

news Briefs

PROPOSALS IN FOR WEST 8TH

Three organizations are touting their visions for how the currently unoccupied property next to the WOW Hall on West 8th Avenue can be redeveloped. The city purchased the land from Wells Fargo Bank with federal Community Block Grant money. The plan was to demolish the old Ridenour Building on the site and create new, affordable housing downtown.

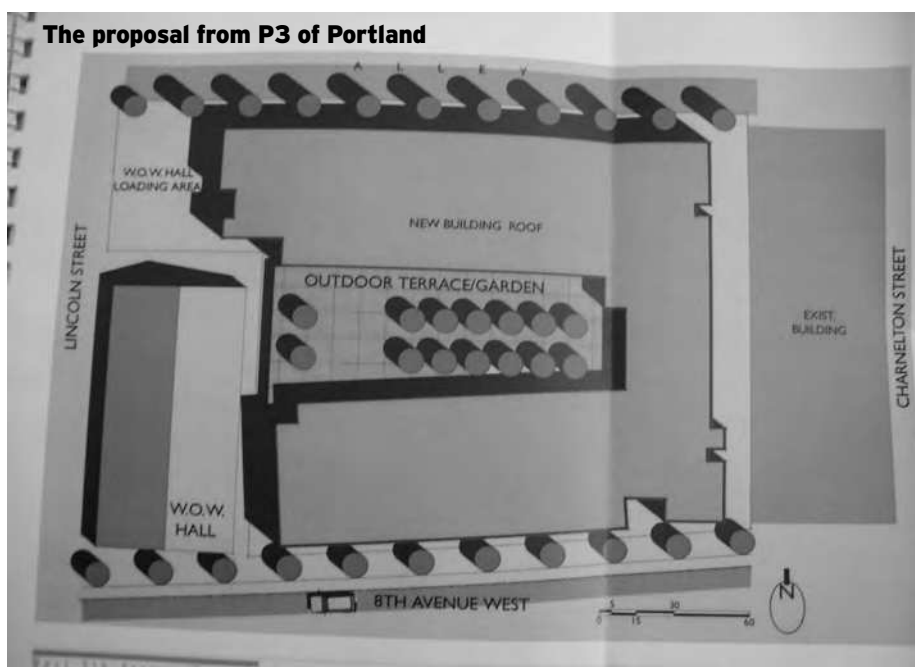
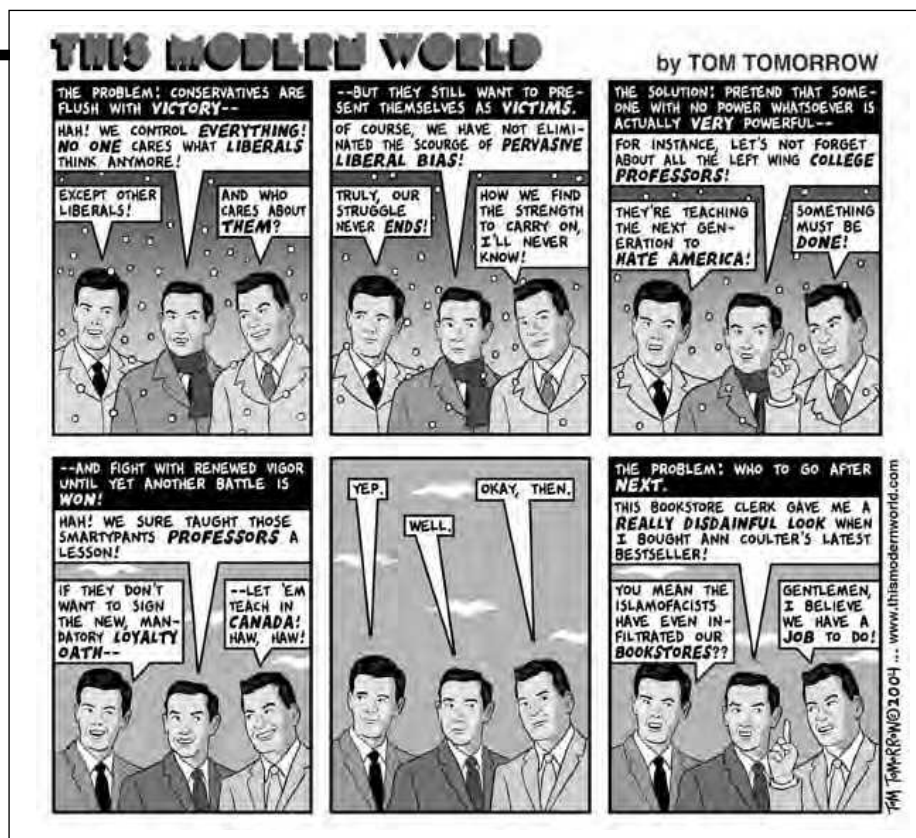
The three request for proposals (RFPs) documents have been filed with the city and

are now available for public scrutiny in the lobby of the Atrium Building downtown across from the bus station.

Two of the RFPs call for redeveloping the site with relatively large residential units, while a third proposal calls for remodeling the Ridenour Building to provide a mix of commercial and non-profit office space. The building has been used for furniture storage since it was last actively occupied by Goodwill Industries.

