

morning? And why, again, were no military jets "scrambled" to intercept the "off course" planes, as is customary? And what about that Israeli company (Zim) that hastily broke their lease and evacuated the WTC *one week before* the "attacks"? What about "building 7"?

And it just doesn't make sense that Flight 77 didn't nosedive into the center of the Pentagon from above, but instead did an improbable 270-degree hairpin circle around the exterior of the Pentagon a few feet off the ground at 400 mph to hit the only part of the Pentagon that was evacuated for renovation.

Coincidences? I'm not sure what to believe any more. But I think it's also interesting to note that most of the SEC's investigative records of Enron (big news just prior to the "attacks") were stored in the World Trade Center at the time it went down.

*Don Schneider
Pleasant Hill*

RAGE FOR THE RIVER

While reading Mariel Alexandre's letter (6/26) on the sorry state of Oregon's waterways, I was overcome with a sense of despair, which deepened into rage. For too long, the wishes of the working classes for clean water have been ignored by the greed-fueled corporate interests that dictate our civic enforcement of our clean water laws has caused the Willamette to become a cesspool of heavy metals and other persistent toxins. At what point will our leaders wake up and realize that their mandate comes not from corrupt industrial interests, but rather from the will of their constituents?

Certainly, these industrial polluters provide some jobs, but these come at the expense of commercial fishermen and tourism industries who once thrived on the banks of a fertile river. It is time to rise up and tell industry that we want our rivers and streams back, that the destruction of the land is too great a price to pay for a nickel off at the market place, that we will endure their underhanded manipulation of our fine democracy no longer.

It is time for our representatives to throw off the shackles of corporate investment and see to it that our laws are enforced and the public is well served.

*Tom Denton
Eugene*

VOTE TO IMPEACH

I have joined with the more than 250,000 people who have called for the impeachment of George W. Bush and Co. at www.VoteToImpeach.org This campaign, initiated by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, has drafted articles of impeachment for introduction in Congress and is gaining great momentum around the U.S. Why, I ask, is the current administration so mean spirited, secretive and devious?

Sincerely, a U.S. citizen for 46 years,
*Jozef Sikiel-Zdzienicki
Eugene*

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows. Please limit length to 250 words, keep submissions to once a month, and include your address and phone number for our files. E-mail to editor@eugeneweekly.com (please put "letters" in the subject line), fax to 484-4044, or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

Union Maid

Applying ethics and values to workers' rights.



Every summer I go to the Vancouver Folk Festival. There's music from all over the world, I get to see friends, eat good food, and my child goes to the children's festival. At one concert my 8-year-old and I heard a group of 100 young fiddlers play "Union Maid." It was repeated so often by old time folkies like Faith Petric and Utah Phillips that my son sang it throughout the day.

I filled with pride. I knew my ancestors were smiling. Radical union activists raised me. My grandmother, who I lived with, worked in the New York garment district sewing "foundations." We didn't always have much money, but we had lots of bras and girdles. My father was a teamster; my mother belonged to 1199. "Never pass a picket line" was a religious statement. Even when it meant economic sacrifice, you supported the union. Everything was union - from your social life, like the picnics we went on, to your death - family cemetery plots were purchased through the union.

Along with pride though, I knew my relatives would be "turning over in their graves." It wasn't just that many unions had become big business, as my grandmother sadly saw before her death, but also that the *concept* of unions and workers' rights has sometimes become so twisted. There have been numbers of organizations in town, such as All Women's Health, EFN, and Mother Kali's, rife with conflict about workers' rights. Workers' have organized in a variety of ways with a variety of results. I don't know the details of all these organizations, but when Bobbie Willis wrote about Mother Kali's (6/12), I felt I must speak up. I unsuccessfully tried writing a letter, but when I heard my child singing "Union Maid" and felt my ancestors, I knew I had to try again.

Reporting on Mother Kali's labor struggles, Willis drew on her interview with Terri Cicacci. They focused on events since fall 2002, but efforts to secure workers' rights have a much longer and different history. For four years prior, former staff, volunteers, community members, and myself, then manager, advocated persistently for reasonable responses to harassment, equal pay for equal work, a community represented board, etc., with formal mediations, negotiations, and legal means. Evaluations, which I instituted, and hiring freezes were not at issue. Despite success at my job, when I fought for fair labor practices for staff, I was forced out, amid claims that staff and I were jeopardizing the store's well-being with our demands. How many times have workers been told fighting for their rights jeopardizes business? Former staff "left" in solidarity when I was forced out and when their jobs were threatened if they protested unfair treatment.

The board was relieved of pressure to negotiate in part because it was easy in this economic climate to replace me and virtually the entire staff with the current manager and staff. I don't think it should have been easy in progressive feminist circles. In my youth, my extended family was often in economic straights, but still supported workers' rights. Difficult economic times should bring us together, not tear us apart. The new manager and staff were aware of the conditions under which they were hired, so their ironic claims to now represent us are not healing and do not feel like workers' solidarity or sisterhood.

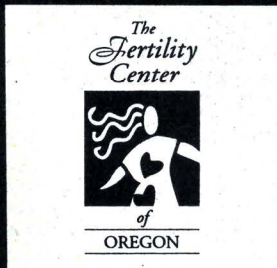
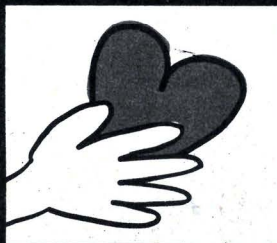
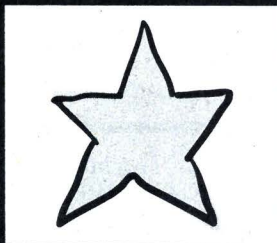
Healing could have taken place in any of numbers of ways suggested to the former or current board. Indeed, the board still hasn't dealt with the grievances and unionizing now won't support workers off the books almost a year. It's a sad story that changed lives. I imagine there are other stories from other organizations. We need to look at why this is happening so much and insist responsibility is taken for actions taken.

Changing personnel and even unionizing in this case silenced rather than resolved conflict. Before we support actions and organizations, we need to look at the full story, applying ethics and values when it comes to workers' rights, or anyone's rights.

Imagine some people will complain at this condensed description of what happened, while some will say everyone was trying, and others say times are hard. I've heard all that before and it hasn't effected much change. I don't want my child to just sing "Union Maid," but to understand its values and how those values are important not just for yourself, but for others, and for your ancestors and children's children. It's hard work living in hard times, but if we don't support each other in deep ways, take responsibility for actions, and tell our full stories, none of us will have anything left to sing about.

tova (Stabin) is a free-lance writer, teacher, editor, librarian, mother, and life-long working-class Jewish lesbian feminist activist and organizer. She was a manager of Mother Kali's for four years.

Share A Miracle
Become An Egg Donor



The Fertility Center of Oregon has helped many couples achieve pregnancy since 1978.

We are in need of **Egg Donors** to continue to help infertile women.

Procedures are done in a pleasant local environment over a period of only six weeks, and donors are **compensated \$2500** for their time. If you are a **healthy woman age 21-31** and are interested, call 683-1559 or visit our website at www.WomensCare.com.