

SLANT

• Portland attorney Dan Meek was at Eugene City Club last week to talk about one of our favorite topics, campaign finance reform. Penalties for duplicate signatures killed the 2002 attempt to get a spending-limits constitutional amendment on the ballot, but Meek, Lloyd Marbet and other die-hard reformers are a persistent bunch. Meek reminds us that campaign spending in Oregon has increased by a factor of 12 over the past six years and it's only going to get worse. Oregon is one of six states without spending limits, so more and more national money will likely be pumped into Oregon congressional races. "The candidate who spends the most wins 91 percent of the time," Meek says. The new initiative is called Petition 53 and it bans corporations, labor unions and other entities from contributing to candidate campaigns. Individuals can contribute up to \$500 in statewide partisan races. We'll revisit this campaign later since the signature deadline is not until July 2. The website is www.voters.net and the Eugene contact is Pam Driscoll at 343-5628 or PamelaCypress@yahoo.com

• Wal-Mart in west Eugene applied in February to become a "supercenter," expanding by 68,000 sq. ft. to include a huge grocery store. Fed up California citizens are fighting Wal-Mart supercenters with ballot measures, recognizing that these big stores swallow up small businesses and living wage jobs, and foster a culture of concrete. Eugene's antiquated development regulations permit (and even encourage) such monsters, but the rules can be changed. Ashland, Corvallis and other communities have managed to keep out big box stores. The Eugene City Council has mega-retailers on its May 24 work session agenda, and labor groups are protesting Wal-Mart's expansion plans at a rally at 5 pm April 22 at West 11th and Commerce. Meanwhile, we can vote with our dollars by shopping at locally owned businesses.

• Word on the digital street is that Arianna Huffington is coming to Eugene next month on tour with her 10th book, *Fanatics and Fools: The Game Plan For Winning Back America*. She plans to speak at the McDonald Theatre the evening of May 6. Stay tuned for details. Two days later on May 8, Amy Goodman of the Democracy Now! public radio program is expected to stop here on her national tour marking the launch of her first book, *The Exception to the Rule: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them*. Time is 7 pm and venue is 150 Columbia on Campus.

• The track record of County Commissioner Anna Morrison is being carefully documented on a new website www.annamorrison.org, which is linked to www.annawatch.com. This collection of votes, statements and media reports will come in handy if Morrison chooses to run again for the County Commission or any public office.

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, or email editor@eugeneweekly.com



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