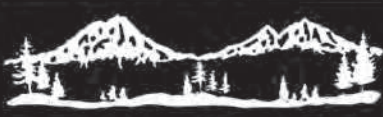




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OPINION

letters

TREES,
HOMELESSNESS
AND PROTESTS

Helping, Not Complaining

Bastille Day and the Chamber of Commerce came to the Eugene City Council in full strength July 14. No less than three bank CEOs threatened to pull out of Eugene if the city didn't "clean" downtown of its unsightly homeless and street crazies.

Law firms joined the chorus, and a beautiful 12-year-old girl testified to being traumatized by some guy yelling at her. Although they admitted that crime downtown was down 6 percent, they insisted that perceptions were more important than statistics. And the perception of everyone is that downtown is unsafe.

They concluded by pledging to be ready to do anything to assist the city in "revitalizing" downtown. They outlined no suggestions besides more police, but I think their offer was magnanimous and should be accepted at face value.

Here are some modest proposals. If there are too many homeless downtown, I'm sure some of the speakers could accommodate more than a few tents on their estates. Right? Drug addicts on the sidewalk? Why don't the bankers set up a competition to see which of them can sponsor the most addicts into treatment? Crazies yelling at respectable customers? What we need is a service — say, vans with crisis workers dispatched to help out on the streets?

All it would take is money — and perhaps a wealth tax would cover it? What would we call it?

Bottom line? We can round up the homeless, addicted, mentally ill and CECOT them. Or tax the wealth and take care of them.

Jack Radey
Eugene

Lousy Corporate Citizenship

The Springfield police officers July 17 were perfectly cordial when they came to let protesters on the highway overpass know the mall would be towing cars parked at the Gateway Mall after 6 pm during the Good Trouble Lives On demonstration. Seems like a bold, anti-customer move on the part of the mall, given the emptiness of the lot (we could see dozens of empty spots from the bridge) and years of declining business. One more reason to choose to shop elsewhere — lousy corporate citizenship.

Amalia Gladhart
Eugene

More Than the Music

The heritage beech tree in the north parking lot of The Shedd Institute on 8th Avenue and High Street is one of the best trees in downtown Eugene. It shades 12 cars on these increasingly hot days, and looking out from under the tree at the other

parking lots in view, I see trees that are stressed and failing to thrive. This one, a glorious 100-year-old European beech with bronzy foliage, is four times the mass of its siblings despite having asphalt up to the trunk. It must have tapped into an underground stream.

The parking lot is slated for repavement after the completion of The Shedd remodel, and I am concerned that this tree will be cut down to facilitate easy, cost-effective paving. When considering the value that trees add to the community (in oxygen, habitat, green nature good for mental health, shade that cools the urban core as climate heats us up), removal of this heritage tree is not cost effective.

Even if replacement trees are incorporated into the new lot, many of us will not live to park under their shade. Besides, will the new trees have what it takes to tap into the underground stream, or will they fail to thrive due to lack of water and increasing temperatures?

Go on a field trip downtown, compare this tree to others, and you will discover that not all of The Shedd's treasures are music lessons and performances inside the building.

Teresa Mueller
Eugene

The City Must Move on Homelessness

This is in response to Nadine Powell's letter "Trash, Trash, Trash" (EW, 7/17). I understand your frustration with the trash of the unhoused. I have picked up after them on the streets, by the river many times, railroads, parks — I've given up!

Until the city of Eugene and Mayor Kaarin Knudson make it their priority to team with a nonprofit and make simple housing a priority, like they do at Community Supported Shelters, and also put a bathroom or two downtown, we will continue to have tons of garbage from the unhoused.

When someone is unhoused, they are trying to survive, exhausted. Their basic needs for garbage, some place to sleep (without being moved), water and a place to pee/poop are not always accessible. (Of course, there will always be a few who don't care. Most do, but don't have stable basic needs and resources.) There is still a waiting list for the unhoused, so until we have ample conestoga huts to get them off the streets, out of the parks and river areas, we will need to put up with or have compassion for the unhoused's garbage.

Gerilyn Van
Eugene

Does the City Work?

It has been over 10 months since I contacted the city to fix the parking issue on West 12th and Charnelton Street. Last year somebody (or some group of people) vandalized the meters in this downtown area and stole them. So ever since then, cars have been parked on these blocks for the whole working hours and there is no space for our clients to park while on business.

Construction workers from the Olive Plaza and other areas and maybe others from the Chapter at Eugene Student Apartments (formerly Capstone)? Who knows. I contacted the city three times, no action. Only one response last year saying they will see what can be done.