

COUNCIL VIOLATES PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

The Eugene City Council voted on the top policy goal for the city using a secret voting method in apparent violation of the Oregon Public Meetings Law.

The council held a "retreat" on Saturday, Feb. 21 in a Eugene Hilton conference room. At the retreat councilors selected their top goal for the city by crowding around flip charts at the front of the room to anonymously place round stickers. From a list of possible goals, councilors placed stickers next to goals they didn't like. Goals that received two or more stickers were eliminated under a "consensus" process set up by a meeting facilitator.

The only goal that didn't receive at least two stickers was a hospital in Eugene's central core, which received no stickers.

The city sent out a press release claiming "the City Council unanimously agreed that the successful location of a hospital in Eugene's center is its top priority for 2004."

There was a unanimous vote later in the meeting to confirm the hospital as the top goal. But the actual dot vote decision was far from unanimous. Various councilors had pushed for a tree protection ordinance, tax reform, a new City Hall, more police funding and other choices as their top goals. The lack of unanimity was reflected in the dot placement, a new City Hall was eliminated as a top goal by two negative votes and a tree ordinance by three, but the dots were anonymous.

"This grants some anonymity," councilor Jennifer Solomon remarked of the process as she moved into the crowd of councilors to place her dots.

The Oregon Public Meetings Law requires that "decisions of governing bodies be arrived at openly" and forbids the use of secret ballots or other obscure voting methods.

Assistant City Manager Jim Carlson denied the city had broken the law. He claimed the dot vote was a "planning process" and not an actual decision action by the city council.

But the law defines its jurisdiction broadly to include "any determination, action, vote or final disposition" of a governing body.

City Councilor David Kelly denied that

there was anything illegal or inappropriate with the anonymous vote. Kelly argued that the public could call councilors to ask them how they voted and argued that members of the public present at the meeting could observe which councilors placed which dots. Kelly said the council had done dot voting before and the city attorney had approved the dot vote on the city's top goal.

Accurately observing eight councilors crowding around to simultaneously place multiple dots with their backs to onlookers was impossible.

This isn't the first time this City Council has apparently violated the Oregon Public Meetings Law. A year ago, a council subcommittee held illegal secret meetings to set up a secret process for filling the city's powerful city manager position. None of the top goals considered by the council this year apparently included open government.

— Alan Pittman

MEMORIAL BENCH HONORS NEILA CAMPBELL

A sculpture bench for Neila Campbell will be installed in a ceremony at 2 pm Feb. 27 in the Owen Rose Garden at the north end of Jefferson Street along the Willamette River.

The installation is to honor Campbell's life and her contributions to the community. Neila, featured in *EW* as a "Happening Caregiver" in 1999, was a respected trauma and grief counselor who died of cancer two years ago.

The bench was designed and built by noted metalsmith Peter Renzetti of the Samuel Yellin Metalworkers. The ceremony will be presided over by Rabbi Hannan Sills. The dedication will be by Campbell's husband Omar Nelson. For information call 484-1275 or email geofrey.hughes@comcast.net



