

See You in November

PRIMARY ELECTION HAS LOW TURNOUT AND BRINGS FALL RUNOFF ELECTIONS

By Henry Houston

With unofficial voter turnout for the May 2020 primary election at around 40 percent in Lane County, it's hard to believe that this is a presidential election cycle. Then again it's a COVID-19 election.

Of course, former Vice President Joe Biden won the majority of Oregon's delegates to take on President Donald Trump in November. In Lane County, official results show voters passed the Lane Community College bond measure, Eugene re-elected its incumbent mayor and its City Council could see three new faces in 2021. However, some seats need November runoff elections.

Mayor Lucy Vinis won re-election with 67 percent support. She says that her second term will be about seeing through the changes that she's laid the groundwork for — like establishing the city's Climate Action Plan 2.0, tackling the housing crisis and following the TAC report on homelessness.

The pandemic might have thrown a wrench in her plans, but Vinis says it shined a light on the city's inequalities, and the defining endeavor of her second term will be economic recovery. She says the city has to reinvest in the economy, like housing and infrastructure.

Most of Vinis's challengers were united under the Solidarity Platform all of whom wanted to force a mayoral runoff election. Vinis says that she's heard some of those candidates at past City Council meetings, and she agrees

with them that the city needs to have more urgency in tackling and addressing homelessness.

Asked how she would encourage the candidates to get involved with the government, Vinis says there's a need for ideas on Eugene's committees and boards.

LCC's bond measure passed with 58 percent, giving the OK to renovate the college's buildings and address career and technical education programs. During the pandemic, there's been a lot of support for health care workers and other front line workers, and LCC Board of Education member Rosie Pryor says that she thinks that the campaign captured some of that energy.

She adds that while she and other LCC supporters were canvassing digitally for the bond measure, she found that many voters had a connection with the college — whether it was through knowing a staff member or attending the college.

And when the local economy one day starts its recovery path, she says that the bond money will go toward career and technical education jobs and that can help everyday Lane residents retrain.

Now outgoing LCC Board Member Matt Keating says that the big part of the bond measure is that the college's construction work will require community benefit agreements, prioritizing local, living wage jobs and a diverse workforce.

Having won his campaign to succeed outgoing Councilor Betty Taylor in Ward 2, Keating says he wants to see CBAs at the city level, too. He says COVID-19 changed everything and the City Council needs to think hard

about its priorities. He plans to collaborate with county commissioners and federal agencies to ensure the city secures money for its services.

Although the virus changed campaigning, he says he's never felt more connected with the community by using social media, making more than 20,000 phone calls and handwriting personal notes.

Rep. Peter DeFazio will go on to November to face Republican challenger Alek Skarlatos.

At the Democratic Party of Lane County's Facebook Live party, DeFazio said Democrats have to keep the House of Representatives and most importantly get the "bozo" out of the White House. He added that if Democrats take over Washington, he has an infrastructure bill more ambitious than President Franklin Roosevelt's plans.

Some local political offices will need a runoff election in November. Unofficial results show Laurie Trieger leading with 43 percent, but she didn't secure the win to represent south Eugene on the Lane County Board of County Commissioners. Joel Iboa, who secured 36 percent of the vote, will take her on in November.

In the Eugene City Council race, Councilor Emily Semple received 39 percent but will face challenger Eliza Kashinsky in a runoff election.

Although Springfield voters re-elected Christine Lundberg for another term, the Springfield Ward 3 race narrowed down to Kori Rodley and Johannis Tadeo. Incumbent Joe Pishioneri will serve another term after defeating Gregg Ybarra. ■

slant

• We are doing a happy dance over here at the *Eugene Weekly*

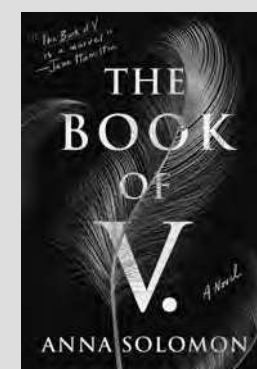
offices! First, **our journalism won awards** in the Oregon Territory Society of Professional Journalists Region 10 competition — covering the states of Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho and Alaska. Our former-staffer, now freelance arts writer Rick Levin took home first place in arts writing for his piece "Don't Fear the Reaper" on Springfield roadkill artist Jessica Kinser; next our staff writer-then student intern Taylor Perse, together with former intern, now professional journalist Morgan Theophil, won first place in housing and homelessness coverage for their investigative and solutions journalism series on the unhoused; and current intern Gina Scalpone together with Emily Goodykoontz, who is now with the *Anchorage Daily News*, were runners up in crime and justice reporting for their solutions and investigative story, "The Broken System," on the court system and the mentally ill homeless. Both those stories were written by students with the University of Oregon's Catalyst Journalism Project and competed against professional journalists across the region. Kudos also to KLCC and *The Register-Guard* who also took home awards in audio and medium-sized newsrooms respectively.

• Second, *EW's* efforts to stay afloat in this pandemic were further aided this month by a \$5,000 **Google News Initiative Journalism Emergency Relief Fund** grant. Like the COVID-19 Local News Relief Funding from Facebook Journalism Project, this money helps us cover local government and issues such as homelessness, and helps to pay interns and freelancers as well as our staff.

• And that brings us to the third reason we are feeling perky despite COVID-19. We can't survive on grants alone, and in addition to our local advertisers, our **readers are helping us print this paper** by sending \$50 contributions and getting a cool *EW* T-shirt (see our ad in this issue). We can't wait till the time comes when we can thank you in person, but for now, just keep picking *EW* up!

• The Oregon press didn't pay as much attention as it probably should to a **6.5 magnitude earthquake on May 15 in a remote area of western Nevada**. *The New York Times* reported that the quake damaged a major highway and shook homes as far as Utah and California. Here in the Pacific Northwest we've been warned about "the big one" that could come any time. That's not exactly what we need right now along with COVID-19 and Donald Trump. On the bright side, if you still have a lot of toilet paper and

canned food leftover from pandemic prepping, you are on your way to an earthquake survival kit.



• What we're reading:

The Book of V. by Anna Solomon is a novel published in 2020 by Henry Holt and Company. Although it's getting a fair bit of attention, we find it sometimes brilliant, sometimes boring. The novel tells the story of three women's lives across three centuries and how they ultimately intertwine.

It will be interesting to see if *The Book of V* catches on with major reviewers.

• If you missed the **City Club of Eugene virtual program** on the Japanese internment disgrace during World War II, you can hear it on May 26 at 7 pm on KLCC 89.7. The visual aspect will be missing, of course, but the story should still be heard. It's important to hear how the internment affected individual lives. Thumbs up to the City Club for continuing to put fine programs out there in spite of the limitations caused by COVID-19. There's no program May 22 before Memorial Day weekend.