

SLANT

• KVAL-TV reported Sept. 29 that the West Eugene Parkway has hit a "major roadblock" in that the roadway might not be "big enough" to handle traffic loads over the next 20 years. This is an angle that hasn't gotten much press before. Will we see local agencies tweaking population projections downward to make the formulas work? Meanwhile, circular logic has our heads spinning. We plan new roads to accommodate future growth, but future growth is linked to building new roads. Let's take some lessons from other metro areas that have failed miserably in trying to build themselves out of traffic congestion.

• Everybody's talking about the California recall circus (makes you proud to be an Oregonian) and Bush's plummeting popularity (it's about time), but is anybody talking about the important 2004 elections in little Eugene? Torrey is expected to announce in October whether he will seek another term as mayor, run for state office or whatever. Council Wards 7 and 8 are up for election and have maybe half a dozen people politely testing the waters ("Shall I run? Oh no, you run. Unless you think I should run," etc.) No one's jumping up and down wanting to take on Sorenson and Green at the county. Will Harcleroad retire as DA? The domino effect will be big in '04, and we hear one candidate is raising money not for any particular race, but rather for "elected office." Stay tuned.

• The big Peace, Justice and Media Conference is taking shape next week on the UO campus, beginning Oct. 9, and it promises to be an exceptional gathering with knock-your-socks-off national speakers. Jim Hightower, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Janine Jackson, Kelly Campbell, Andrea Buffa will be there, followed a couple of weeks later by Molly Ivans (Oct. 25). Check out our stories in Back to Campus this week, along with a special pull-out schedule. Local speakers will include (ahem) Ted Taylor and Alan Pittman ranting about alternative media at 11 am Saturday, Oct. 11, location TBA.

social ideals to locally based economics and personal lifestyle."

Most people live in urban areas where permaculture offers tremendous value and opportunity, says Spencer. "The gathering serves as a point of convergence to discuss, network, teach, learn, strategize and enjoy practical experience. The goal is to move forward the ideas and skills for cultural transformation towards a more Earth-friendly, cooperative, locally based way of living."

The gathering began with a "World Café" with small groups talking about the elements of local culture, which included bio-region, food security, consensus, smart urban design, local economy, respect for the environment and human potential.

This year's workshop and panel schedule included social, political and food topics related to building local culture. Topics included "Permatopia — A Graceful End to Cheap Oil," "Back Yard Food Forest," a bio-diesel panel, "Cooking with a Haybox," alternative residential choices, worm composting, medicinal weeds and urban water management.

Panels and presenters were almost all local people. "We are impressed to know that we have extensive talent and knowledge right here in Eugene for building local culture," says Spencer. "We made new friends with similar values and found some lived just a few blocks away. We all learned new approaches to healthy living."

Photos of the gathering and more information are available at www.eugenepermaculture.org or call 686 6761.

For those who missed the permaculture gathering, a related event is happening in the River Road area beginning at 6 pm Sunday, Oct. 6. Local residents are celebrating a new neighborhood landmark, a mural by Jan Spencer, on the side of the Goodwill building at 1015 River Road.

The marimba band Kudana will play, and a silent auction will be held to raise money for the mural project. Local activist Martha Johnson initiated the idea and local residents are depicted in the mural. Images can be seen at www.efn.org/~spencerj

PHOTOVOLTAIC JUICE PICKS UP SEX APPEAL

Solar electricity is getting cheaper each year as technology improves, and meanwhile the cost of conventional electricity is getting more expensive.

"Photovoltaic (PV) electricity has for years been pie in the sky and expensive," says Tom Scott, a local solar contractor and advocate, "but now it's getting sexy."

Scott, who's organizing the annual Solar Home Tour Oct. 4, says solar electricity used to have a 50-year payback on investment and both utilities and consumers were not very interested in pursuing it. But the price of electricity has doubled in the past eight years, and if it doubles again, the payback time could be as little as five to 10 years. Adding to the incentives are increased rebates and tax credits that make Oregon one of the best states in the country for solar electricity.

Eugene's Solar Home Tour will begin with a free 10 am lecture and slide show Saturday at the EWEB Training Center, 400 E. 4th Ave. Participants can then join the tour by bus (\$5 per person) or follow along (\$10 per carload). At each site, experts will describe the solar system in place and how it works.

Some new printed materials will be available this year for the tour, including a slick 64-page magazine with featured solar installations around the state. In the magazine, Gov. Ted Kulongoski writes that "it's a myth that Oregon doesn't get any sun — Astoria annually receives more solar energy than the best location in Germany, a country that leads the world in the installation of solar energy systems."

— Ted Taylor

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

Artist Jerry Ross says the Jacobs Gallery misspelled the title to his painting shown in our story on the Mayor's Art Show last week. The correct title (in Italian) should be "La Vedova di Guerra" (The War Widow).

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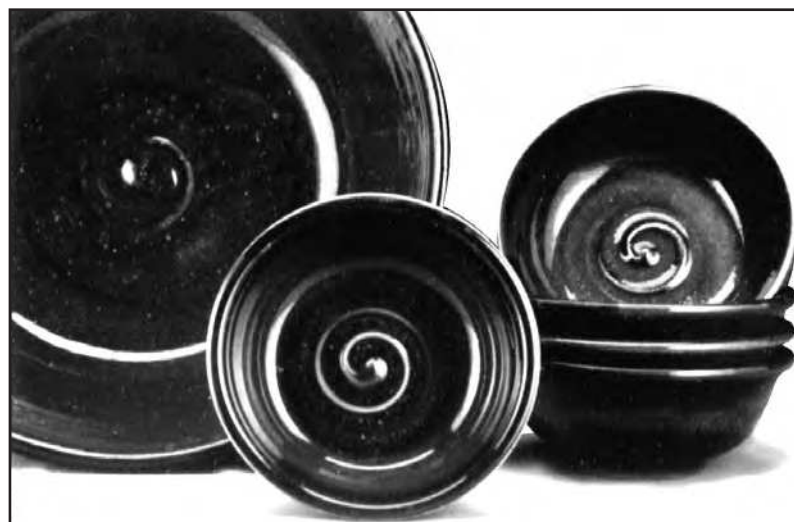
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