

**CORPORATE SHILLS
TARGET SCHOOL MONEY**

If somebody comes up to you with a clipboard asking you to sign on to their grassroots anti-tax referendum, you better think twice, says Patty Wentz of the Voter Education Project.

"People assume when they see somebody holding a clipboard that it's a grassroots group," Wentz says. But she says big corporations and other shady donors are behind the effort to repeal the Legislature's recently passed tax increase. "They're totally fake. They're not really a grassroots group."

The three chief petitioners for the "Taxpayer Defense Fund" PAC formed to gather signatures to defeat the revenue measure are staff with the Washington, D.C.-based Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) lobbying firm. Two of the three have offices in D.C., not Oregon, according to a filing with the state.

CSE, which calls itself a grassroots think tank and refuses to name donors, has served as a front group for corporations' secret big spending on lobbying efforts, according to Public Citizen and other critics. A recent article in the *Washington Post* based on leaked documents, reveals millions of dollars in donations CSE received from Phillip Morris, US West, General Electric, Microsoft, Exxon and other big corporate donors while pursuing lobbying efforts in those corporations' interests. Phillip Morris got CSE lobbying against cigarette taxes, Microsoft got lobbying for cuts in anti-trust enforcement and Exxon got lobbying against efforts to reduce

global warming, for example.

Wentz says she's concerned that corporate or other moneyed interests in Oregon or nationally could similarly be using CSE as a cover. US West has already used CSE to lobby for higher phone bills, she notes. The tax increase CSE is now opposing would raise \$800 million to keep schools open with a three-year graduated income tax surcharge. The average Oregonian would pay only about \$38 a year, but wealthier individuals and corporations could pay far more.

"They're complete hired guns," Wentz says of CSE. The real question is who hired them, she says. "Just who are these people and what are their interests in Oregon?" — Alan Pittman

**LCC BOARD MEMBER
BACKS MANNIX PLANS**

Oregon Republican leader Kevin Mannix is pushing for a referendum on the Legislature's three-year tax hike and he's getting support from an unlikely source, a member of the Board of Education at LCC.



Bozievich

Jay Bozievich of the board voiced his support for Mannix's efforts at a board meeting last week, and when asked about it after the meeting, said, "Increased taxes hurt the state's economic recovery and with it the college's ability to count on stable funding. As business in Oregon gets stronger, the college's funding becomes more stable."

Bozievich, an EWEB engineer and Libertarian recently elected to the board,

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

says during these tough economic times, "we should be looking for ways to stimulate the economy, not depress it. HB 2152 will be a disaster for Oregon's economy and, as LCC's enrollment tracks with the economy, a disaster for LCC."

Mary Spilde, president of LCC, did not comment on Bozievich's position, but she said last week that if Mannix's efforts to stop the tax hike are successful, the college will lose about \$1.3 million and community colleges statewide will lose about \$9.9 million. Even with the tax hike, LCC is looking at cutting programs and raising tuition over the next few years.

Several board members declined to comment on Bozievich's position, however none of them could recall a situation in the past where a board member publicly opposed a measure that would increase funding for the college.

EW endorsed Nadia Sindi for the position in the May 2003 election, but *The Register-Guard* endorsed Bozievich, saying he has "a broader grasp of the intricacies of the college's operations and budgetary challenges."

Bozievich's views on taxes are not new. In his unsuccessful campaign for the state Legislature in 2002 he promised to "vote with the Democrats to block the Republican social agenda, but vote with the Republicans to block any Democratic attempts to increase taxes or spending." He was supported in that race by County Commissioner Anna Morrison and Rep. Pat Farr.

Bozievich says his opposition to HB 2152 "is the only stance that is in the real interest of the college and the state."

— Ted Taylor

**DEVELOPERS PUSH FEES
ONTO HOMEOWNERS**

Your sewer bill could go up to fund developer profits after the Lane County Home Builders Association (HBA) derailed a fee increase for developers.

The local sewer system and sewage plant is funded by a mix of sewer fees and system development charges (SDCs) on developers to account for the cost of serving new growth. To better account for the cost of growth, sewer managers this sum-

mer proposed that home builders pay a \$837 SDC per new home to hook up. The HBA threatened to take legal action and the sewer managers this month backed down, agreeing to suspend \$300 of the fee for a year, pending a consultant and citizen committee study.

Susan Smith, manager of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC), says the HBA attack on the SDCs became very personal. "There's a lot of material that attacks me personally and our staff." But she said HBA lobbyist Roxie Cuellar recently publicly apologized for the attacks at a MWMC meeting.

Smith says if the sewage system can't collect enough SDCs from developers to pay for needed capacity projects, the difference may have to come from homeowners' sewage bills. "It is a zero-sum game," she says. "We have to build the capacity projects that are needed" to comply with environmental regulations. "The [homeowner] fees could go up."

At stake is big money. By heading off the developer fee increase this year, homeowners may have to make up about \$200,000 in lost SDC revenue down the line. If the developers don't pay their share in later years, homeowners could be out millions of dollars in higher sewer rates.

The Eugene City Council will discuss approval of the MWMC's proposal to suspend the SDC increase on Sept. 22, with a council vote scheduled for Sept. 24.

Smith says the current fee system that HBA opposes was established by a diverse citizen committee in 1997 that looked at the "complex" balance between homeowner fees and developer charges. "For the last six years, we've had a methodology that seemed to work," Smith says.

The MWMC is now asking for volunteers to serve on the new citizen study committee formed in response to the HBA threats. Applications are available at the MWMC office at Springfield City Hall.

— AP

**POSNER SPEAKS ON
HUMAN RIGHTS POST-9/11**

John Posner says our founding fathers
(continued on page 11)

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL



Maggie Matoba

On a hot August afternoon, master gardener Maggie Matoba shares a patch of shade with Roberta Phillips, Helen Burns and Evelyn Higgins, Willamette Oaks Retirement Center residents who raise veggies and flowers in the therapeutic garden Matoba maintains as part of her Healing Harvest program. "Maggie came last spring— she's been such a blessing," says Higgins. "She put in new soil and a watering system." Matoba witnessed the healing potential of gardening when her father came to stay following a stroke. "Gardening added 15 years to his life," she says. "He enjoyed it so much, his whole aura changed." Matoba took the master gardener course in 2000 and currently commutes to Portland to study horticultural therapy — she'll be certified in October. She started her first therapeutic garden, for girls at Looking Glass treatment center, in May of 2002. "It's a population I wanted to work with — at-risk youth," she says. "They learn about soil, biology, ecology. At the same time we address behavioral issues." Healing Harvest, newly granted non-profit status, also includes gardens at Sheldon Oaks, Womenspace, and River Kourt Apartments.