

*Random Last-minute Ramblings.* Oh boy, skimming all these Whither Portland essays has been stimulating . . . Jerri and Sally's contributions in particular echoed many of my thoughts (as did Anne's which just landed in my inbox). But I will confess that my heart and energy are focused on federal issues (Storm the Midterms!). This in spite of my rewarding experience working at the county and state levels in the 70's. We now live, to put it mildly, in different times.

I do want to call out Don Clark, a principled, innovative and effective Multnomah County Executive. He said that the county was poor people's government and that in this country we don't let people die in the streets. That was foresighted, fearless and compassionate leadership that led to stopping freeways, 40-mile loops, Hooper Detox, college degrees for sheriffs . . .

When Neil and Vera and all those people Sally mentioned were leading, we were not overwhelmed with the environmental and social displacement issues we face today. The problems of homelessness, police behavior and affordable housing may be insoluble and the progress immeasurable, but they are inescapable, partly because they have changed the nature of the dialogue between citizens and policy-makers.

Speaking as a grandmother with children and grandchildren here in Portland I am painfully aware of the deterioration of public schools that Kim described, the shockingly high cost of childcare for working parents, the lack of paid parental leave.

I believe in the importance of local action, but the problems we face cannot be solved locally. It is going to take federal and state commitment, cooperation and resources. Yes, we can and should aspire to be local models for solutions, but as long as the folks living on our streets will come here because it is more tolerable than elsewhere, and as long as businesses (and the rich) can move to more tax-friendly locations we won't find sustainable, long-term solutions. And then there's mass incarceration, voter suppression, climate chaos . . .

How do we walk our talk? If we care about the environment should we still be collecting our frequent flyer miles? If we value investigative reporting should we be reading newspapers on line?

So yes, I'll continue to show up for the marches, help out at a soup kitchen, support the candidates who share my values, walk to meetings, drive an electric car, follow Elsa and Muriel anywhere. And yes, I support changing our city's form of government, and mentoring the next generation—which we can do only if we are willing to listen to them in all their diversity and step gracefully aside to make room for them. But I am too often overwhelmed by it all and am grateful to all of you who do, and have done, so much. And to David for prompting this conversation.