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CONCERT WEDNESDAY

'Teamsters and Turtles' concert Wednesday in Ashland helps Healthcare for All cause

by John Darling

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Labor and environmentalists are joining together here for a concert and a little comedy to promote Health Care for All Oregon, a statewide movement for universal coverage.

HCAO on Wednesday is staging a concert, "Teamsters and Turtles," featuring guitarist-singer Anne Feeney, a "labor hellraiser," and noted environmental singer and social commenter Dana Lyons. It starts at 7:30 p.m. at Ashland First Congregational United Church of Christ at 717 Siskiyou Blvd. The suggested donation is \$15, but no one will be turned away. Doors open at 7.

"We're working on creating a system where everyone gets health care when they need it," said HCAO organizer Jason Houk of Ashland. "We're looking at it as a model for the nation."

In addition to raising funds for the drive, Houk says it's a progressive step, showing labor and environmental forces working together — and dispelling the stereotype that environmentalism shrinks jobs, while labor expands them.

"The main struggle with unions and environmentalists," he says, "is what you see with the Keystone pipeline. Labor wants jobs for communities and to preserve traditional employment. The environmentalists want to preserve land and resources. It's not usual for them to sit at the same table. But resources need to be preserved for sustainable development. These different ways can work together. It's traditionally been loggers vs. EarthFirsters. But they are on the same side when faced with a bigger threat, like climate change and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. These are places where environment and labor find common ground."

HCAO has 110 chapters throughout the state and was active in recent passage of House Bill 2828, for a two-year study of best options for financing health care in Oregon, says Houk, who is also an organizer with Southern Oregon Jobs With Justice.

"We look at universal health care as the best way to go, the one that cuts most of the profit out of the system." Another path, he adds, is expansion of Medicare.

Feeny, based in Pittsburgh, says her music is designed to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Not many women have chosen to walk the path of Woody Guthrie, notes Houk, in a statement, but Feeney has made a career of it for 35 years.

"In 2009 Anne Feeney, union maid, hell-raiser and labor singer, energized crowds from L.A. to Bellingham with her Sing Out for Single Payer Road Show. Accompanied by Bob Wickline, David Rovics, and others, she will be back in Oregon in July, this time with her 'Teamsters and Turtles – Together at Last!' Tour. The music of Warrior/Activist Dana

Lyons, is described as a blend of rock, folk, tongue-in-cheek humor, environmentalism, and political critique.”

Capt. Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, said, "Every movement has its minstrel. The unions had Woody Guthrie. The peace movement had Phil Ochs. The environmental movement has Dana Lyons” — the singer/songwriter best known for his hit comedy songs “Cows With Guns,” “RV” and “Ride The Lawn.”

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