

SLANT

• Both sides in the LTD strike have agreed to return to mediation Thursday morning and we hope some resolution is reached to get the buses rolling again, though it seems unlikely as both sides are digging in and LTD is even threatening to withdraw its latest offer. We are pleased to see discussion in the media about LTD losing some of its funding if this strike continues. As it stands now, LTD gains financially from the strike while employees suffer. But of course it's about more than money. The strikers need assurance that their concerns are being addressed, and nothing speaks louder than money. We hear transit union officials in Portland and elsewhere are weighing in, or at least watching this dispute to see how it might affect their next contract bargaining. Organized labor is under attack nationwide, and unions are fighting not just to maintain their power, but also to survive. Kulongoski's keeping his distance from this strike, but is that wise? He has the expertise and clout to effectively intervene, and perhaps he should since he appoints LTD board members. And he was elected with strong support from labor – support he could lose in the next election if this struggling union goes down in flames while he fiddles.

• Local activist Hope Marston wrote to the LTD board this week reminding them (and us) that if it weren't for the skyrocketing costs of medical care, we likely wouldn't be having this labor strife. The powerful

health care industry in our nation has no incentives to keep prices down. The Bush administration, Congress and Oregon Legislature are giving the industry everything it wants. It will take a revolution from the grassroots up to end this profiteering and make health care affordable and accessible to everyone. The idea of single-payer health insurance is still alive, and we expect to see another measure on the Oregon ballot, probably in 2006.

• Whatever happened to Eugene's Independent Science Review Board? We hear it's still in existence, but it's not being used. Let's see the new council and mayor run some ideas and proposals past this collection of local scientists. A lot of volunteer expertise is waiting to be tapped. Air and water quality, hazardous substance management, wetlands, riparian habitat and energy generation are just some of the issues with scientific implications that come before the City Council, County Commission and other local government bodies.

• San Francisco pundit Marc Perkel sends us his weekly observations on the national political scene, and he's in a funk this week. He writes: "The bad news is coming so fast that I can't write about it all. Do I write about the Italian journalist being shot? Or the CIA shipping people overseas to be tortured? Or the price of gas going to record highs? Or the programmer who admitted writing the software to

fix the election for Bush? Or that Bush appointed John Bolton, a man who hates the United Nations, to the United Nations? Or the destruction of Social Security? Or ongoing problems like the federal deficit, going deeper and deeper and deeper into debt? The tax cuts for the rich, the war in Iraq, the coming war

in Iran? There's just no end to the bad news. If Bush was actually elected – which I don't believe he was – America made a really bad choice."

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

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

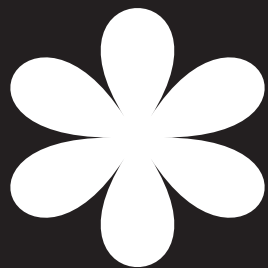
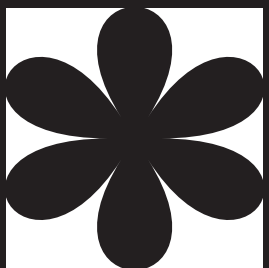
MICHELE RENEE & RAVI LOGAN

Following graduation from Southwest Texas State, Michele Renee moved to Belize, married a pilot, and spent seven years at aerial photography in North Africa and the Caribbean. "I decided I didn't like to fly," says Renee, who returned for a teaching degree, got a divorce, and hit the road in '93. "I always felt like an alien in Texas." She ran out of cash in Eugene but felt comfy here, got a job at the Friendly Market, and eventually found her teaching niche as a sub at the International High Schools. "I've taught all the courses at all levels," she says. "It's the nicest sub job in Eugene!" She also found Ravi Logan, a UO meditation teacher and a leading international advocate for Progressive Utilization Theory, a model for sustainable development. Their mutual projects include an 8-year-old daughter, Asha, and a two-year-old backyard meeting hall, the Dharmalaya Center for Human Development. See dharmalaya.org for a schedule of yoga and meditation classes, gardening and building workshops, and neighborhood social events. Enjoy music and art at the center's second annual River Road Pear Blossom Culture Fest, at 356 Horn Lane on Saturday, April 2.



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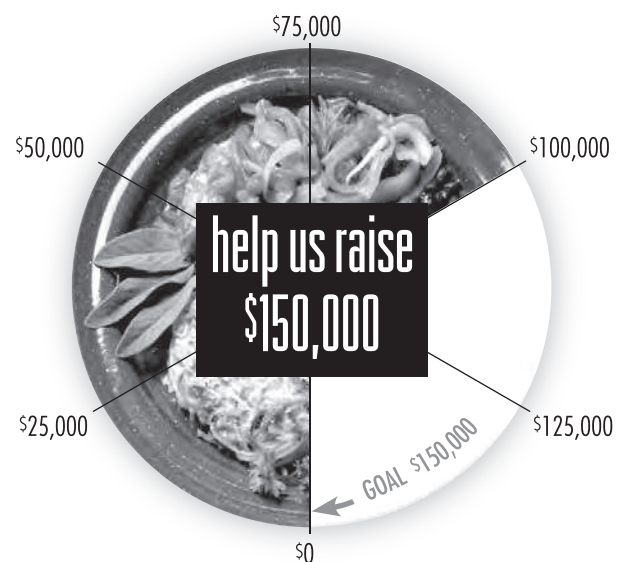
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