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OREGON LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

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who to blame

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OPINION

letters

From the Mims Family to Housing

The Legacy of the Mims Family

Thanks to G. B. Lawrence for reminding and informing readers of the critical part the Mims family played in accommodating not only Black University of Oregon athletes but a succession of traveling non-white artists, entertainers and speakers during a period of racial segregation and exclusion (“Helping Preserve A Legacy,” EW, 1/16).

In 1980 I worked for Housing and Community Conservation (HCC), whose purpose was to provide low-interest loans to bring deficient housing up to code. We expected one loan to serve as a catalyst for others, and to a large extent that occurred, especially in the east butte area where the Mims property is located.

The affordable, federally funded loan on which I worked with the Mims family as a housing inspector literally provided the foundation and structure that helped preserve the architectural and cultural integrity and significance of both houses on the site. Many of the homes in east butte, and elsewhere in Eugene as well, were restored, directly or indirectly, with HCC loans.

Sadly, funding for the agency dried up in the early 1980s, but its legacy lives on, largely unrecognized, in housing throughout Eugene’s historic communities.

Robert Emmons
Fall Creek

An Idea for Punishment

“Baxter-Krause also faces up to two years in federal prison” (EW online, 1/22).

If corporate polluters were sentenced to a prison in a cancer alley, would their defense lawyers protest cruel and unusual punishment?

David Hoffman
Eugene

The Hidden Costs of Housing

The viewpoint — “Strengthening Democracy” by Diana Bilovsky (EW, 1/16) — misses key points of unaffordable housing.

Often ignored housing costs include excessive costs to buy or sell a home of 6 percent due to collusion and price fixing in the real estate industry. The 6 percent adds zero value to a home and is around 2 percent in Europe. If a person sells then buys, that is a cost of 12 percent.

Big government expenses of excessive property taxes, building permit fees, costs of sewer and storm water as well as corruption in politics make home ownership unaffordable for many.

The solution is to reduce the size of our wasteful, inefficient big government funded by the above taxes and fees by ending the city manager type government and replacing it with a business with a board of directors voted on by taxpayers, similar to EWEB. We can achieve much

greater services with much less cost with a business-oriented organization, and allow competition from other sectors in the private industry. Due to lack of competition and forced use of our bloated government and entrenched bureaucrats, we will not get anywhere until major changes are made.

And get politicians to allow a maximum of 2 percent real estate commissions and costs.

Gary Cook
Eugene

Choking on Emissions

I think it’s time that Eugene started emissions controls on all vehicles. The air here has gotten worse. What would it take to institute this?

Randi Briscoe
Eugene

A Decision in Poor Taste

The recent actions of the Eugene 4J school board regarding our current principal Nain Muñoz and his resignation has sparked some heated discussions in the community and has reminded people of past events where 4J has also not had the community in mind.

As a 12th grader at NEHS, I personally am not too surprised they chose not to reconsider his resignation because in my 12 years attending school in this district, they’ve never really impressed me with the choices they make.

Regardless of my personal opinion, though, it is a little shocking that they would make this decision considering the uproar from staff and students retelling stories and sharing how he’s the best administrator our school has had in a long time, but also because that just leaves yet another school in our already understaffed district without a principal.

Unfortunately, 4J is known for making poor decisions regarding its students. For example, all the false promises they made regarding Japanese immersion school Yujin Gakuen and their building. In short, 4J promised them the old North Eugene High School building, but in the end they were pushed to a bunch of portables in the south hills.

In conclusion regarding our principal, I think 4J needs to open its eyes and realize leaving yet another school without a very loved administrator is just poor taste.

Emily Harness
Eugene

Railyard Concerns

Union Pacific, a Class I railroad that currently owns/operates the railyard and tracks in Eugene, has filed for approval to lease this yard to Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP), a Class III operation.

Union Pacific’s Transportation Division union members expressed concern about this transition, and opposed the lease as it will impact the quality of maintenance of the railroad. Union Pacific employs highly skilled union workers, whereas CORP is not held to this same standard.

UP railroad employees handle railcars full of toxic materials on a daily basis. Union Pacific has also been responsible for ongoing groundwater cleanup efforts in Eugene for many years.

CORP’s mismanagement of the Coos Bay branch line shows a pattern of fail-