bike or transit. Instead of telling others where to ride their bikes, you should think about how to avoid some of your travel by car.

*Alex Bauman
Eugene*

KICK THE CAR HABIT

I have read with interest Gary Trendler’s letter regarding “sidewalk rules” in the *Eugene Weekly* (Nov. 29). This letter was in response to a letter by a pedestrian who had a near miss with a bicyclist on the sidewalk and a subsequent confrontation.

I walk or bike almost everywhere in town and strongly support human-powered transportation as the best option in terms of safety, environment and health. My personal experience is that, generally, bicyclists on the sidewalk move to the street to avoid pedestrians. In the case mentioned, this didn’t happen.

While Gary can be legally correct in his rendering of the law, I think this misses the larger point. I try to use bike lanes, as I feel this establishes our “right” to streets that are often seen as “belonging” to cars. Ideally bikes would co-exist with cars on streets (as they do in Europe), but this would require lower speeds (“twenty is

plenty”) and more bicyclists.

Endangering pedestrians is not the way to engender the change I envision. Please be courteous and understand we can kick the car habit when we have viable alternatives. Let’s work together to make this happen instead of scaring pedestrians. We need everyone.

*Bruce Tufts
Eugene*

MEAT IS MURDER

There is no way to avoid eating less meat if we are serious about the future of the planet. According to a recent report, “Creating a Sustainable Food Future,” in order to feed the growing human population — projected to reach about 10 billion by 2050 — while curbing planet-warming emissions to ward off climate catastrophe, people across the globe must significantly cut back on eating meat from cows, sheep and goats by 40 percent.

This report was produced by World Resources Institute (WRI) in partnership with the World Bank, U.N. Environment, U.N. Development Program and a pair of French agricultural research agencies.

Limits on meat eating are among 22 proposals from the report. All points being worked on simultaneously could achieve “meeting growing demands for food, avoiding deforestation, and reforesting or restoring abandoned and unproductive land — and in ways that help stabilize the climate, promote economic development, and reduce poverty.”

VIEWPOINT

BY JOHN AMMONDSON AND EMILY SEMPLE

End Single-Use Plastics

URGE THE EUGENE CITY COUNCIL TO ACT ON PLASTICS

From city-level initiatives like the Urban Growth Boundary, the Climate Resiliency Ordinance and a ban on single-use plastic bags, to an extensive history of grassroots environmental activism, the city of Eugene has long been a leader on environmental issues. Today, given the increasing scale and devastating impact of plastic pollution on our ecosystems and wildlife, it’s time for our city to take action again.

Every day, Oregonians consume millions and millions of pieces of single-use plastics, which are usually used for just a few minutes and then discarded. This plastic either piles up in our landfills or ends up trashing our parks, waterways and other natural areas, breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces that are often ingested by wildlife. A stunning 86 percent of sea turtle species have been found with some sort of plastic in their bodies, in addition to 44 percent of all seabird species and 43 percent of all marine mammal species. To make matters worse, most plastics take hundreds of years to break down once they enter our environment, so our choices of quick convenience today will pollute the environment and threaten wildlife for centuries to come.

Fortunately, there are steps Eugene can take to reduce the environmental impact of single-use plastics: by preventing their use in the first place. For example, one of the most common uses for single-use plastics is for food and beverage containers and utensils, especially for takeout food. So instead of using non-recyclable materials like polystyrene (commonly known as Styrofoam) or other plastics, the city could require that restaurants use more environmentally friendly alternatives that can be recycled or composted, which would significantly reduce our overall plastic footprint.

This is not a new idea, and as the country and world become increasingly aware of the toll plastic pollution is taking on our ecosystems, communities and organizations are taking action.

More than 200 cities and communities across the country have already passed polystyrene foam bans, and the European Union recently voted for a complete ban on all single-use plastics. Companies and restaurants are also taking action to reduce their impact by using different materials: McDonald’s has committed to phasing out foam cups and containers by the end of 2018 in favor of 100 percent recycled materials.

Right here in Eugene, there are a variety of local restaurants that have stopped using polystyrene foam takeout containers and other harmful single-use plastics in the interests of protecting our environment and wildlife. The commitments of these restaurants display the continued innovation and environmental stewardship of Eugene’s restaurant sector, and provide a model for tackling plastic pollution here in our city.

Like many environmental issues, plastic pollution can seem overwhelming when considered at a broad scale. But recent examples of worldwide plastic action and the leadership of restaurants right here in Eugene who have committed to more sustainable plastics practices shows that reducing plastic pollution in Eugene is possible with simple but smart steps. We strongly urge the Eugene City Council to act on this issue as soon as possible, take bold action to reduce Eugene’s plastic footprint and make the city a continued leader on plastic pollution and environmental sustainability.

John Ammondson is a fellow with Environment Oregon, a statewide environmental advocacy organization. Emily Semple is the city councilor for Ward 1 in Eugene.