

# news Briefs

Ibrahim Gassama



## NEW VOICES IN WORLD LAW

A free public forum at the UO School of Law will feature three young, female scholars with critical perspectives on U.S. international law and policy. The forum, organized by law professor Ibrahim Gassama, will be held from 4 to 6 pm Thursday, Jan. 11 at

Room 175, Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St.

At the forum, titled "New Voices in International Law," Hilary Charlesworth, Karen Engle, and Ileana Porras will reflect on the U.S. role in the world and challenges such as economic and social inequity, nuclear proliferation, AIDS, terrorism and gender violence.

"We wanted to sponsor some very capable, younger international scholars to hear their perspectives on a variety of issues," Gassama says. "We refer to them as 'new voices,' although they also could be called 'feminist' or 'critical' legal scholars or 'Third World' or 'post-colonial' scholars."

Charlesworth, an Australian law professor and current holder of the Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics, is considered one of the world's leading feminist international law scholars. She wrote the first book-length work to focus on the role of women's issues in that arena and co-authored one of the most widely used international law texts.

Engle writes and lectures extensively on identity politics, international law, human rights and employment discrimination. She holds a chair at the University of Texas School of Law and is considered an incisive and original thinker.

Porras is a law professor and former nun who focuses on issues of violence, colonialism, trade and the environment. She has made important contributions to various aspects of international law, including international environmental and economic law.

"Through their brilliance and dedication to legal scholarship, these scholars have in-

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



creased and improved our understanding of international law," Gassama says. "I felt that it was important to hear from these women at a time when many of us are deeply concerned about the concerted efforts from one wing of the Republican Party to undermine international law and international institutions.

"Notwithstanding the recent repudiation by the U.S. Justice Department of a legal memorandum that provided legal justification for torture of terror suspects, there are plenty of reasons to believe that this adminis-

tration lacks an appreciation of the contributions of international law to our civilization," Gassama says. "These distinguished scholars understand the limits and aspirations of international law and should help us as we think about how best to deal with the expanding list of challenges we face in the world today."

The forum is part of a two-year inquiry by the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics into "The Changing Geopolitical Order: Implications for Peace and Stability."

## SLANT



• It was a memorable event for Eugene. Kitty Piercy took her oath of office as new mayor Jan. 3 and gave her first state of the city address – a message of optimism tempered with recognition that we still face big challenges ahead in creating jobs, building community, improving city government, providing services for the disenfranchised and confronting bigotry. The outgoing mayor and councilors were honored, and new and returning council members were sworn in. The event packed the Hult Center lobby in what is likely the largest and most diverse ceremony of

its kind in Eugene's history. Starting off the new year with such enthusiasm and turnout is a hopeful sign for positive change in Eugene.

• Some creative elves gave downtown Eugene an unlikely gift of decorated driftwood New Year's Eve or early New Year's Day. Dozens or even hundreds of pieces of wood were left in doorways, on newspaper boxes, planter boxes and windowsills along Willamette. Walt Hunt at New Odyssey gathered a few from the front of his juice bar and put them in his window so they wouldn't walk away. The artistically inscribed messages include: "Be strong as a mountain, gentle as a feather," "Sneak up on a flower," "Justice creates peace," and "It takes a long time to grow young." Some are still around this week, waiting to be discovered. Meanwhile, anonymous posters have gone up around town with equally inspiring messages.

• Bonny Bettman's been raising a lot of important issues in her bully pulpit role as chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee. She's been the lone voice on the MPC in opposition to spendy, environmentally brown road projects such as the West Eugene Parkway. It's a lonely job standing up against a panel that



appears to value growth and sprawl over livability. Bettman took advantage of the 65 people in attendance at the New Year's Eve emergency meeting of the MPC to grill state and local officials on missing data, hard to retrieve information, and budget inconsistencies. It was an eye-opener for many attending on how decisions are made in transportation planning. Former Mayor Torrey describes such detailed questioning as nit-picking. We consider it shedding light on a shadowy process.

• We look at the massive devastation in Southeast Asia and its incredible cost in lives and money, and we can't help but think of our own campaign of devastation in Iraq and its incredible costs. Again, we need to change our nation's priorities. Bush backers will be celebrating his inauguration Jan. 20, but administration critics will be marking the day in Eugene with a gathering and march at 4 pm from UO to the Federal Building. Check our paper next week for details.

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

