

CITY GETS RAISES

The city is closing a \$2 million budget gap by shutting a pool and reducing library, planning and parks maintenance budgets, among other cuts in services to citizens. But city firefighters and police officers are sitting pretty.

Over the past eight years firefighters have received raises of 17.5 percent more than inflation. The city gave police raises of 7.7 percent over inflation.

During the same period, the city gave most other city union employees (AFSCME) raises that only just kept pace with inflation.

A system of binding arbitration for police and fire employees accounts for their higher pay raises, according to a memo from city budget manager Kitty Murdoch. Cops and firefighters can't strike, instead their pay disputes are settled through binding arbitration by state mediators. Arbitration "generously awards" police and firefighters raises comparable to other fire and police agencies around the state, according to Murdoch. The arbitration system doesn't compare police and fire raises with other city of Eugene employees.

Of course, the city's top bosses have also made sure they get their raises. This year city managers and executives got a 3 percent cost of living raise. Next year, they'll get another 2 percent.

By comparison, Gresham city managers got no raise last year. Corvallis city executives got only a 1.5 percent raise last year with another 1.5 percent this year. In Salem, no city worker got a raise last year. Next year, Salem AFSCME workers will get a 1 percent raise with managers getting nothing.

While city councilors are spending hours in meetings arguing over how to find a few thousand more dollars to prevent damaging cuts, city worker raises aren't on the table. Labor costs make up about 80 percent of the city's budget. Just a 1 percent cut in overall pay would save about \$2 million, enough to solve all the city's budget problems.

— Alan Pittman

SPRAY TIME

The Union Pacific Railroad will be spraying herbicide along the tracks running through the Eugene area from May 19 to June 3. The chemical they will use, commonly known as glyphosate, is better known by its commercial name, Roundup.

Neighbors and local anti-toxics organizations are protesting both the health risks associated with Roundup and the lack of notification about the spraying to railroad residents. The railroad runs through the Whiteaker, River Road, Trainsong, Bethel and west Eugene neighborhoods.

The EPA rates glyphosate at toxicity level III, with I being most toxic and IV being least toxic. Independent studies, however, have repeatedly found harmful side effects from the chemical to both humans and animals. According to the *Journal of Pesticide Reform*, glyphosate-containing products can cause eye and skin irritation, headache, nausea, numbness, elevated blood pressure and heart palpitations. The inert ingredient that helps Roundup attach to weeds is more toxic than glyphosate itself, and the combination of the two is yet more toxic, the journal reports. A 1997 Princeton study found that an ingredient in Roundup caused death to half of the animals in the experiment.

"I think that anyone within a couple of blocks of the track should be concerned, especially if they have children or are pregnant women," says David Monk, executive director of the Oregon Toxics Alliance.

Neighbors say that UP refuses to sign a written agreement promising to notify residents of upcoming sprayings, relying instead on a verbal agreement that neighbors says is not always followed. UP could not be reached for comment.

"We end up with no way to protect ourselves," says Majeska Seese-Greene, president of the Whiteaker Community Council and member of the Railroad Pollution Coalition.

Activist organization Communities Against Railroad Pollution will be handing out information about Roundup May 17 and 18 at the

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

Van Buren crossing between 1st and 2nd Avenues. — Nika Carlson

it other than that in the university eyes it doesn't meet the standards of appearance for the east campus area." — Nika Carlson

LAWNS NOT FOOD

University student, employee and east campus housing resident John Boosinger is growing on borrowed time. His 25-by-40 foot front yard garden is scheduled to be the first victim of the new east campus maintenance policy.

The policy, part of the East Campus Development Plan, was adopted just over a month ago. It says that the university will do regular landscaping in the area to maintain a "graceful edge" to university property. All yards must be returned to grass, which will be mowed by the university on a regular basis. No more lawn art and no more gardens.

"It's a little ridiculous," says Boosinger. "You can be out (in the yard), but you can't do anything to it."

Boosinger and his wife will be allowed to finish the growing season, but will have to remove the garden at the end of the summer. New leases will have more specific language about lawns and yards.

Five weeks ago, University Housing officials demanded that Boosinger remove the 2-1/2-year-old patch. They rescinded their demand after Boosinger, legally permitted the garden according to his lease, threatened legal action.

"I am using water and land in a responsible, healthy, efficient, and beautiful way, and I believe the university should support my efforts instead of literally trying to destroy them," Boosinger wrote in an e-mail to the university.

The new plan, in development for more than six months, took into account the concerns of neighborhood, said Mike Eyster, director of housing for the university.

"The policy was designed to maintain the yards better than we have in the past and make it look more like a residential neighborhood," he said. "We had complaints about the grass being too long or that there's a garden in the front yard."

Boosinger says he's had nothing but positive feedback about the yard, and expressed frustration that he will no longer be able to grow the vegetables that provide nearly 70 percent of the food he, his wife and his child eat in the growing months.

"We know that the food is better for us than anything we could get at the store, and it tastes better too," he said. "There are no negatives to

MORSE RIDES AGAIN

Wayne Morse, Oregon's maverick U.S. senator for 24 years in the mid-20th century, was not the dramatic type. But much of what he said in challenging every U.S. administration he encountered took on the aura of high drama.

Portland playwright Charles Deemer decided to string together a series of Morse's memorable statements into a one-man show of high volatility. What gives them explosive character is the startling way they become contemporary if viewed as responses to the current U.S. administration.

Premiere performance of the 40-minute show will be at 1:30 and 3 pm Sunday, May 18 as part of the annual Wayne Morse Open House at the Morse Home, 595 Crest Dr. The occasion will once again feature free ice cream, tours of the Morse Home and pony rides for the kids.

Morse may be best remembered for his prophetic challenge to the Vietnam War, when he was one of only two senators to vote against the illegal Gulf of Tonkin resolution of President Lyndon Johnson. That dissent is but one of several expressed in the play that suggest parallels with the current administration of George Bush.

Directing will be Sparky Roberts. Claude Offenbacher will perform as Morse. Karl Nestvold is the narrator. Admission is free.

STARHAWK CIRCLES

Starhawk, author of many books, including *The Spiral Dance*, *Walking to Mercury*, and *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, will be in the Eugene area from May 20-25. She will be promoting her most recent book *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*, as well as training local activists who want to pass along their skills and experience to others through role-play and interactive exercises.

A workshop for teaching the tools and skills to help participants be effective agents for change and to free their imaginations will be followed by a ritual of healing and empowerment culminating in a spiral dance.

Starhawk may be best known for *Spiral Dance*, a spiritual guidebook on the practices

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

LYNDA DUFFY

When blues singer/Realtor Lynda Duffy read a December *Register-Guard* story about low-income people forced to live without electricity and water, she immediately phoned the Eugene Water and Electric Board. "She wanted to know about need in the community," says EWEB's Charles Dalton. "I let her know there was a ton of need out there." Duffy's brainstorm: a benefit concert. "I'm a marketing genius," she admits. "I learned it from my dad - he truly cared about people." For a solid three months, Duffy dealt full-time with bureaucratic mazes and artists' and politicians' egos to coordinate Blues for HUES (Heat Up Eugene and Springfield). St Vincent de Paul agreed to dispense the money raised, and the Hilton donated space for the March 28 event. "It was an incredible learning experience," Duffy says. "Now my job description is 'everything.'" Featured performers included Curtis Salgado and Paul deLay, plus an all-star lineup of local blueswomen: Linda Hornbuckle, Deb Cleveland, Barbara Healy, Norma Fraser, and Duffy herself. "We got the biggest applause," she observes. "We raised \$25,000 this time - we plan to make it an annual event."

