

# The Eugene Weekly Saga

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demonstrating the Weekly's commitment to delivering the news in print. Mere survival is not his goal but to see it rise, "like a phoenix."

Zusman brought in Portland-based designer Maggie Gardner, working with art director and production manager, Todd Cooper, for updating the logo and other design elements. Gardner and Cooper advocate more color and vibrant fonts for a "design refresh". Along with Mark as the new interim Publisher, a new position, director of community development, was added and Jody Rolnick, the former editor and publisher of the Cottage Grove Sentinel and an experienced grant writer was brought into the fold. Rolnick continues to focus on increasing pages and growth in revenue as well as reporter resources.

Also there was the addition of a new reporter, Bentley Freeman, a recent University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication grad as well as a former UO Catalyst Journalism Project intern. The Catalyst Journalism Project continues to provide Eugene Weekly with outstanding reporters, including: Sadie Gustafson, Emma J Nelson, Emily Rogers and Amelia Winkelman. Catalyst reporters have accumulated many awards.

And so the legacy of the Eugene Weekly continues with, seemingly, as strong or stronger than ever impact on the community. Not only surviving but thriving (like a rising phoenix, maybe), rebranding the look, making internal improvements, structurally, financially and most importantly forging a journalistic pathway directly to and for the readers.

Now, the elephant in the room is what the hell happened to the accused fraudster and thief, is justice going to find any purchase on this financial assault? Well, they say the wheels of justice turn slowly and in May of 2025, that rings somewhat true, for now.

On April 3, Elisha Young was named and indicted by a Lane County jury on two counts of first-degree theft and three counts of aggravated theft. In May, Eugene Police Department spokesperson Melinda McLaughlin says law enforcement in Whitehall, Ohio, arrested Young on May 6 following her Lane County indictments. The announcements went out, the troops rallied and justice seemed to loom.

Ross Taylor, Georga Taylor's son, said his family supports "a prosecution on all charges, given not just the monetary loss but the pain and angst caused to the employees and Anita, especially. The breach of trust was profound."

He went on to thank the Eugene police and the Lane County District Attorney's office for their efforts. "We also want to express our gratitude to the Eugene community and their support of the weekly paper. The paper's survival through this ordeal wouldn't have happened without their support. Thank you."

Thanks and gratitude faded shortly when Governor Tina Kotek denied to extradite Young from her cell in Ohio to Oregon for prosecution. The shock of this development was profound, especially to those, not only close to the Weekly staff and family but the community in general.

The outrage expressed by all was incredulous, especially within the ranks of the Eugene Weekly senior staff. Why would the Governor put the kybosh on the scales of justice? Soon there were rumors and conspiracy whispers swirling but no answers would come until Governor Kotek reversed the decision on May 27. A spokesperson for the governor's office said "community concern" was a factor in deciding to bring Young back to Oregon to face the charges. Elisha Young, 38, was extradited from Ohio and lodged in Lane County Jail on July 2nd and arraigned on the declared charges in a Lane County Circuit Court on June 3. She has a pre-trial hearing scheduled for Aug. 7.

So it is yet to be seen how the prosecution and trial will proceed, but it does signal a reckoning of sorts for the little newspaper that could. Not a goliath but a mighty voice for Freedom of the Press and Power of the People, the Eugene Weekly continues to beat the odds of survival and to wave it's banner. How the wheels will turn is not known at this time, but regardless of the outcome the Eugene Weekly will power on.

Anita Johnson died in December 2024 at the age of 95. With Anita's death, her approximately 60% stake in the Weekly now goes into a family trust for her four children. Art Johnson, her husband, passed away in 2022. Derek said his siblings are prepared to give up their share to editor, Camilla Mortensen. He said his mother loved the paper's current editor-in-chief, and she had hoped this would happen once she was gone.

"She wanted [the Weekly] to continue being a voice in the community, taking on city hall, that old line," said Derek. "She did not want to sell it to someone from Chicago, or Gannett. She wanted it to be local, and the best way to have it be local was to have the people who knew how to run the paper take it over."

Camilla Mortensen is certainly ready to take on that role. She said the paper's other partial owner, Georga Taylor, Fred's widow, also approves of the plan.

The soon-to-be co-owner of Eugene Weekly, has been instrumental in the paper's recovery and charting its new path forward after facing significant challenges including the embezzlement and staffing reductions. Camilla's vision and plans for Eugene Weekly revolve around ensuring its long-term financial stability, restoring its full operational capacity, maintaining its independent spirit and community voice, and continuing its legacy of providing valuable local journalism to the people of Eugene.

However, Mortensen said her majority ownership may be short-lived. Moving forward, she's looking to make the Weekly a community-owned newspaper, using a nonprofit or a perpetual-purpose trust.

Jody Rolnick, the Weekly's publisher, said that transition could happen in as early as a year. In the meantime, Mortensen said the public likely won't notice any changes to the Eugene Weekly, which continues to release new issues each Thursday.

