

news Briefs



BRINGING THE WAR HOME

Friday, March 18, marked the second anniversary of the start of the Iraq War and 32 people lined up outside the Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force recruitment offices in the Santa Clara Shopping Center holding graphic images of the war's human casualties. While approximately 40 supporters and media listened, the protesters spoke in turn, giving their reasons for opposing the war and citing lies and omissions by recruiting officers when trying to persuade young people to join the military.

"We have full faith in the essential goodness and the conscience of the American people, and if these images were shown in America's living rooms every night, the war would be over in a week," protest spokesman Peter Chabarek said.

"Democracy depends on media that will

inform rather than obscure. Our media in recent years has done a shameful job in that respect," protester John Bergland said. "People would not vote the same if they knew the truth."

"I'm sickened and saddened that our country supports children killing children, and that's what's happening," protester Leslie Hunter said. "Americans are being lied to."

An elderly gentleman passing by briefly heckled the protesters. "[American troops] died to give you suckers the freedom to come out here and do this," he said. "Bring 'em on!"

The activists responded with a hearty "Thank you," emphasizing their support for the troops.

In response to the protesters' presence, recruitment center staff shut down the offices for the day. Chabarek said that because law enforcement did not interfere, the activists established a precedent of their right to demonstrate on private property.

The protesters were primarily members of the Civil Resistance study group, which meets weekly to discuss nonviolent opposition to the war. Faith in Action co-sponsored the event. The action received coverage on all three major TV networks in Eugene, several radio outlets and *The Register-Guard*.

The Civil Resistance study group meets at 8 pm Monday nights at the Friends Meeting House, 2274 Onyx St. — *Kera Abraham*

STANDING FOR PEACE

An estimated 400 people from three dozen Oregon towns gathered for the Memorial Peace Procession in Cottage Grove last weekend. The event was part of the Global Day of Action that included at least 726 communities in the U.S. alone, according to www.unitedforpeace.org

Prayer flags were carried in the procession with the names of 1,854 U.S. and coalition soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and approximately 600 Iraqi children killed in the Iraq War. The program included a laying of a wreath at the Oregon National Guard Armory by a contingent of veterans, lead by

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Michelle and Steve DeFord, the parents of David W. Johnson who was killed in Iraq in September 2004. So far, 27 Oregon soldiers have died in Iraq.

The DeFords spoke of their son's sacrifice and their loss, and "how they decided to work to give his death meaning by dedicating their lives to bringing an end to this immoral and unjust war," says Scott Burgwin of Stand for Peace. "The DeFords offered us a powerful example of commitment to peace and a challenge to each of us to do what we can and, even more, what we have to, to bring an end to this war."

Stand for Peace plans to continue to hold weekly vigils from 5 to 6 pm Fridays and from 6 to 7 pm Sundays at Opal's Park in Cottage Grove. For more information, call 767-0770.

FRESH AIR ON ENERGY

In 2003, when West Cascade Energy LLC filed an application to construct a 900-MW gas-fired power plant in Coburg, a coalition of citizens and nonprofits organized to fight it. Concerned about pollution and questioning the need for the facility, they called on their county commissioners to reject the application, only to find that local officials' hands were tied: Authority over the plant siting decision fell to the five-member, governor-appointed Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC).

A similar fight is playing out in Klamath Falls, where COB LLC has received a site certificate for an 1,160-MW gas-fired power plant — huge by industry standards — and Klamath Generation LLC has a pending application for a 500-MW gas-fired plant. Hundreds of community members oppose both plants, but again, elected county officials can do nothing; EFSC makes the decisions.

Now, a state bill aims to give citizens and elected officials more decision-making power about energy facility siting. The "Oregon Fair Energy Bill" makes provisions for public input into decisions about power plants that don't meet local land use rules. In those cases, local jurisdictions would hold public hearings and share equal decision-making authority with EFSC.

The bill also requires energy facility approvals to incorporate energy forecasts that consider regional electricity needs, cost effectiveness and conservation. The "need" requirement for new power plants was a part of Oregon law until the energy crisis of the 1990s, when it was eliminated, opening the door for plants in Oregon to produce surplus energy for out-of-state consumers. Currently, Oregon has an energy surplus, and demand is projected to hold steady with supply through 2011.

The Fair Energy Bill would also prioritize wind, solar and co-generation projects over fossil-fuel facilities, a move that could encourage windmills on farms in Eastern Oregon.

Lisa Arkin of the Oregon Toxics Alliance in Eugene says she was inspired to draft the bill when she heard directly from frustrated citizens living near proposed power plant sites. "They had angst about what seemed to be a rubber-stamp process," she says. "When we build power plants that we don't need, we're putting excessive pollution into the airshed. Let's get our laws aligned with our goals."

Lane County Commissioner Pete Sorenson says that the bill's biggest strength is its bi-partisan support. The bill's co-sponsors in the Senate are Bill Morrisette (D-Rural Lane and Linn) and Doug Whitsett (R-Klamath Falls). The companion bill in the House is co-sponsored by Reps. Bill Garrard (R-Klamath Falls) and Phil Barnhart (D-Central Lane and Linn).

"The reason we have a representative republic is that those elected should be the decision-makers," Whitsett says. "I do not oppose building industry and creating jobs for Oregon, but this particular plant [the COB facility in Klamath Falls] is in the wrong place, and it has been stuffed down the throat of the local community."

The bill (SB 527) will have its first public hearing on March 28. Arkin encourages citizens to contact their state representatives to encourage their support. — *Kera Abraham*

IRISH DEBATE

The UO Debate Team plans to hold an exhibition debate jointly with the Irish National Champion Debate Team at 7 pm Monday, March 28 at Lillis 182 on campus. Topic of

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

NATHAN GREENE

Every Thursday afternoon, shoppers at Eugene's Growers Market Co-op will find Nathan Greene behind the cashier's counter. "Anyone can become a member — just show up and shop," says Greene, who puts in 40 to 50 hours per month of unpaid work as a board member and volunteer coordinator. Founded in 1972, the market offers local organic produce and other natural foods at low prices. Hours of operation are 2:30 to 7:30 pm Thursdays and 3 to 6:30 pm Fridays. Members volunteer one half-hour per week or pay a 15 percent surcharge. "It may be the only totally volunteer-run co-op in the nation," says Green, who discovered the market shortly after moving from Newport in 2000. Twelve offices above the market at 454 Willamette St. are rented out at low cost to local environmental and social-justice groups. "That's how I got my job with the Walama Restoration Project," says Greene. "I love the work." WRP bids on habitat restoration projects throughout the Willamette Valley. "We do educational programs with schoolkids," Greene reports. "We focus on children as future stewards of the land."

