

Corruption or Mismanagement?

Congratulations to John McLaughlin and *Lane County Living* for daring to speak up about a rather dubious contract made by the City of Eugene. In case you haven't seen McLaughlin's article, "Corruption at the Hult Center," published in the recent *Lane County Living* supplement, the gist of it is that the City made a huge error and has been unwilling or unable to make amends.

In April of 1983, the City entered into a 15-year contract with a local individual to print the Hult Center playbill/magazine *OnStage*. Since that agreement was made, *OnStage* publisher Jerry O'Brien (Regina Publications) has received tens of thousands of dollars from the City for this service.

The City maintains that one must pay for professional quality services and, of course, one must. However, when O'Brien was awarded this contract, the publishers of *What's Happening* (who incidentally submitted a proposal to print a very similar looking product) were told that the Hult Center had found someone to print the playbill at no cost to the City. Since then, a total of \$48,136 has been paid to Regina Publications—\$40,000 of which was awarded in June of 1984 as "back payment" which the City had not expected to pay!

Also at question here is the fact that after awarding that contract to Regina Publications, the Hult Center stopped advertising with both *Lane County Living* and *What's Happening*, even though WH is a free publication specializing in the arts and entertainment—an obvious place for the Hult Center to advertise. Two years ago, when the Hult Center and WH were just starting up, such advertising could have greatly benefitted both the Center and WH.

Even more confusing, was the refusal to provide WH with press releases, photographs of performers, and other background materials which WH was willing to print at no cost to the Hult Center/City of Eugene/taxpayer. We now receive a list of events to include in our calendar, but still no photos, no ads, no support.

Question:

1. Should taxpayer money be used to subsidize a private business at the expense of other small business people?
2. Does the Hult Center really need such a costly "playbill"—actually a magazine? Is *OnStage* the best way to present a playbill when many performances are left out due to prohibitive publication deadlines?
3. Is the subsidy of *OnStage Magazine* a prudent use of taxpayer money, particularly at a time of Hult Center deficits?
4. Is the City guilty of blatant corruption or gross mismanagement?

Since the LCL article was published, the City of Eugene has held a press conference to counter some of McLaughlin's charges. City spokesperson Barbara Bellamy spelled out the financial details and admitted to some past "confusion" regarding the \$40,000 payment. She also revealed that a new contract with Regina Publications was just negotiated (Nov. 28)—reducing the term of the contract to 5 years and doubling the amount of free space allotted to the Hult Center in *OnStage*.

However, many questions remain unanswered:

1. Was the contract awarded in a fair and open manner?

2. Who allowed the \$40,000 bill to accumulate without the City's knowledge?
3. What about the second contract also awarded O'Brien for media-buying services? Is \$400/month plus 15% commission a reasonable and customary rate for such services?
4. Why were the rights to the *OnStage* logo signed over to O'Brien? Didn't the City

pay for the design of this logo for its own use?

5. In whose interest has the City/Hult Center staff been acting?

We're frankly disappointed with the City of Eugene's discretion in these matters, and we'd like to hear a lot more about them. We'd also like to hear from you, our readers, about these issues, your experiences, your feelings. Write to: *What's Happening* Letters, P.O. Box 259, Eugene, OR 97440.

Remember to Remember...

No way to avoid the onslaught of Christmas spending. It's all around us wherever we turn. Ads blatantly tell us where we can "shop for Christmas" as if Christmas itself were a commodity. Well, the truth is that there are so many wonderful things to buy this year—locally made and truly unique—that even if we could avoid it we may not want to!

But in the midst of the consuming—the buying of gifts, the feasting with family and friends—let us remember to remember the less fortunate—the homeless, the hungry, and the many others who are barely making it. Find your favorite charity, public or private agency, and give what you can—money, clothes, a toy, some food. It will be well used and appreciated.

A particularly tragic event impossible to ignore these days is the widespread famine in Ethiopia, affecting thousands daily. Because of its immensity, it seems almost hopeless to try to help. But small donations

do add up and they can be easily made through Oxfam, a world-wide famine relief organization, or the American Friends Service/Ethiopian Relief Fund, or by calling the local office of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) at 485-1755. There will be an organizing meeting for Ethiopian refugee work at the Eugene Public Library on Sunday, Dec. 9, at 2 pm which is another way to get involved.

A particularly pleasant way to make a contribution to the famine relief effort is by attending a benefit dinner at the Keystone Cafe, 395 W 5th, on Saturday, Dec. 8. The menu sounds wonderful—chicken or cheese enchiladas with all the trimmings, prepared by Anita Sullivan of Saturday Market "Empanada" fame, who incidentally also organized this benefit. All food and labor is being donated, so all proceeds go to Ethiopia by way of Oxfam. Fight hunger by eating a delicious meal!

And have a joyous and meaningful holiday!

MARK'S
Flowers & Gifts
2755 Friendly St.
Eugene, OR 97401
485-0628

Miniature Art Show & Sale
during December
Grumbacher Watercolors
30% OFF
while supply lasts
Green Earth Art Center
1155 W. 1st Ave.
484-0889

THE Book Station
"Great Literature by the Gallon."
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345-6211
free parking 6th & Blair

Honey Heaven
• Handmade gift packs
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• Large selection of quality dried fruit and nuts
• Locally made honey pots
also for the holidays... honey cookbooks & beeswax candles
949 Pearl St. 344-5939

ON THE COVER:

Ceramic vase by Faye Nakamura, one of the many pieces featured at this week's Artists' Studio Sale. See article.

What's HAPPENING

Eugene/Springfield's Arts & Entertainment Magazine
Published every Thursday

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Editors
Elisabeth Lyman, Lucia McKelvey, Sonja Ungemach

Production Manager
Sonja Ungemach

Office Manager
Lucia McKelvey

Advertising Manager
Elisabeth Lyman

Advertising Representatives
Jack Craig, Alan Garten, Shelly Singer, Anne Stelter, Martha Wagner

Production Assistant
Nancy Erskine

Calendar Editor
Shelly Singer

Bookkeeper/Receptionist
Sheri Longobardo

Distribution
Dan Steinmetz, Mgr.; Jack Craig, Leonard Harris, Marcos Marotta

Typeset
ProtoType

Camera
Production Department

Printing
Springfield News

What's HAPPENING
335 W. 20th, Eugene, OR 97405
P.O. Box 259, Eugene, OR 97440
(503) 484-0519

Gallagher Gleason & Raven
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1745 Coburg Rd., Suite 2, Eugene, OR 97401
484-1006

New Computer-Assisted Systems Provide The Most Advanced Telephone Answering Service in Lane County ... 344-5211 Since 1947
Personalized • Accurate • Confidential
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Our professional staff will put sparkle in your home this Holiday Season! Special holiday rates.
Dependable • Reliable
345-9174
10% off on first month's cleaning with this ad
Expires December 31, 1984

The Waldorf Education Association warmly invites you to these events
Cascade Valley Waldorf School's
5th Annual Christmas Faire
December 8th 10-4 pm
Handcrafted natural fiber gifts, toys and dolls, games, live music, candle dipping, ornaments, puppet shows, super raffle, home-baked goods and lunches available, and a little people's market.
Free Admission
3411 Willamette 683-6951
(Dunn School)