

news Briefs

PLAQUES AND ADVICE

New Mayor Kitty Piercy wasn't the only official to speak at the Eugene State of the City event Jan. 3.

Incoming and outgoing elected officials, even political opposites, exchanged praise and plaques. Councilor Bonny Bettman thanked Piercy for "sharing the platform so liberally" and praised outgoing Mayor Jim Torrey for his "down to earth" style and sense of humor. Torrey "has been a very, very powerful political force in this community for more than a decade," Bettman said.

Torrey returned the praise, noting Bettman's key role in passing a measure to provide city tax money to bail out local schools. Without Bettman, the funding might not have happened, Torrey said. "Council President Bonny Bettman saved the day."

Torrey also offered the new mayor and council this parting advice: "Keep Eugene a great place for kids, because if you do, it will remain a great place for everyone."

Re-elected Councilor Betty Taylor used her turn to offer a long list of what she'd like to see the new city government accomplish: an independent performance auditor; helping Oregon Research Institute in its plans to build a new office at the old Sears building across from the downtown library; tax reform; an equitable system of funding road repairs; a living wage ordinance; regulating big box stores; increased funding for neighborhood organizations, community television and the sister city program; daylighting the millrace



BETTY TAYLOR

at the old Agripac site; creating a downtown youth center with the cooperation of the UO and private donations; and making government "sensible, transparent and fair to everyone."

Taylor's progressive list brought some of the biggest applause of the evening from the packed Hult Center lobby.

— Alan Pittman

UO STUDENTS OUTLINE PLAN

Members of the nascent UO peace group Students for Change have outlined their plan for an ambitious movement called the Commongood Project. In the first phase of the project, members will raise funds and build networks with local and national interfaith groups and social justice organizations. They will also organize "communities for the common good," or "comcoms," which will host educational events and facilitate public conversations. "We want to welcome people who are attracted to a new kind of spirit," says SFC member Brian Bogart. "It's not just for young people, but for all concerned citizens."

The project's umbrella goal is to provide "a creative response to the destructive US agenda of spreading subordination through violence," according to SFC's draft. "The Commongood Project claims the future as a common ground for life and the human family, to be protected from unjust, violent, and unsustainable systems we live under today. Everyone has the right to evolve equally in a hopeful, peaceful world. That which threatens our common ground — obstacles to equitable coexistence — must be changed."

SFC is leading a campus rally and a march to the Federal Building to protest George W. Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20. Pre-march activities will take place at the EMU amphitheater on the UO campus from noon to 4 pm. For more information, see the following story or visit the SFC website at www.students4change.org

— Kera Abraham

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



COUNTERING INAUGURATION

UO students, faculty, and community members will gather at several locations on Thursday, Jan. 20, to mark President-elect George W. Bush's inauguration day with a series of events that will encourage individuals to help inaugurate an alternative, more just and peaceful vision for the U.S., according to Michael Carrigan, one of the organizers. In addition, participants will use the occasion to "celebrate the dawning of a new era in Eugene with the election of Kitty Piercy as mayor," Carrigan says.

• Events at UO begin at noon at the EMU with talks by Sandy Morgen, Garrett Epps, Shaul Cohen, Sharon Schuman and Brian Bogart. Related student events with music and more speakers run from 2 to 4 pm.

• At 4 pm, students and faculty will march from the EMU to the Federal Building at 7th and Pearl to join the events there.

• Federal Building events begin at 1 pm with music, dancing, and chanting. Speakers beginning at 5 pm include Jim Rassman, Josh Laughlin, Amy Pincus-Merwin, Lucy Lahr

and William Maxwell. Following the talks will be a candlelight vigil and march around the Federal Building from 5:30 to 6 pm.

• Events at Cozmic Pizza run from 6 to 9 pm with music, speakers and theater.

• At 7 pm a day earlier, on Jan. 19, a pre-inaugural event will be held at Cozmic Pizza that includes a showing of Barrie Zwicker's film *The Great Conspiracy* about Bush and 9/11.

GRAFFITI BY COP

If you paint graffiti on city property you could face a fine, an order to clean it up or even jail time. But a different standard apparently applies to a Eugene police officer's illegal graffiti.

City Manager Dennis Taylor admitted Jan. 10 to the City Council that Eugene police officers had illegally spray painted "no trespassing" signs on public sidewalks in an effort to stop panhandlers. Panhandling on public property is not illegal, courts have ruled. "Panhandling is a constitutionally protected

SLANT

• We love seeing Kulongoski showing some spunk and taking on the Bush administration in his State of the State Address this week. The gov said he would not sit by while "the federal government attempts to dismantle our environmental legacy, undermine our values and erode our sovereignty." That statement covers a multitude of sins, from destructive salmon and forest policies to gay rights restrictions to attempts to override Oregonians' votes on assisted suicide and medical pot. Meanwhile, Lane County Commissioner Pete Sorenson has announced his gubernatorial candidacy to oppose Kulongoski in 2006. It's a long shot, but Sorenson's pressure from the left might be just what's prodding Kulongoski to show some leadership and initiative in what's so far been an unremarkable governorship. Smart move by Sorenson. We hear Pete somehow got invited to sit among state

lawmakers in the audience for the gov's State of the State Address. How did he manage that?

• Tsunami reports and winter weather news are overshadowing war and politics these days, so here's a quick recap on the presidential election as we approach the re-inauguration of Bush next week. Congress met Jan. 6 to approve the Electoral College votes and U.S. Rep. Conyers and several colleagues objected to the votes from Ohio on the basis of "numerous, serious election irregularities." Conyers had written to all 100 senators asking them to join him. Locally, members of TruthinVoting.org continued a vigil at Sen. Wyden's Eugene office, and Sarah Gray continued her fast, all asking Wyden to join Conyers. Tens of thousands of people across the country phoned, faxed, and wrote to Congress. The morn-

ing of Jan. 6, Sen. Boxer agreed to join the objection, and later, in a joint session of Congress, Rep. Tubbs Jones from Ohio came forward with Boxer to raise an objection to the Ohio votes. The House and Senate then held separate debates. Wyden, Clinton, Obama, Kennedy, and others spoke in support of raising questions about the election. But when the vote came, Boxer stood alone. In the House, many spoke in support of the objection and some strongly called for election reform. Conyers, Jesse Jackson Jr., Kucinich, Waters, Tubb Jones, and Lee gave rousing speeches, alternating with a Republican chorus of "Get over it." In the House vote, 31 lawmakers supported the objection. DeFazio was at home in Oregon and missed the vote. What's next? The momentum for accountability may lead to crucial voting reforms. We need to thank members of Congress, especially Wyden,

who listened to his constituents.

• Something new in this week's issue of *EW* is a lively column in our Personals section called "Date Girl," written by Judy McGuire, and scheduled to run every other week. She responds to questions from readers, and sometimes just ponders the mysteries of sex, weird relationships and pop culture. Give us feedback, and for now you can write to Judy via ategirl@earthlink.net

• As we go to press, we hear members of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 575 are planning an informational picketing from 4 to 6 pm Thursday, Jan. 13 at the LTD station downtown. For more information, contact Carol Allred at 729-1903, or read Gary Gillespie's comments on the threatened strike in our cover story this week.