

# news Briefs

## NEW YEAR, NEW POLITICS

The first weeks of the new year bring several events looking ahead for local government. Eugene will get a new mayor and councilors, the county will get a new commissioner and citizens will speak out on what they see as high priority for 2005.

Kitty Piercy will be sworn in as Eugene's new mayor Jan. 3 and will give her first **State**

of the City address. The event will begin at 5:30 pm Tuesday in the lobby of the Hult Center and is open to the public. Piercy says she chose the late afternoon time so that more people will be able to attend. Music and refreshments are planned.

"I want to hear your ideas and critical feedback over the next four years," she wrote in a message to her mailing list. "We live in a great community and I promise to do my best to listen hard to diverse voices as we move forward together."

A swearing-in ceremony and **State of the County** address for the Board of County Commissioners is slated for earlier the same day. Commission Chair Bobby Green will outline a five-point plan for the county's success in 2005 as part of the events that begin at 10 am Monday, Jan. 3 at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave.

New Commissioner Faye H. Stewart will be sworn in, along with re-elected Commissioner Peter Sorenson, Sheriff Russel

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



## SLANT

• One of our favorite January events of recent years is the Citizens State of the City address that usually follows the traditionally less inspired mayor's State of the City address (see dates in our News Briefs section). This year, the dynamics are likely to be very different, but perhaps even more interesting. Will new Mayor Kitty lay out the progressive agenda item by item, or will she be more moderate as a representative of "all Eugene?"



We got a preview of Piercy's inclination to moderation and compromise when she stood by Mayor Torrey campaigning for November's ballot measure to build a new police station – a project supported by city staff, but few others. She tells us she wants "to be respectful of those who came before, even if I often did not agree with them." We predict she will pick her battles carefully. Meanwhile, will the Citizen's State of the City call for more radical changes now that we have a more progressive mayor? Eugene is facing challenges on many fronts and Kitty can only do so much. The

energy, the will for positive change – the power – still lies with the people.

• Regardless of the tone and content of the upcoming state of the city and county addresses, it's great to be looking forward rather than dragging along the past. The R-G and other local media are trudging through their annual end-of-the-year retrospectives, and ranking stories for their importance. It's a media tradition that's long outlived its usefulness. Nobody wants to write these stories, so they are usually assigned to the greenest reporters as an exercise in "getting to know the community." No one reads them. Who wants to relive a year of police rape and dirty politics? It's not all bad news, of course, but it's arrogant for reporters and editors to try to rank the importance of stories, as though there exists some universal standard. We at EW are guilty as well. Each week we tell our readers what we think is important. But for some families a tiny obituary or birth notice buried deep in the daily paper was the biggest news of 2004. For others, a check in the mailbox, a revelation, an ill-

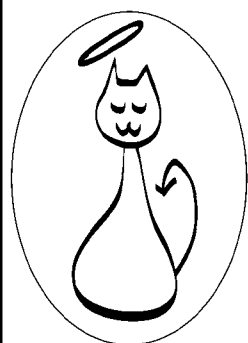
ness, a healing, a phone call, an unexpected embrace – these were the biggest events of the year, far surpassing headlined sex scandals, corruption, injustice, elections, wars and even unfathomable catastrophes around the world. In the end, it's not the supercilious media, but rather we humble human beings who decide what has meaning and significance in our lives.

• We hear from Alder Fuller of ProtoTista fame that he is planning on taking his classes to Portland next year, so winter and spring might be the last time for a while for Eugeneans to soak up the professor's unique lectures and discussions on complexity theory. Fuller operates a small, independent non-profit college based in a west Eugene warehouse. He teaches small classes of all ages on topics of chaos theory, fractals, symbiosis, Gaia theory, climate change and more. He says he's envisioning a regional community college with a small faculty teaching classes in Portland, Eugene, Bend and elsewhere. Winter term begins Jan. 10 with a week of free overviews. For information, e-mail [info@prototista.org](mailto:info@prototista.org) or visit [www.prototista.org](http://www.prototista.org)

• In a follow-up to our story (11/24) on Nancy Hughes and local efforts to provide cleaner, safer, more efficient stoves to people in Guatemala, we heard from Dean Still who tells us these stoves were designed by Aprovecho Research Center in Cottage Grove. "We have 11 active stove projects around the world," says Still. Aprovecho just received a \$76,000 grant from Shell Foundation to write a consumer's guide to third-world cooking stoves to be published by the EPA, he says, along with a \$25,000 grant from the Murdock Foundation to build an emissions testing facility. More information is available at [www.aprovecho.net](http://www.aprovecho.net) and [www.treeswaterpeople.org/Justa.htm](http://www.treeswaterpeople.org/Justa.htm)

• One of our loyal readers left a message this week that outgoing Mayor Torrey's last gift to Eugene will be a bag of asphalt. He was referring to an emergency meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee requested by Torrey to presumably push through some pet road projects for his developer friends. See Slant last week. The meeting is at 11:30 am Thursday, Dec. 30 at the Springfield Library.

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, [editor@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)



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