

peace road. All in all there are some positives and the usual suspects. Pick one, write someone for or against it, e-mail them if you can, talk to people about it. Be creative, be effective, it's fun, it's quick, it's easy, and it's moist and refreshing.

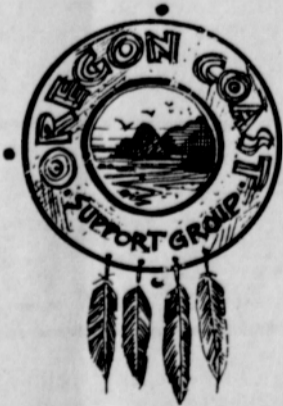
Okay, on to the National level; ugly, ugly, ugly; oh well, it is a duty. We know too much about Dubyah to trust him with our hamburger order let alone our country. Molly Ivins and Doonesbury have nailed him: All hat, no brains. Al Bore; nice guys finish second. Pat Buchanan, big hat, big pile of cow dung; sorry, I might enjoy having a beer with Pat more than I would with most of the folks running, but then I've had a beer with racist homophobes before and enjoyed parts of it; it's a free country, and nicer than Pat thinks. Ralph Nader might run; well, talk; but that's good cause he talks the truth, not a popular thing in politics. But Big Bill and Little Mac seem to be the guys who can win. Bradley seems like he might really work if we put him in the game. McCain seems tough and honest, and has a survivor's instinct. Either one could change this country for the better, but since it looks like the Democrats will take back the House, Bradley would be the most effective. Pick one and vote. Done.

In the Upper Left region, there are a few important things that you can look into and have your opinion as a citizen be heard. Our busy beavers at the Army Corps of Engineers have volunteered to do some heavy lifting for the multi-national corporations, as usual. The latest plan is to dredge the Mighty Columbia from Portland to Astoria, scraping up 36 inches of whatever they find and dumping it off shore. This will allow even bigger ships to deliver more stuff to stuff starved Portland. Or something like that. Also on the agenda these days are plans to undo some previous mistakes made upstream. Plans to breach several dams are seriously being debated. In an effort to save the salmon, there is some very creative thinking going on and as a citizen, you get to be part of that. There are meetings going on all over, there is one in Astoria in February, look it up.

At last back to home. We have a few local things pending, what's going on with the grade school, the shuttle situation, Inspiration Point and the S-Curves, to name a few. I'm sure our new city manager Helen Westbrook encourages dialogue in seeking solutions, so that's your cue. Call someone on the transportation or energy committee, tell them what you think; it's your duty as a responsible citizen. Call Mayor Hood or chat over your wine purchase when you catch her at the store, she's easy. In a village like this we have a rare access to our government: we are our government. Not everyone runs for city council, or is on committees or goes to meetings, but everyone can make a local phone call, or see someone in the post office and have their ideas heard. I'm not suggesting you get in Carmen's face when you see her at the Legion, but a simple, "I'd like to talk to you about the Shuttle when you have some time, here's my number. Thank you," would seem to be fair. Then listen and speak your piece when the time comes. Simple stuff, being a citizen. Fun too, and very educational. Oh, and did I mention that it really works? Think Bottle Bill.

Locals Only:

As most locals are aware, the Chamber of Commerce is having troubles of late. I have been encouraged to write about the situation. I have decided to wait until next month after the City has completed its audit of the use of public funds by the Chamber.



