

SPEND TO SAVE

It was at the very bottom of the R-G's article, so you might have missed it: DA Doug Harclerod saying, "If we had adequate jail space in this county, she would not be dead."

Paula Benitez was mercilessly, relentlessly stalked by her ex. She went through all the proper steps. He went to jail, got out early for space, almost immediately fixed on her, and killed her and himself. What terror and pain she and her family and friends have suffered. What grief the survivors still will suffer.

Springfield businesses, schools, traffic were disrupted. Police, who did a great job, were deployed for several hours. All that cost lots of money. This is going to keep happening while we don't provide adequate funding for our county's needs.

Lane County Animal Regulation kills thousands of healthy animals just because they haven't got enough space. The kennels haven't been expanded since the 1970s, though the county sure has.

We have got to learn that you have to lay out money to save money. And pain and terror and grief.

*Rita Castillo
Springfield*

KALI'S ALREADY GONE

Repeatedly the Mother Kali's board has asked the community to prioritize financial matters over all other values. Severe financial problems arose because the board drove out a staff (Tova, Lezlie, Carrie and Aurelia) that had steadily boosted sales and cultivated inclusive community networks while challenging classism and ageism in board-staff dynamics and protesting misuse of power. Now, after at least two livelihoods are destroyed and the store's modest financial momentum squandered, we are asked as "good feminists" to revive Mother Kali's yet again, and to believe that some time in the future, the feminist principles in that labor issue may be addressed. But my "feminist" bookstore is already gone.

The request in the March 4 letters that we the community help the board find "affordable" resolutions to the 17-month-old dispute was disingenuous. Last year I proposed that an

independent panel of impartial community members review all documents, interview relevant parties to clarify unanswered questions, and recommend a resolution. When the board finally responded, rejecting my proposal by claiming confidentiality concerns, my suggestions for allaying those concerns were ignored.

It was also surprising to learn that not supporting Mother Kali's means supporting Bush and mega-corporations. Although I tremendously miss my once-feminist bookstore, Eugene has other independents that can order feminist books from independent progressive presses. Pressuring workers, the community, or anyone who challenges those in charge, while postponing accountability indefinitely, won't create social change. I know my bitterness and frustration won't either. Let's move on from Mother Kali's.

*Ellen Rifkin
Eugene*

LET KALI'S GO

While I often spent money at Mother Kali's Books last year, I see less and less reason to do so any more. Mother Kali's may have been unique in 1977, but today, everything you can get there, you can get at any other independent bookstore in Eugene, let alone at the chain stores. Mother Kali's could be a good place, an asset to the community, but that's not just a matter of who they are; it's a matter of what they do. What they have been doing at Mother Kali's, however, has been more than just disappointing.

The store has chewed up and spit out a dozen women in the last two years; this is fostering feminism? Is threatening lawsuits against newly unemployed single mothers progressive? With allies like these, what need have progressives of enemies? And how, exactly, does Bush benefit when we choose to spend our money at stores where workers are treated like human beings?

I'd like to express my appreciation for the solidarity the Graduate Teaching Fellows' Federation has shown toward my fellow Wobblies at Mother Kali's, and for the support other community activists have shown. I encourage others to join me in not shopping there until the store does right by its wronged

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



workers. To any students whose professors have ordered books at Mother Kali's, remember that you have the ability to order your own textbooks, either online or at other community bookstores, particularly the University Bookstore, which is your student cooperative.

*Patrick R. Wade
Treasurer, IWW Lane County*

COUP D' MANNIX

I'd like to offer my congratulations to our new shadow Governor, Kevin Mannix. How proud he must be that he's managed (with out-of-state financing from a Tom DeLay group) to successfully overturn the compromise budget from the longest session in Oregon legislative history.

He surely must be pleased as punch that he and his gang of Republican thugs and talk show demagogues have successfully managed to take a group of Oregon legislators — who put their home lives, personal fortunes and sacred honor at risk by actually engaging in representative democracy and compromise

over nine long months — and let them know that their efforts were entirely wasted.

Heartened, no doubt, by the successful coup d'etat in California, I can only imagine how pleased our new shadow governor must be at his own successful coup right here in Oregon. What an achievement this is for Mr. Mannix: No longer will losing an election be an impediment to holding elective office!

I look forward to watching him as he appoints his shadow cabinet and proceeds with his already-delineated shadow legislative agenda. But I have to wonder if he's thought this entirely through. Having already ensured that no Oregon legislator in a generation will have the gumption to actually propose any meaningful budgetary legislation, I am curious as to why he is now calling for a special session. It rather seems as if, having gelded the stallion, Mr. Mannix is now attempting to stand it at stud. Something is missing from the equation, certainly.

*Hart Williams
Eugene*

viewpoint BY JIM FLYNN

Equal Justice?

Why did Lara get less than five years?



On Feb. 26 former Eugene Police officer Juan Francisco Lara was sentenced to less than five years for crimes relating to sexual abuse of women and other acts of misconduct while on duty. Eleven victims spoke at the hearing about how Lara's actions have irrevocably changed their lives for the worse. Many of the victims reported that they were so afraid of Lara that they had to move away from Eugene.

Lara never took responsibility for his crimes, and instead attempted the age-old defense that the women wanted it. The hearing revealed Lara's own boastful admissions that he was "just thinking with his dick," and that his job was all about "getting a piece of ass." The plea deal was arranged in a shady after-hours proceeding where this rapist was even allowed to weasel out of being convicted as a sex offender!

The bust of Lara (and of Roger Magaña, currently in jail awaiting trial) is just the tip of the iceberg. The EPD is filled with cops who abuse their power as police officers every day and severely violate the public's trust.

I wonder if the new chief intends to really clean house or just make public scapegoats of these two cops. Will any officers be suspended or fired as a result of the investigation into the sex crimes? One thing is clear: They need to clean up their act before coming to the community for more tax money!

Let's clearly show this travesty of justice for what it really is. Perhaps you recall the case of Jeffrey Luers. On June 16, 2000, this 22-year-old man set three SUVs on fire in the Romania car lot to make a political statement. The punishment for this minor property crime: 22.5 years in prison! There were no back-room deals in this case; as a matter of fact, there were no plea offers made to him at all. The only victim in this case was a car dealership that collected a hefty insurance check.

What did the women who were raped and victimized by Lara get? Nothing. They did not receive a dime in victim compensation (although the DA asked for it, the judge denied it) and were harshly cross-examined by Lara's defense attorney, Dan Koenig. They were humiliated by the slap on the wrist that Lara received in this plea bargain proceeding, and now must attempt to get on with their lives.

It is appalling and outrageous that a young man has been sentenced to 22.5 years for a minor arson, and an officer sworn to uphold the law and protect the community has been sentenced to 54 months by the exact same court of law for sexually abusing while in uniform at least 10 women in this community without even having to register as a sex offender — a title he has more than earned by his own deviant, dishonest and evil actions. This situation makes a mockery of the courts, the criminal justice system and equal protection of the law — the foundation of the U.S. Constitution.

Jim Flynn is an 11-year Eugene resident and police critic who was repeatedly pepper-sprayed by EPD officers at the June 1, 1997, protest of downtown tree removal to build the Broadway/Charnelton project.