# Attorney General Rayfield

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promoting or marketing opioids and opioid products, making or selling any product that contains more than 40 mg of oxycodone per pill, and are required to put in place a monitoring and reporting system for suspicious orders. Indivior has agreed to not manufacture or sell opioid products for the next 10 years, but it will be able to continue marketing and selling medications to treat opioid use disorder.

The settlements were negotiated by North Carolina, California, Colorado, Illinois, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, and Virginia.

In Oregon, settlement funds are distributed:

45% to the state: Directed into the Opioid Settlement Prevention, Treatment, and

Recovery Fund, established by Oregon statute in 2022.

55% to counties and cities: Distributed to support local opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery programs.

The \$10.1 million recovery for Oregon in this settlement is in addition to the approximately \$700 million Oregon will receive from settlements entered into since July 2021 in national lawsuits against several pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors and retailers for their role in the opioid crisis – including a \$66 million settlement agreement announced in June from the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma.

# Lower Umpqua Library Notes



Lower Umpqua Library District (LULD) is having an active summer! While library cards (free for district residents) are required to borrow (take home) library materials, such as books and DVDs, everyone is welcome to participate in library events, regardless of residency or cardholder status.

Participants (ages 0-18) in the Summer Reading Program read for the chance to win prizes! Stop by the library to participate in the following special events for the Summer Reading Program and to pick up take-home crafts:

Wednesday, July 09th at 11 am: Smokey Bear is coming to the library!

Wednesday, July 16th at 11 am: Umpqua Soil and Water

Wednesday, July 30th at 11:30 am Umpqua Valley Beekeepers

Wednesday, August 06th at 11 am: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Wednesday, August 13th at 11 am: Reedsport

K9 Shelter

Wednesday, August 20th at 11 am: Event celebrating the end of the Summer Reading Program

In addition to the Summer Reading Program events, a board game club will meet at 2 pm on Fridays, although the library will be closed for the 4th of July holiday. Board games, playing cards, Magic: the Gathering cards, and puzzles may also be used inside the library at any time. Puzzles, playing cards, Magic cards, and chess sets may also be borrowed in the same manner as books, but the other games are library-use only. Please call, email, or visit the library if you would like more information or to use the library's games, cards, or puzzles.

LULD's board of director meetings are held at 6 pm on the second Tuesday of every month, unless otherwise noted. The exact date and agenda for the upcoming meeting can be found on the library website at: <https://www.luld.org/library-board-minutes>. The July meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 08th at 6 pm.

Knit and Crochet Group meets every Thursday at 4 pm. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

Alex Kuestner, Library Director/District Manager  
Lower Umpqua Library District  
395 Winchester Ave Reedsport, Oregon 97467  
(541) 271-3500 [www.luld.org](http://www.luld.org)

# Summer Reading Schedule

Programs are geared for all ages unless otherwise specified.

JUNE	June 17	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Teen D&D Session 1 **Teen Program**
	June 18	Wednesday @ 1 PM: Kick Off Party + Children's Author Visit
	June 19	Thursday @ 4 PM: Lego Club
JULY	June 24	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Level Up Life Skills **Teen & Adult Program**
	June 25	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
	June 26	Thursday @ 4 PM: Tween & Teen Movie! **Teen Program**
	June 28	Saturday @ 12 PM: "Bring Your Own Book" Book Club **Adult Program**
AUGUST	July 1	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Board Game Club
	July 2	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
	July 3	Thursday @ 4 PM: Lego Club
	July 4	Friday: Library Closed for 4th of July holiday
	July 8	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Teen Tie Dye with Victoria **Teen Program**
	July 9	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
	July 10	Thursday @ 4 PM: Tween & Teen Movie! **Teen Program**
	July 12	Saturday @ 12 PM: Garden Club **Adult Program**
	July 15	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Teen D&D Session 2 **Teen Program**
	July 16	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
July 17	Thursday @ 4 PM: Lego Club	
AUGUST	July 22	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Level Up Life Skills **Teen & Adult Program**
	July 23	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
	July 24	Thursday @ 4 PM: Tween & Teen Movie! **Teen Program**
	July 25	Friday @ 5 PM: Local Author Night **Adult Program**
	July 26	Saturday @ 12 PM: "Bring Your Own Book" Book Club **Adult Program**
	July 29	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Board Game Club
	July 30	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
	July 31	Thursday @ 4 PM: Summer Reading Craft Make Up / Repeat A Craft
	August 5	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Friendship Bracelet Bookmarks **Teen Program**
	August 6	Wednesday @ 1 PM: All Ages Story & Craft
August 7	Thursday @ 4 PM: Lego Club	
August 9	Saturday @ 12 PM: Garden Club **Adult Program**	
AUGUST	August 12	Tuesday @ 1 PM: Teen D&D Session 3 **Teen Program**
	August 13	Wednesday @ 5 PM: Family Night, grand prize giveaway
	August 14	Thursday @ 4 PM: Tween & Teen Movie! **Teen Program** @ 7 PM: YonDr Book Club **Adult Program**

NORTH DOUGLAS LIBRARY DISTRICT'S MILDRED WHIPPLE LIBRARY

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