

**NEWSBRIEFS**

**Document recording fee clears Oregon House, heads to Senate**

On Feb. 17, the Oregon House of Representatives passed a bill that is expected to generate \$15 million in additional revenue for affordable housing projects over the next two years.

As reported in the Feb. 6 edition of Street Roots, HB 2436 raises the document recording fee — a charge imposed by the state when real estate changes hands — from \$11 to \$26. The extra revenue from the increased fee would be used to build affordable housing and provide rental assistance.

The projected revenue increase is much less than it would have been two years ago, when legislators first tried to pass the bill. But the bill's supporters say that in addition to funding affordable housing, it will create jobs as projects are built.

The bill will pass to the Senate for a hearing and a vote.

**Peanut butter recall puts strain on local food pantry shelves**

Oregon Food Bank, which distributes food to more than 340 shelters and soup kitchens statewide, pulled 225,000 pounds of food from its shelves, leaving a severe shortfall in supplies for individuals and families in need of food. The peanut butter had to be removed after an FDA recall of peanut products that may be contaminated with Salmonella.

The recall comes as the need for food assistance reaches unprecedented heights. In the second half of 2008, requests to Oregon Food Bank for emergency food boxes increased 15 percent over the same period in 2007. In some counties, the rise in requests was as high as 40 percent.

Some peanut-containing foods on the recall list must be destroyed, and others are withheld from distribution until the FDA determines whether they pose a health risk.

"The peanut product recall is putting additional strain on the OFB Network at a time when we are experiencing record levels of demand for emergency food," said in a statement released by the organization. The food bank estimates it will require an additional 1 million pounds of food per month to meet the need.

In the wake of the recall, the food bank is seeking donations of other forms of protein, such as canned chili or tuna, and monetary support. More information is available at [www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org)

**Measure would curtail national guard service without declaration**

With 3,500 Oregon National Guard soldiers set to ship out to Iraq and Afghanistan in July, peace activists hope a new piece of state legislation will help them prevent the deployment. Supporters of House Bill 2556, introduced by Portland Rep. Chip Shields, urge Gov. Ted Kulongoski to buck the federal deployment order and keep the troops at home.

HB 2556 would limit the National Guard's service to within Oregon unless the U.S. Congress has authorized a declaration of war. Those against the deployment say Congress' 2002 authorization of force is no longer valid, because the immediate goals of the war in Iraq have been achieved.

Under the U.S. Constitution, governors control their states' national guards, except in wartime, when the president assumes authority. The bill authorizes the state's attorney general to argue the legality of the president's current control.

Kulongoski's office, however, says the governor will not be able to override a federal deployment order.

**Report on policing suggests a bias in oversight panel**

STAFF REPORTS

A committee tasked with reviewing complaints of police bias has found that while most cases were handled fairly, some were cause for concern.

Groups such as the now-disbanded Racial Profiling Committee have investigated possible police bias since 2006, but they have focused on the police department's own data on stops and arrests. Instead, members of the Bias-based Policing Workgroup looked at discrimination complaints that citizens filed themselves. They reviewed 36 of the 104 complaints the IPR received between July 2005 and June 2007 and issued a report Feb. 18.

The workgroup found that three-quarters of discrimination allegations involved race or ethnicity. Many of the people who filed complaints thought of officers' behavior was not just biased, but rude or insensitive: The

report notes a case in which "an officer reportedly called a complainant 'stupid' although the reviewers believe the cause of the misunderstanding may have been a language barrier."

The group stressed that its conclusions only reflect the behavior of officers who generate complaints, not the police department as a whole. They suggest that officers, especially those who generate more complaints, should be trained in cultural competency and customer service.

The workgroup did not see racial bias in how complaints were handled, and they said most were investigated adequately. But they did note that some IPR staffers — who are supposed to be neutral when they record and investigate complaints — seemed to side with police officers.

"The tone of some IPR letters and phone conversations do not reflect the

independence outlined in its charter," the report says. "At times it appeared that IPR staff questioned the behavior of the complainant, justified the behavior of the officer, and/or discouraged the caller from filing or following through with a complaint."

Critics of the IPR have argued that the process puts too much control in the hands of the police bureau's Internal Affairs Department, and should have more civilian oversight.

"With this report, we're proactively finding ways to improve the way we handle complaints about alleged police bias," former workgroup chair Sherrelle Owens said in a press release. "Ultimately, we hope this information will lead to more respect and better service to Portlanders from IPR and the bureau."

**On the Yellow Line**

By Thea

Constantine

*Born in New York city into a family of actors, writers and poets Thea now lives in North Portland, Oregon, with her husband, musician David Minick.*

*Her short stories have recently appeared in 'In Focus', the quarterly magazine of the PEN Cyprus Center, as well as anthology collections and the popular Portland zine, 'Repeat Offenders.' She is currently at work on a collection of short stories and launching her new zine, 'There is No Message.'*

Pioneer Square: A couple of chicks sitting around talking. Three or four. I don't want to turn around and look nosy. They are laughing and having a good time. One is on the way to the clinic. One is on the way to the pharmacy. In tuning in, I'm trying not to think about my friend who is just getting out of the hospital after being robbed. Or losing all her money. Or something. After having left my house.

Now they're talking about not liking being called "bitch." One woman is talking about her friend who gets too drunk. Gets drunk and calls her "bitch." About how her friend isn't an audience while drinking. How her friend won't listen to her when she's drunk. I feel like turning around and saying, "I completely understand." I think about how I sat with my friend yesterday and asked her to please go home and sleep it off. Please drink some coffee and get somewhere safe. She asked me if I would hate her if she did otherwise. I told her I wouldn't hate her but that I would be really mad. I am, in fact, really mad now. Mad and worried and mad about being worried.

Skidmore Fountain: A man who has been sitting next to the woman with the awful friend gets up to leave. He turns to her first, though, and says "It's called an addiction cycle." She thanks him. Her

friends say "amen." The woman says she hates to see her friend coming and she hates to see her go. She says her friend is like a tomboy and a best friend and a lover all in one. That no matter what, she's her girl. I thank my lucky stars that at least I'm not "in love" with my friend. It's bad enough just loving someone.

Rose Quarter Transit Center: The woman takes her leave. Her friends watch her walk away, and one mentions how beautiful the woman had been at one time. Another says she started getting fucked up after she "got gay." Another woman says how about that? She didn't used to be gay at all but then she just up and "got gay." I ponder the phenomenon briefly. Celebrities smiling from the pages of "Vanity Fair" with God knows what on their upper lips. "Got Gay?" When I tune back in they are talking about how something is worse than "heron." One of the women has a leg that is swelling up. They are trying to figure out if it's the Xanax and methadone that's doing it. They talk about a friend who Oded from pills and methadone. One thinks it's the heroin and methadone. One thinks perhaps it's just the methadone. One of the women gets off at the next stop. I get off at the one after that: Killingsworth/Interstate.

**STOP THE WARS at Home & Abroad  
 Keep Oregon's Guard Home  
 from Iraq & Afghanistan!**

**IN SALEM**  
 ON THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL  
**1:00pm Sunday**  
**March 15, 2009**

**We Demand:**

**Money for jobs, education,  
 healthcare & housing, not war!**

**End the Siege of Gaza! A Just  
 Peace for Palestine-Israel!**

**Say NO to Scapegoating!  
 Protect Immigrant Rights!**

**MARCH  
 & RALLY**



For More Information: Peace and Justice Works 503-236-3065 [www.pjw.info](http://www.pjw.info)

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