

Bikes, Dogs and the Homeless

Your last newsletter asked about bike safety. Here's a true anecdote from my life.

I was bit by a homeless guy's unleashed dog on my morning bike commute last week. It attacked me as I passed on the Fern Ridge Path and the man's tepid attempts to control it verbally failed to prevent it from getting a solid chomp on my left calf. To me, this incident is indicative of the broader situation of homeless people having to live on the bike paths.

I'm not a pearl clutcher, but it does suck having to commute through people's beds, and this exact eventuality has never been far from my mind. Unfortunately, there's no solution since our liberal economy requires commodified housing to suppress the cost of labor. So I'll just cope.

Penelope Pascal

Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: To get EW's email newsletters go to EugeneWeekly.com/newsletter.

Going With Harris

My boyfriend and I recently decided to leave the Democratic Party due to our dissatisfaction with Joe Biden's leadership. We found ourselves gravitating towards Robert F. Kennedy Jr., seeing him as a better alternative in the face of a Biden vs. Donald Trump scenario.

But, with Biden stepping out of the reelection race and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris, we've had a change of heart. The prospect of Harris becoming the presumptive nominee has reignited our faith in the Democratic Party. Although I'm not yet 18 and can't vote, I'm thrilled to campaign for her, and my boyfriend is eagerly looking forward to casting his vote in her favor.

While we remain registered Independents for now, we're optimistic about the direction the Democratic Party is taking. This positive shift has us considering rejoining the party in the future.

It's a go for Project Coconut, and we're

excited about the possibility of seeing a Madame President in our youth.

Devon Lawson and Abraham Constantino
Walterville

Beware the Amendment

Coming to you in November, courtesy of three commissioners on the county board, is a politically motivated amendment to the County Charter which will enable new commissioner districts in 2026 that will be based on outdated 2020 census numbers. However, the Charter itself allows for redistricting "not less than every 10 years." The last redistricting was in 2021 (one year late due to COVID) and the next lawful redistricting process is scheduled for 2030.

The districts these three commissioners want immediately did not have enough board support in 2020 to get 'er done. Therefore, according to Commissioner Pat Farr, the existing districts were enacted by an undemocratic process.

Note that what they wanted four years ago came from the same private citizen who put forward what will be put to you, the voters, in November. This required subverting the County Charter Review Committee recommendations.

It is clear their intent is gerrymandering East Lane County to cement what they expect to be a four person right leaning majority for years to come. And so, on a 3-2 vote they have pushed through a board order at the 11th hour that enables actions that have had no public vetting.

Please pay attention to this ballot issue.

Hope Vaccher

Eugene

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 250 words and include your address and phone number for our files. Email to letters@eugeneweekly.com, fax to 484-4044 or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

Local & Vocal

Viewpoint by Eugene Pride Board

More Than a Festival

Pride in the Park is a life-saving event for many and needs the support of community leaders

For 30 years, Eugene Pride has been an annual tradition for our area's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other LGBTQ+ community, and it has been the only consistent cultural tradition of the queer, trans, and gender diverse community during that time. Throughout, we have learned, grown and changed.

We are an all-volunteer led and run 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Over the past several years, due to the tireless work of the Pride board and volunteers, the festival has grown to include close to 300 sponsors and vendors with booths. Many of these businesses are owned by queer youth and emerging entrepreneurs who are opening small businesses and making their start.

Additionally, the festival showcases 153 drag queens, musicians, comedians, dancers, poets and other artists who express themselves on our two stages to a crowd of over 12,000 people. This is the work of PRIDE — Promoting Respect in Diverse Expression for arts and culture in the LGBTQ+ community.

Eugene Pride is not just a party or festival — it is a life-saving event for many.

Over the years, Pride has incorporated offerings that really sustain our community. We have a Sober Circle where queers and trans folks in recovery can still be in community while maintaining their sobriety and building a network of support year-round. We offer an Interfaith Area where faith organizations can work to undo centuries of trauma inflicted on our communities.

Our Youth Zone offers the chance for LGBTQ+ parents to meet each other and for queer, trans and gender diverse youth to express themselves through art, activities and fun. We have a large clothing swap and offer free gender-diverse haircuts so that people can feel comfortable in their bodies. We also offer a Veterans Village where community members who served our country can navigate various resources that are available to them.

No other venue or organization in Eugene offers so much to the LGBTQ+ community in a single day. This year, we estimate more than 100 people will be tested for HIV and, if they receive a positive result, will get immediately connected to care in a supportive environment. More than 100 nonprofits will raise awareness around their services and connect the LGBTQ+ community to jobs, resources and support. Others will receive health care at our medical tent from doctors and nurses who are volunteering their time.

People will meet their first partner at Pride. Some will be openly queer for the first time. Others will see friends they haven't seen in years. Some will see that they are not alone and that it's worth it to keep going; that a community cares about them. People find themselves at Pride.

As we have worked to grow the Pride festival to attend to the needs and wants of the LGBTQ+ community, we have tried to be respectful members of our larger community. We get out of the city's way by having our event in August to avoid being in conflict with the University of Oregon commencement, track and field events, Juneteenth and the other events in the area during Pride month.

Today, it feels as if we have to struggle to even have this one day, a struggle we are proud to share with each other and with our movement's heroes — people like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and other transgender women of color and drag queens.

After sustained public pressure, including appealing directly to our Eugene City Council, we finally have what we need to produce the festival, despite getting those answers less than three weeks before the event. We have received enough parking to ensure our attendees with

disabilities, entertainers, sponsors and vendors as well as volunteers and organizers can access and park in Alton Baker Park where our event is held. Limited parking for four-plus carpools will also be available on a first-come first-serve basis, but no other public parking will be offered.

Please do not attempt to drive into Alton Baker Park!

We have arranged shuttles from sites around Eugene, and you are strongly encouraged to park on the side of the river where you reside or are traveling from. LTD is providing a code that will be posted on our website so that you can ride the bus free to Pride, and we will offer free bike valet, as well. All transportation options, including a map, can be viewed on our website.

It is telling that we can bring 60,000-plus football fans to the same neighborhood where Pride is held, but getting 12,000 to the same area requires public outcry.

We bring the whole world to Eugene to watch a track meet, but we struggle to get our local LGBTQ+ community what it needs to organize a one-day festival. We have some great advocates on city staff who are doing their best to support this event, and we are incredibly grateful for their support.

However, we need leadership that values our community, not only with words of support, but with action and prioritization.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making Eugene Pride happen. It is a truly amazing community event, and this year will be no different.

Happy Pride!

The Eugene Pride Board of Directors is Max Skorodinsky, Helen Shepard, Kim Marks, Elizabeth Rickert, Andrew Horan, Brooks McLain, Jerry Kovac and Nick West.

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