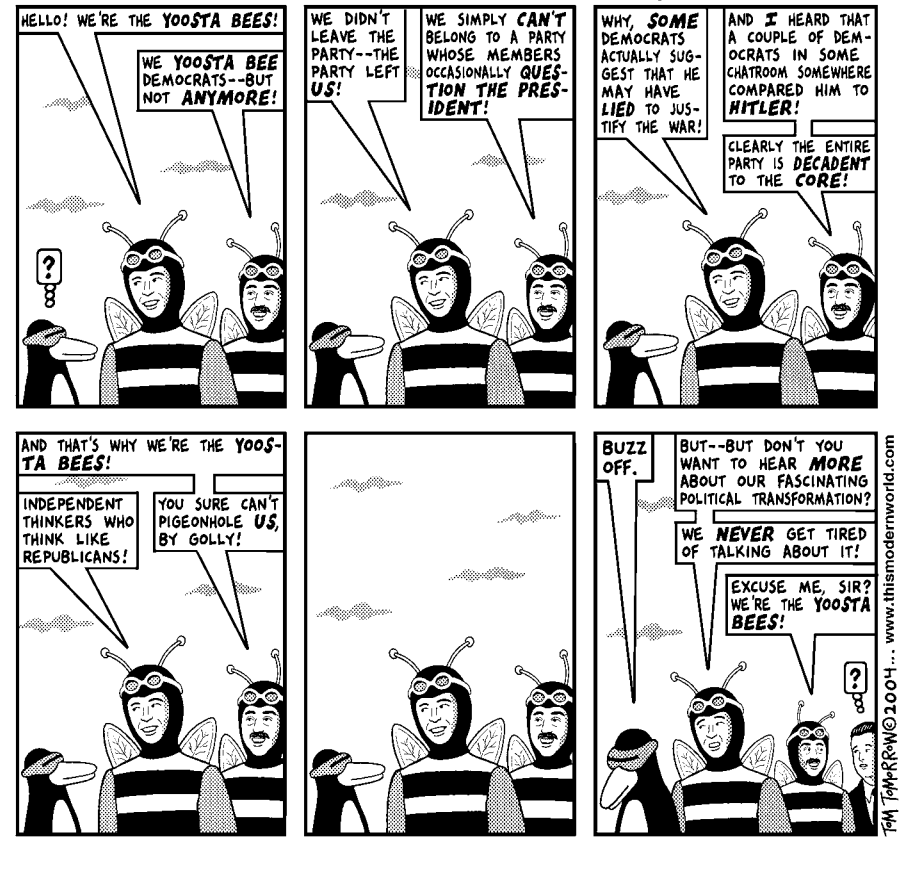
Neila Campbell

WICKES REMEMBERED

Longtime Eugene music teacher Linda Wickes, 76, died unexpectedly Feb. 15 from injuries suffered in a fall. In her honor,

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



friends and family are organizing a scholarship fund to send talented, low-income students to the Oregon Suzuki Institute summer camp in Forest Grove. Wickes was featured as a "Happening Person" in *EW* in 1999.

"Linda had a passion for teaching music," says a statement from friends Isha Lerner and Michael Wolf. "She was a major influence in the lives of hundreds of children, bringing the art and technique of Suzuki violin instruction to the Eugene-Springfield community over 20 years ago. Through her love of music and her belief in the creative genius of the child, Linda mentored and taught hundreds of area children the fine art of violin playing and music appreciation."

Wickes played in the Eugene Symphony Orchestra and founded and directed the Eugene Strings Celebration camp each summer at UO. For information on the scholarship fund, call Susan Mondon at 683-1413 or Anne Simons at 342-2375.

UO ENVIRO CONFERENCE COMING UP MARCH 4-7

"Rousing The Restless Majority" is this year's theme for the 22nd annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, which runs Thursday through Sunday, March 4-7 at UO. Topics will range from political strategies for environmental action, to the Healthy Forests and Restoration Act, stormwater pollution, the Northwest Forest Plan, Indian sacred land protection strategies, land trusts, alternatives to environmental litigation and grassroots fundraising.

PIELC is one of the world's premier environmental law events and each year more than 3,000 people from around the globe convene in Eugene. They include attorneys, scientists, students, environmental activists and concerned citizens. More than 140 panel sessions, workshops, keynote addresses and special events are scheduled. Events take place at the law school and EMU.

Keynote speakers this year include: Bev Harris, Mike Brune, Richard Drury, Maria Elena

Foronda Farro, the Rev. Robert Jeffrey, Dune Lankard, Betsy Loyless, Ed Marston, Ingrid Newkirk, Chief Evon Peter and Jane Roberts.

For more information, visit www.pielc.org or contact Land Air Water at 346-3828.

PEACEFUL POET

Poetry therapist John Fox comes to Eugene next week, lecturing on and demonstrating the healing power of words. Fox is author of *Poetic Medicine* and *Finding What You Didn't Lose*, as well as numerous articles. A free public lecture, "Expressing Your Truth: The Healing Power of Creativity," sponsored by PeaceHealth's Women's Information Network, is at 7:30 pm, Tuesday, March 2 at the Hilton.

Fox will hold a more detailed talk at 7:30 pm Friday, March 5 and a workshop from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on Saturday March 6. Both of those events are at the Tamarack Wellness Center, 3575 Donald St. Cost is \$125 for Friday and Saturday, or \$20 for Friday only. 685-9009 for info.

EUGENE, CORVALLIS EXAMINE COHOUSING

Architect and author Kathryn McCamant will give a free public lecture and slideshow on cohousing in Corvallis at 7 pm Friday, Feb. 27 at the Corvallis Art Center. The Corvallis Cohousing group and a group of Eugene residents forming a cohousing community in town are hosting the event. It is an opportunity to learn more about the possibilities of cohousing from a national expert and meet other residents interested in this semi-communal urban lifestyle.

Cohousing communities consist of individual homes that are often architecturally designed to promote interaction and communication between neighbors. They usually include a community house or space where residents can spend time together and share meals or events. Martin Henner, who is developing cohousing in Eugene, says that cohousing differs from intentional communities in that "cohousing communities are not ideological," but instead are based on environmental and social values.

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

CRAIG BRYAN

Cradling class mascot Century in his left hand, South Eugene High's Peer Group Coordinator Craig Bryan slaps high-fives with students leaving a training session.



After an initial week of training, these peer-group leaders will meet once a week for the rest of the term in small groups, each one composed of five or six freshmen and two or three upper-class leaders. "It's a chance to talk to older people and a break from school - very relaxing," notes a freshman in his evaluation. Leaders meet weekly in their own staffing groups and also once with coordinator Bryan. "Staffing groups are intense - kids say that's the most important group," he reports. A Californian with degrees in psychology, Bryan worked with juvenile offenders and drug-dependent teens before he moved to Eugene in 1982. After his daughter Summer entered South 10 years ago, Bryan worked with teacher Marty Johnson to expand a Peer Helper program. While Peer Group is voluntary, 98 percent of freshmen choose to take part, and a quarter of upper-class students trains as leaders. "They get health or community service credits," Bryan says. "The kids run the program."