

Talks cont'd from pg 1

that can sometimes be detrimental to the cause.

“For anybody that comes to our events, they get a different feel for things than from the media story,” McKelvey explained to *The Skanner*. “I’m not going to go to a protest and tell the followers of Portland’s Resistance to intervene

and call the community to action.

The first talk, ‘The Rise of Corporate Rule,’ will hash out how the financial establishment has attained new positions to influence public policy. “There are a lot of examples of work that’s happening here where people are seeing undue

“‘We need to funnel some of the people we have going to protests into workshops and events’

with anybody’s action, because that’s not our job. But what we can do is set a peaceful example, and I think we’ve done a good job in doing that.”

In a gesture to separate itself from violent protest, the resistance is raising money to help repair Portland’s vandalized property.

Having formed “in order to survive a Trump presidency, the rise of White nationalism and the widening income inequality” Portland’s Resistance is striving to connect people to local politics, progressive causes and community development.

It’s why the group has partnered with art and activism group, Know Your City, to ignite a new program called Resistance Talks in an effort to make sense of a nation divided.

“One thing that has seemed to create a lot of conversations and changed peoples’ perception of community is the general election,” said Cameron Whitten, executive director of Know Your Rights.

Beginning in March, the monthly series of talks will cover pressing social justice issues to inspire critical thinking

influence of corporation. That talk is really going to be locally focused,” said Whitten.

Speakers will include People’s Co-op, to discuss how co-ops can help maintain a local economy; Portland Tenants United, which will address renters’ plight in the face of real estate interests; and Direct Action Alliance, the people of color anti-fascism organization, will talk about divestment on a city level. Rounding out the roster is XRAY FM, which will speak on independent media as a conduit for local voices.

“I think one of the main things Portland’s Resistance can do in this partnership is amplify the message,” said McKelvey. “It’s going to be all for nothing if all we do is protest. So we need to funnel some of the people we have going to protests into workshops and events, such as the Resistance Talks.”

Next month’s talk will focus on the First Amendment, attacks against the press, freedom of assembly, and police use of excessive force.

Read the rest of this story at TheSkanner.com

Misdemeanor cont'd from pg 1

who stressed the importance of wiser spending with a looming \$1.7 billion state deficit. “The War of Drugs has also been unfair. People of color possess drugs at the same rate as everyone else, but they are more likely to be arrested and convicted here in Oregon.”

Statewide, more than 4,000 people annually are convicted of drug possession, yet African Americans in Oregon were convicted of felony drug possession at more than double the rate of Whites in 2015, according to a major study by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.

“We know that Oregonians from across the state support a different approach,” Rogers said.

The survey of 600 registered Oregon voters from various demographics was conducted between January 26 – 29, 2017 by GBA Strategies, and is subject to a +/- 4 percent error margin. Of seven different criminal justice and public safety issues presented to voters, drugs

were the top concern, at 43 percent, followed by over-spending on incarceration and prisons at 30 percent.

The support of lesser consequences for drug offenders can be linked to an-

“‘People of color possess drugs at the same rate as everyone else, but they are more likely to be arrested and convicted here in Oregon’

other statistic the survey uncovered: nearly two-thirds of Oregonians (64 percent), across genders and political parties, know someone who has struggled with drug addiction.

Underscoring the urgency for reclassification is the fact that most misdemeanors can be expunged, whereas felonies cannot. Such a conviction can tarnish offenders’ records for life and hinder them from accessing employment, education, and housing.

Cody Roberts is a mentor at the 4th Dimension Recovery Center. After

struggling with drug addiction which led to a felony conviction, Roberts sought treatment and put his life back on track. But, he said, the felony still lingers over every opportunity to bet-

ter his working or living situation.

“Today, I work with guys who are dealing with the same thing,” Roberts said during the press conference. “These are successful people, they’re educated, but they still have to deal with a felony for having been addicted to drugs and being caught with a small amount. They can’t move forward with their lives, and frankly it discourages them. (Some) end of returning back to what they were doing.”

Read the full story at TheSkanner.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mohamed Alyajouri Joins PCC Board

The Portland Community College Board of Directors has officially appointed Mohamed Alyajouri, healthcare integration manager for the Oregon Primary Care Association, to serve on behalf of Zone 6. Additionally, Jim Harper, who represents downtown Portland and portions of Columbia County (Zone 4), has been named board vice chair. Harper has served on the PCC Board of Directors since 2005. Alyajouri replaces Gene Pitts, who resigned from the board late last year. As the Zone 6 official, Alyajouri will represent Yamhill County, east Washington County and Southwest Portland for the remainder of the term, which runs through June 2017. He can run for election to the PCC Board in May 2017; the new term will begin July 1. The PCC Board of Directors consists of seven members elected by zones to four-year terms. Board members govern the college, which includes selecting the president, approving the college budget, and establishing policies that govern the operation of the college. Alyajouri, a Beaverton resident, currently serves on numerous local boards including as the board president of New City Initiative, a board member of Oregon Public Health Association, and the co-chair of Muslim Educational Trust’s outreach committee.

Rest cont'd from pg 1

as the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon.

It defines the ability to rest, move freely, pray and eat in public spaces as rights – and makes it illegal for law enforcement to deny those rights.

“We have public spaces for a reason. They’re for public use,” ACLU of Oregon’s legislative director, Kimberly McCullough, said at a Friday organizing meeting and informational session at Sisters of the Road Café in downtown Portland.

According to McCullough, the law would directly challenge a web of 225 city and county ordinances around the state that target resting, eating in public, sleeping in public or resting in public places and disproportionately target people living outdoors. If passed, it would allow those targeted to complain to the Bureau of Labor and Industry and challenge arrests or citations in civil court. Defense attorneys would also have the ability to challenge

such charges as illegal and have them dropped.

She also noted people of color, people with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender people – especially LGBT youth, who are disproportionately represented among street youth

“‘We have public spaces for a reason. They’re for public use’

– are more likely to be singled out by these laws pushed out by homeless sweeps. According to Multnomah County’s 2015 homeless count, African Americans made up 24 percent of the county’s homeless population, but were just 7 percent of the county’s general population.

And African Americans in Multnomah County are more likely to be targeted at every tier of the criminal justice system, according to an exhaustive review of court records released earlier this year by the investigative reporting nonprofit InvestigateW-

est in a partnership with Pamplin Media. That includes citations for minor violations such as transit violations and jaywalking – and courts tend to charge Black residents higher fees.

Just how many people in Oregon are cited or arrested under camp-

ing or sit-lie ordinances is hard to ascertain, since these ordinances are categorized differently and will be referred to different courts depending on whether the defendant receives a civil citation or an arrest.

Jane James, a community court attorney for Metropolitan Public Defenders, told *The Skanner* the offense in this category that’s most frequently referred to her office is erecting a temporary structure in a public place – that is, setting up a tent outside.

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PHOTO BY MELANIE SEVCENKO

David Rogers, executive director of the ACLU of Oregon, talks about the results of a recent poll showing most Oregonians favor reducing sentences for drug possession during a Wednesday morning press conference.