

ure to maintain infrastructure and safeguard communities. A Class III railroad like CORP lacks the financial resources to prevent or respond to a disaster, leaving taxpayers to bear the costs and health risks. This is not acceptable!

Will the non-union CORP management take on the responsibility of protecting their employees, and Eugene's citizen's water and soil, or will they abandon these

critical environmental protections like they did in Coos Bay, a much smaller operation?

It is critical that Class I standards be upheld at this railyard! This lease is dangerous. We must prioritize public health and safety while preventing future disasters and contamination in the middle of our city!

Robin Bloomgarden
Eugene

Local & Vocal Viewpoint by Rene Gonzalez

NOT AN ISOLATED INCIDENT

Racism in Eugene after the inauguration of Donald Trump

Growing up in Eugene, I always felt proud of the open-minded and inclusive community that welcomed me. The sense of belonging and support was palpable when my family and I first moved here from Mexico in 2015.

However, after living in Louisiana for three years and then returning to Eugene, I've found myself in disbelief that such open racism is now present in our community today. It's hard to reconcile this Eugene with the place I remember, a city that I thought was far beyond this kind of hate and ignorance.

I usually try to avoid the topic of politics, but things have reached a point where I can't stay quiet anymore. I've been holding this in for a while, but seeing how things have been progressing, I feel like I have to speak out.

The day after Donald Trump took office, I had experiences at the coffee shop I work at — all in one day — that stuck with me, and I'm not sure it would have happened the same way before his election. It was a series of comments and interactions, but they all felt like a gut punch.

I had a customer tell me to "go back to Mexico."

Another mockingly called me "*mucha-cho*." Then another pointed at the "*bienvenidos*" pin on my apron and asked me why I was wearing it, as if my identity was up for debate. But the worst part? The customer who asked me where I was from, and when I said "Tijuana," he told me my English was "too good" for that to be true. Then, he tipped me 75 cents and

said it was for me to "go back to Tijuana."

It was like he was giving me permission to be a second-class citizen, as if I didn't belong here.

And it didn't stop there. Another customer, a regular, refused to have me make her drink simply because of my background, and a group of teenagers mocked me in front of my face, smirking and saying "*gracias*" as if it was some kind of joke.

This isn't just some isolated incident. It's the reality for a lot of us, especially those of us who are trying to live and work in this country. This is how people are acting, and it's being given a pass. These aren't just random strangers — these are people who I know, who I interact with regularly and who, in some way, are connected to everyone reading. That's what's so disheartening.

This isn't just about me. This is about my family, my friends and people who look like me — because if I'm treated like this, it's only a matter of time before it impacts someone else you know. I live with the fear that one day, my parents could be taken away from me. That fear is real.

I've always tried to stay out of the political discourse, but I can't ignore it anymore. When this kind of hate and discrimination is allowed to fester, it's not just affecting me, it's affecting all of us. It's a reminder that silence in the face of injustice is part of the problem. So I'm speaking up, because this matters — for me, for my family and for the people who may not have a voice.

Please, don't let this be the new normal. Let's not forget that we're all human, and we all deserve respect and dignity.

Rene Gonzalez is from Tijuana, Mexico, grew up in Eugene and recently moved back to Oregon after three years in Louisiana.

slant still Free

BY EW EDITORIAL STAFF

>> It's Groundhog Day on Sunday, Feb. 2, and Donald Trump's nonstop executive orders have been giving us that "This again?" feeling every morning. We were impressed by the community members who gave heartfelt public comments at the Jan. 28 Lane County Board of Commissioners meeting in response to Trump's attacks on trans people. We applaud Commission Laurie Trieger's response — she said, "Sometimes decorum is one of the most powerful tools of oppression, and it is not always OK to comply. And this is one of those times." She calls this moment in our country's history, "uniquely dangerous." Board Chair David Loveall, on the other hand — WTF dude? Women, immigrants, trans and queer folks and their supporters told of their fears, and while he started off well, thanking the commenters, he moved onto things like, "Our president only indicates that he is reading his Bible as he should." Find a link to the meeting at EugeneWeekly.com.

>> You can also find on EugeneWeekly.com (with no paywall or login) a review of the Eugene Symphony performance with music director candidate and conductor Tania Miller, and Bricks \$ Mortar columnist Christian Wihtol with the breaking news last week on J.H. Baxter & Co. and its president, Georgia Baxter-Krause, pleading guilty Jan. 22 to federal criminal charges of illegally boiling off hazardous waste into the atmosphere at the company's now-defunct Eugene plant and lying about it to regulators. There's also an interview with Commissioner Laurie Trieger — it's one of several swan song pieces by now-former reporter Bentley Freeman who has moved into an ad sales position here at the Weekly.

>> Speaking of transitions — and the ad sales that keep this commie rag afloat — Eugene Weekly welcomes Dave Newman as our new advertising manager. Cuchulain Kelly (who somehow managed to sell ads and enter NPR's Tiny Desk Concert

contest multiple times) will be heading to the East Coast. Those who know him from Eugene's music scene can follow him at CuchulainKelly.com. Newman has an extensive background in news and media (and not gonna lie, cannabis journalism) and has hit the ground running. You can hit him up at Dave@EugeneWeekly.com or give him a call at 541-484-0519.

>> City Club of Eugene is meeting at the University of Oregon Many Nations Longhouse at noon Friday, Jan. 31 for its forum, "Preparing the Next Generation of Indigenous Leaders." Three current Indigenous leaders will speak: Jason Younker, chief of the Coquille Tribe; Christina Thomas, member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the the 2024-2025 cultural ambassador at UO; and Te'E Philips Brown, member of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians and the 2024-2025 Mr. Indigenous at UO. The three will speak about tribal governance and the opportunities UO offers for students to participate in and assume leadership positions on campus.

>> Hey you book lovers! Literary Arts announced the finalists for the 2025 Oregon Book Awards. Among the finalists for the Ken Kesey Award For Fiction is Miriam Gershow of Eugene for *Survival Tips: Stories* (Propeller Books) and Charlie J. Stephens of Port Orford for *A Wounded Deer Leaps Highest* (Torrey House Press). Finalists for the Frances Fuller Victor Award For General Nonfiction include University of Oregon professor Courtney Thorsson for *The Sisterhood: How a Network of Black Women Writers Changed American Culture* (Columbia University Press), and in the running for Sarah Winnemucca Award For Creative Nonfiction is Jaclyn Moyer of Corvallis for *On Gold Hill: A Personal History of Wheat, Farming, and Family, from Punjab to California* (Beacon Press). The winners will be announced April 28 at the 2025 Oregon Book Awards Ceremony.



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- 2 **JumpStart** - before school program to help students focus on academics.
- 3 **PE Recess** - ensures all students exercise during recess.
- 4 **Trainer in Residence 2** - teaches advanced skills; dance, tumbling & track.
- 5 **Prep Time PE** - gives teachers prep time while keeping students active.
- 6 **Healthy Assessments** - assist schools in completing mandatory fitness assessments for all.
- 7 **Healthy Moves in the Community** - give families opportunities to stay active outside the classroom.
- 8 **Digital Curriculum** - Educational Fitness Videos for teachers & parents who teach distance learning in schools and small spaces.
- 9 **Online Classes** - Looking for online educational fitness/PE classes for kids? Contact Denise to find out more about our 30-40 minute classes offered weekly this fall.