The proposal to save the old building is part of the RFP from the West Eighth Avenue Development Group, LLC. Charles Tilt, Kathy Ging and others are saying downtown needs cheap office space as well as affordable housing and the Ridenour Building is structurally sound. The building would make a great "business incubator" for start-up enterprises, says Ging. Tilt says the group is also concerned that sound from WOW Hall concerts will lead to complaints from the new apartment dwellers next door, leading to the shut-down of the popular performing arts center.

An RFP from Public Private Partnerships,



Inc. (P3) and Otak, Inc. of Portland is calling for construction of a 41,000 sq. ft. U-shaped apartment complex at the site. P3 envisions commercial space on the bottom floor and 100 rental units above. Noise mitigation would be integrated into the design, and the overall look of the building would carry on the architectural themes of the WOW Hall next door. The structure would rise five storeys along 8th Avenue.

A Eugene group, Metropolitan Affordable Housing Corporation (MAHC), has the thickest RFP for a project they call WesTown on 8th. The mixed-use, mixed-income building would have some commercial space on the two-storey 8th Avenue streetfront, but most of the 86 units would be set back from the street so as not to dwarf the WOW Hall. The building would only be five storeys on the alley. Sixty-nine of the units would be deemed affordable

housing, while 16 others would be at rented at "market rate." The project also includes "live-in work units."

MAHC's proposal has extensive plans for noise mitigation regarding WOW Hall concerts. The apartment building would include a "sound-reflective wall" on the west side, the side closest to the concert hall, and \$50,000 is included in the budget for "acoustic upgrades" to WOW Hall itself, keeping more of the sound contained for the benefit of all the neighbors. MAHC also plans to not develop the small parcel of the property behind the WOW Hall, and instead sell it to WOW Hall.

Tilt of the West Avenue Development Group says he's concerned that not enough public input will be going into the selection process. The proposals will be examined by the city's Housing Policy Board which will

SLANT

- Will there be a national monument built in Eugene to honor U.S. Nobel Peace Prize winners? It's still a fresh idea, but it's gaining momentum and potential sites have already been picked in Alton Baker Park. Nowhere is there a monument for the 19 Americans and three U.S. organizations that have received the prize for peace since Teddy Roosevelt won it in 1906. Organizers are saying they want to honor the peacemakers – some famous, some obscure – educate the public about what it takes to win the prize, and inspire others to work for peace. The committee spearheading this exciting effort needs help, such as letters of endorsement from organizations, design proposals, volunteers of all sorts, and of course financial support. A rough website is up at www.nobelpeacemonument.org and interested persons can call 686-1027 or e-mail jnhattig@efn.org. This really is a heart-warming holiday story.

- In our Nov. 24 issue we ran a piece

about Nancy Hughes' fund-raising project to put safer, more efficient stoves in the homes of 8,000 indigenous Guatemalan families. She launched this project after going to Guatemala for three years with the Eugene-based Cascade Medical team and helping to treat families whose health was damaged by the old three-stone fires. In the first week after the story, she received \$2,200 in donations. Her goal is \$25,000 per year for the next four years. As a result of the story, Hughes heard from another woman raising money for the indigenous women of Guatemala and she has been contacted by women who are supplying cooking stoves to Kenya. Stoves not bombs. How's this for a U.S. foreign policy that makes sense! If you want to contribute, send to the Duffy Hughes Memorial Stove Grant, c/o Eugene Southtowne Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 5158, Eugene 97405.

- Back in 1998, Eugene voters narrowly turned down a measure that would have created an independent police review

board. Anarchists were getting big headlines in those days, both for their noisy confrontational tactics, and for getting beaten up, pepper sprayed and jailed by the local constabulary. Voters probably figured the troublemakers were getting what they deserved when they punched their ballots. A lot has happened since then. The fruitless military style drug raid in the Whiteaker neighborhood shocked a lot of people, racial profiling by Eugene police was documented, the Lara and Magaña sexual abuse cases grabbed headlines and provided an unsettling perspective of a city police department out of control. Meanwhile, some of the few people of color we have in town are leaving, bitterly citing chronic harassment and discrimination. Now City Councilor David Kelly is raising hell about our community's ubiquitous and not-so-subtle bigotry toward anyone not like ourselves. We're in denial, he says, thinking we're such a hip town. So what can we do about it? Kelly's right to raise the issues, and he recognizes that there's no one solution. We

need to understand and confront bias and injustice wherever they appear, whether it's in our schools, neighborhoods, homes, media, business, government, or in ourselves. Opportunities for positive change abound; it's a matter of getting involved and staying involved over time. And speaking of persistence, that old issue of an external police review board is still alive and it's the topic at noon Friday, Dec. 31, at Eugene City Club. New Year's Eve is apparently the only Friday that would work for this program, but maybe it's perfect. Let's get a head-start on a new year of doing things better.

- We just heard that longtime Eugene fine artist and poet Peter George Aposporos, aka Panos, died at the age of 80 on Dec. 3. A circle of friends who have known him over the past 30 years, along with some family members from the East Coast are gathering in his memory at 1 pm Thursday, Dec. 16 at the Masonic Cemetery at East 28th and University. Accordion music and whistling are planned in tribute.