

news Briefs

UO STUDENTS FORM NEW PEACE GROUP

After a year without an active student peace group on the UO campus, Students for Change (SfC) has emerged. The founding members are students from UO instructor Chuck Hunt's sociology class. With support from the campus Survival Center, about 40 students wrote a mission statement, launched a website and made SfC public last week.

"My personal opinion is that we're not specifically an anti-war group, but a peace group," says SfC member Cole Robinson. "There are a lot of roads to peace, and I would like to examine those roads."

On Dec. 2, SfC held its first anti-war rally at the EMU Amphitheater on the UO campus. Several hundred people showed up and marched down 13th Avenue, some carrying signs with anti-war slogans.

SfC is planning another protest for Jan. 20 at the EMU Amphitheater. Participants will march to the Federal Building to protest President Bush's inauguration. Later that evening, SfC will host a benefit concert. For more information, visit www.students4change.org

— Kera Abraham



Kenneth Blackwell

PROBING THE ELECTION

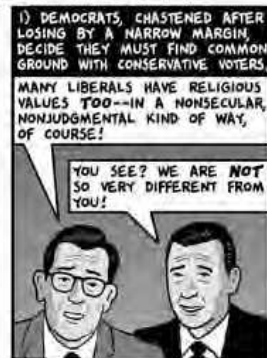
Despite the lack of news in the mainstream media about election fraud in the U.S., developments continue on several fronts. Below is an update gathered from numerous sources:

- More than 37,000 complaints have been filed so far about the 2004 election. During November, voters, poll workers, and precinct judges in Ohio spoke at public hearings, giving testimony on withheld ballots and voting machines, rigged electronic equipment, harassment, intimidation, official misinformation, and waits of up to nine hours that prevented many people from voting. One woman waited four hours to vote and returned home to find her husband had unexpectedly died.

- Election investigations now center in Ohio, where a count of provisional and overseas ballots has reduced Bush's lead from 136,000 to 119,00 votes. Green and Libertarian Party candidates brought a lawsuit for a state recount, with the Kerry-Edwards campaign recently joining them. Volunteers are being trained to help recount Ohio's 88 counties. With the Electoral College scheduled to vote Dec. 13, the re-

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



count has been stonewalled by Ohio's Republican Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell.

- Once the Electoral College votes, a proposal to challenge election results in key states can be brought by one or more U.S. representatives and one or more senators. In 2000 there were willing representatives but no senator (Remember *Fahrenheit 9/11*?). People are searching for a senator who will pledge to be the challenger if needed. Congress would then vote on whether to accept election results from the state(s) in question.

- On Dec. 3 Green Party lawyers and the National Voting Rights Institute sued Blackwell, alleging he is stalling, and asking that a recount begin immediately and

that Blackwell not certify Republican electors for Ohio until the recount is completed.

- Greens and Libertarians have also requested a New Mexico recount. The hand recount Ralph Nader initiated in 11 New Hampshire precincts ended Nov. 30 with no change in results. In New Hampshire, paper ballots had been counted by optical scanners.

- Congressman Conyers and other members of the House Judiciary Committee have sent a strongly worded 14-page letter to Blackwell, with 34 questions they want answered by Dec. 10. They are concerned that Ohio election irregularities "constitute a troubled portrait of a one-two punch that may well have altered and suppressed votes, particularly minority and Democratic

SLANT

- The rousing party at the Eugene Public Library last Saturday night felt like the memorial Tom Wiper would have wanted if the choice had been his to make. Nearly 3,000 Eugeneans moseyed through all three floors to talk to local authors and artists and buy their wares. They paid a total of \$5,000 for 100 banners made to celebrate the library's first century. They bought raffle tickets and stood in line for Euphoria chocolate sundaes, spending a total of \$10,000. But Tom Wiper was not sitting with his wife, Kathy, in his customary party place in the rotunda at the bottom of the stairs. He died earlier this fall at age 61 after a long and crippling illness. Barbara Dellenback, executive director of the EPL Foundation, says without hesitation that this library would not have been built at this time without the leadership of Wiper. As chair of the capital campaign, he relentlessly raised the private funds to match the city's contribution. Soon, Dellenback says, prominent signs will indicate a permanent memorial in the library. The rotunda, centerpiece of the building, will be named the Tom Wiper Rotunda.

- Last week we wrote about an upcoming public hearing on the West Eugene Parkway -- a rare event in a process that carries on mostly behind closed doors -- and here's a final reminder. The hearing before the Metropolitan Policy Committee is from 11:30

am to 1:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 9, at the Eugene Public Library. Want to testify for three minutes? Show up early and get on the list.

- We hear the city of Eugene is looking at making a decision soon regarding two or more proposals for redevelopment of an acre of city-owned land downtown. The lot is on the same block as the WOW Hall at 8th and Lincoln. One group of investors is proposing to bulldoze the old Goodwill building and put up a mix of apartments and commercial units. Another group with more modest means wants to save the old building and convert it to low-rent commercial, non-profit offices and business incubator units. Lots of issues for the city to look at: What's the highest and best use of the property? What does downtown really need? Is the old building worth saving after some 15 years of disuse? Can late-night music (aka noise) from WOW Hall be compatible with residents nearby? Can WOW Hall buy the lot behind the facility for parking and access, and still leave adequate room for a redevelopment project? Would heavy construction next door actually damage the WOW Hall's old foundations? This is a good project to watch.

- The debate on the role of religion in politics



Bill Moyers

continues as we puzzle over the American psyche and its idiosyncrasies. One voice of clarity and insight is Bill Moyers, who was recently honored by Harvard Medical School with its annual Global Environmental Citizen Award. His response to the award, titled "Battlefield Earth" is well worth reading and can be found at www.alternet.org/story/20666 Moyers talks about the strange beliefs of the religious right welcoming destruction of the environment and conflagration in the Middle East. Why worry about global warming, toxics, deforestation and war when it's all part of God's plan as outlined in Revelations? These religious fanatics are currently in charge of our resources and our foreign and domestic policy. Flee to Canada? No way. Let's recruit lefty Canadians, Mexicans and Europeans to emigrate here and join the fight.

- Several EW readers have left messages for the editor voicing concern for the governor's budget -- the lack of money for education and the gov's push to allow addictive lottery slot machines to raise money for state police. Another reader voiced outrage at Bush's latest plans to protect only a few watersheds that provide habitat for endangered salmon. Hmm. Does the White House chef served farmed salmon? One reader sug-

gested EW do something to support the local radio station that now broadcasts Air America, and we plan to do just that. We are talking to KOPT 1450 AM about a co-sponsorship. The caller said Air America is the only progressive radio in the area, but she must not have discovered KLCC or KRVM.

- Another reader comment this week was a suggestion that one of the best ways to "fix" Social Security would be to raise the national minimum wage. The increased payroll taxes would go a long way to fund Social Security. Business lobbyists, of course, argue that labor costs are fixed, so higher wages just mean more layoffs and fewer people paying into Social Security. Round and round we go, but let's keep in mind that if it were up to business and industry, there would be no minimum wage, no 40-hour week, no OSHA, no paid holidays, no workers' comp, etc.. Some European countries have found a simple solution to the growing wage gap: They cap the amount of executive salaries that can be written off as a business expense. And it's based on the ratio of the lowest paid worker to the highest paid executive in a company. For example, a CEO can only make, say 30 times the salary of the lowest-paid worker without the company incurring extra tax liabilities. Should we bother trying to get such reforms through Congress today? Why not plant some seeds?