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**UPPER LEFT EDGE**

WHERE TO GET AN EDGE

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**Manzanita:** Mother Nature's Juice Bar, Cassandra's, Manzanita News & Espresso, & Nehalem Bay Video  
**Rockaway:** Neptune's Used Books  
**Tillamook:** Rainy Day Books & Tillamook Library  
**Bay City:** Art Space  
**Yachats:** By-the-Sea Books  
**Pacific City:** The River House, OceanSide, Ocean Skie Espresso  
**Lincoln City:** Trillium Natural Foods, Driftwood Library, & Lighthouse Brewpub  
**Newport:** Oceana Natural Foods, Ocean Pulse Surf Shop, Sylvia Beach Hotel, & Canyon Way Books  
**Eugene:** Book Man's Cafe Navarra, Eugene Public Library, Friendly St. Market, Happy Trails, Keystone Cafe, Kiva Foods, Lane C.C., Light For Music, New Frontier Market, Nineteenth Street Brew Pub, Oasis Market, Perry's, Red Barn Grocery, Sundance Natural Foods, U of O. & WOW Hall  
**Covallis:** The Environmental Center, OSU  
**Salem:** Heliotrope, Salem Library, & The Peace Store  
**Astoria:** KMUN, Columbian Cafe, The Community Store, The Wet Dog Cafe, Astoria Coffee Company, Cafe Uniontown, & The River  
**Seaside:** Buck's Book Barn, Universal Video, & Cafe Espresso  
**Portland:** Artchoko Music, Laughing Horse Bookstore, Act III, Barnes & Noble, Belmonts Inn, Biscuit Art Gallery, Bijou Cafe, Borders, Bridgeport Brew Pub, Capt'n Beans (two locations), Center for the Healing Light, Coffee People (three locations), Common Grounds Coffee, East Avenue Tavern, Food Front, Goose Hollow Inn, Hot Lips Pizza, Java Bay Cafe, Key Largo, La Patisserie, Lewis & Clark College, Locals Only, Marco's Pizza, Maryhurst College, Mt. Hood CC, Music Millennium, Nature's (two locations), NW Natural Gas, OHSU Medical School, Old Whves Tales, Ozone Records, Papa Hayden, PCC (four locations), PSU (two locations), Reed College, Third Eye, Multnomah Central Library, and most branches of the YWCA  
**Ashland:** Garo's Java House, The Black Sheep, Blue Mt. Cafe, & Rogue River Brewery  
**Cave Junction:** Coffee Heaven & Kerby Community Market  
**Grants Pass:** The Book Shop (out of Oregon)  
**Vancouver, WA:** The Den  
**Longview, WA:** The Broadway Gallery  
**Naselle, WA:** Rainy Day Artistry  
**Nahcotta, WA:** Moby Cafe Hotel  
**Duval, WA:** Duval Books  
**Bainbridge Island, WA:** Eagle Harbor Book Co.  
**Seattle, WA:** Elliot Bay Book Co., Honey Bear Bakery, New Orleans Restaurant, Still Life in Fremont, Allegro Coffeehouse, The Last Exit Coffee House, & Building News  
**San Francisco, CA:** City Lights Bookstore  
**Denver, CO:** Denver Folklore Center  
**Washington, D.C.:** Hotel Tabard Inn (Out of U.S.A.)  
**Paris, France:** Shakespeare & Cie  
**Brighton, England:** The Public House Bookstore  
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**FROM THE LOWER LEFT CORNER**  
Victoria Stoppello

Lightning got me thinking...

Those of you who are like me, middle-aged or older, probably find yourself getting out of bed at least once each night to make a trip to the bathroom. This tedious interruption of a good night's sleep, however, provides an opportunity to throw another log in the woodstove, scan the night sky, and occasionally experience something you otherwise would have slept through.

During my trip downstairs the other night, a big bolt of lightning struck not far away. The street lights faded, went out, then after a minute or so returned. Hail moved in waves in the circle of street light south of the house, blanketing the street for the third time in a day. A gust of wind pushed the hail more fiercely against the house, rata-tat-tating on the skylight in our dressing room, then moved on.

The fridge switched on in a way that implied the electricity had been off momentarily. I thought nothing of it, and climbed the stairs back to our bedroom. The digital alarm clock was blinking redly on and off, 12:05, even though it had been 12:25 a few minutes before. So, the power had been off.

A big flash of lightning, plus its accompanying roar. What is its connection with the electrical system burping? Is the lightning finding a sympathetic cousin in the wires that criss-cross the settlement? Or is lightning a sort of conspirator, coming through town attempting to rescue its fellow gang member from the jail which is our electrical system, where electricity does prison slave labor for our benefit? Does the electricity in the lines jump for joy when it sees the face, hears the voice, of lightning, then switches devices off, then on, in its excitement? Or is it that lightning and electricity in the lines are all one system, one body of energy, the lines that snake over the countryside and through cities, the vascular system that radiates from the heart, lightning?

Recently I heard a brief radio description of the physics of the aurora borealis, which I've only seen a few times and at relatively southern locations. The physics discussion explained that charged particles from the sun are pulled toward the earth in concentrated patterns near the earth's magnetic poles. One comment took me into space in my mind's eye: Apparently the astronauts on the space shuttle can see the aurora from their vantage point, can see the earth's magnetic field as illustrated by these charged particles, appearing as blades of grass streaming from the earth's poles.

I've seen a photo of the earth from space with a golden crown of the aurora borealis. Because I have a philosophical bent—or perhaps I'm tapping into some ancient source of primordial myth—I felt that photo showed the earth with a halo. I felt awe, inspiration and hope. My limited study of art history has exposed me to hundreds of art works showing saintly figures with haloes; could it be that the earth itself has a halo, is in fact a heavenly body, has a spirit force of its own?

I've also read of spiritual systems that refer to auras, energy fields radiating from individual's bodies that indicate various conditions or emotions via color—blue for protection, red for anger, and so on. The photo of the earth had a halo of gold, a color indicating a higher spiritual state of being in that system. Without putting any stock in these musings, I wonder how it is that these old methods of indicating spiritual ascendancy would just happen to mimic a very earthly physical phenomenon?

Allowing my imagination to wander, I also see in my mind's eye, a blue earth, surrounded by a network of electrical storms, flashing here and there, like Christmas lights on a strobe, and then think of the internet, now connected with a series of wires and links that flash on and off ever so minutely with each message.

We've gone from a world where the only electricity we experienced was produced by lightning, and the only light was generated by the sun, to a world where we humans manufacture lightning through a variety of methods, then run it through wires to create a million tiny suns in our homes and offices (at least in the industrialized world). I wonder what this has done to our sense of wonder, our sense of place, and our appreciation for the everyday miracles that the earth and sky have always provided.

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