



• The late Sen. Wayne Morse is being honored with a one-man play this weekend (see Calendar listing for Sunday) and this production has political as well as historical and dramatic significance. *American Gadfly* playwright Charles Deemer describes Morse as a man of political courage who "stood on principles before party loyalty. He was a rare political bird, a true maverick. He was just as Socrates described it, a man sent by the gods to keep the State honest. We desperately need that kind of gadfly today." Hear hear.

• Eugene city councilors are meeting at the Hilton Friday for their annual retreat and goal-setting sessions and coincidentally they will be having lunch downstairs the same time City Club is dining upstairs with Gary Blackmer, an independent city auditor from Portland. A couple of councilors suggested the council move upstairs to join the party, but we hear Councilor Papé and perhaps another councilor or the mayor got together with the city manager and nixed the idea. Blackmer will be talking about how independent auditors can save cities millions through boosting efficiencies and avoiding lawsuits, an idea championed by the Charter Review Committee in 2002 but kept off the ballot by conservative councilors. We can understand why city managers and even city attorneys might resist the idea of someone looking over their shoulders, but it's puzzling why fiscal conservatives wouldn't love the idea. We predict some councilors will bail on their private lunch and join the City Club crowd for this lively presentation. But will some choose ignorance instead?

• The mayor's new task force to study economic development in Eugene is already in trouble with councilors at odds over whether or not the committee's recommendations should be by consensus or by majority vote. Sound silly? Not at all. Just as our nation is angrily divided and polarized over White House policies, Eugene is similarly polarized regarding growth and sprawl. The only way for our town to become less divided on these issues is to find common ground, and that won't happen on split votes. Councilor Bettman has advocated for "consensus minus one," recognizing that consensus can break down if even one person dissents. Councilor Solomon prefers majority rule, probably because the mayor's new committee already appears to be stacked with pro-growth, pro-sprawl members.

Will this new 16-member committee accomplish anything useful? Not if it's just a rubber stamp for unfettered development.

• Araminta Hawkins tells us she won't be pursuing Pat Farr's soon-to-be-vacant House District 14 seat. She's too busy with a full-time job at PeaceHealth, serving on the board of HIV Alliance and her work with various other political and social activism groups. Who else might run against Farr's wife, Debi? Rich Cunningham would probably jump at the chance but he's facing heart surgery and will be out of commission for awhile. John Bullock's name has popped up as someone worth recruiting. He's a principal in the Bethel School District and a good, eloquent Democrat.

• The City Council is expected to give final approval Feb. 23 to a plan to divert \$40 million in tax revenues over the next 20 years into an urban renewal fund to benefit the riverfront area, new federal building area and part of downtown. One big problem (in addition to sucking money out of city and state coffers) is that we don't know how the millions will be spent. State law requires urban renewal projects be identified before the money is collected, but the proposed Eugene plan is so vague that the City Council could decide to use the money for another high-rise parking atrocity, subsidize a basketball stadium for UO (we're not kidding), or even a state highway project. The council seems dead-set on passing this plan, even though it's likely to be referred to the voters. Let's tidy up the project language first so we have a clearer idea of what we will be voting on.

• Bush's Vietnam-era National Guard service is under scrutiny and we'll probably never know where he was hanging out between late 1972 and September 1973. Bush's personal history reflects on his character, but Democrats shouldn't spend too much time flogging an issue that most Americans don't care about. D's should focus on the Bush administration's three-year track record on the environment, education, economy, corporate corruption and foreign policy.



*SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519.*

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