

news Briefs

IT'S ROPE, NOT DOPE

The Industrial Hemp Bill has been introduced to the Oregon legislature every two years since 1997, but it's never reached the floor for a vote. Now it's back, with a good chance of getting a fair hearing. Senate Bill 294 would allow hemp farming in Oregon and create a licensing, permitting and inspection program for growers and handlers.

Hemp was farmed extensively in the U.S. for centuries (the Declaration of Independence was drafted on hemp paper), but in the early 1970s, the DEA classified hemp as a drug under the Controlled Substances Act, making it illegal to grow but legal to import. Today, 31 other nations grow industrial hemp, but the U.S. remains the world's largest hemp consumer. In 2002, North Americans purchased approximately \$150 million in retail hemp products.

Carolyn Moran, founder of Eugene's Living Tree Paper, testified at the Oregon Senate Environment and Land Use Committee's April 6 hearing on the bill. She uses hemp fibers for her non-wood paper products, and the legalization of industrial hemp production would lower her costs. "Let's get with the program," she said, referring to the other nations already growing hemp legally. "Why not? We have nothing to lose."

Oregon Sen. Floyd Prozanski, who introduced the bill, says that industrial hemp production could boost the state's agricultural economy. "Why is it that we can import raw industrial hemp, but we can't allow our farmers to choose to grow it as an economic crop?" he asks. "The government shouldn't be able to tell us what is and isn't an agricultural product. The reality is, it's rope, not dope."

Hemp is grown from a different variety of *Cannabis* than marijuana, and it has negligible psychoactive properties. Hemp has

smaller flowers, thicker stalks and a much lower THC content than marijuana, and it contains a compound that blocks the marijuana high. It can be used in the production of paper, body care products, food, building materials and vehicle fuel.

If the Industrial Hemp Bill passes, Oregon could become the first state since the 1970s to allow hemp cultivation for profit. Other states, however, have passed legislation to allow hemp cultivation for scientific studies.

Since 1995, 14 states have passed legislation supporting hemp production and possession, and Oregon is one of four states considering an industrial hemp production bill this year.

Because industrial hemp production is still illegal on a federal level, the bill treads in murky legal waters. Prozanski says that the state could take one of two actions upon passing the bill: require farmers who wish to grow industrial hemp to apply for permits through the DEA, who could refuse to grant them; or keep all permitting within the state and wait to see what the feds will do.

For more information on the movement to legalize industrial hemp, see www.vote-hemp.com

— Kera Abraham

EARTH DAY BASH AT LCC

A multitude of free events leading up to Earth Day April 22 are planned on campus at LCC from April 18-21. The week-long celebration is a first for LCC and is sponsored by the Associated Students of LCC, the Sustainability Group of LCC, and OSPIRG.

Workshops, speakers and films will focus on forest and water conservation, composting, transportation sustainability, peace and sustainability, and industrial pollution.

Monday highlights include an 11 am workshop on protecting old growth forests in the McKenzie Watershed, followed by a noon presentation by Bill Sullivan on "Wreckreating or Recreating?" in the McKenzie forests.

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



the annual LCC Waste Audit, composting, peace and sustainability, water conservation and rainwater harvesting.

Wednesday events include a workshop on "Light & Health," a lunch talk on "Reducing Car Dependency" with EW staffer Jef Stout; and a discussion of biodiesel fuels.

Thursday begins with a reading by professor Ronald Takaki, followed by a workshop on "defining sustainability."

Films to be shown during the week include *PickAxe*, *Exporting Harm*, *End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream* and *Blue Vinyl*. A list of locations, live music performances and other events can be found at www.lanec.edu or call 463-5365.

WESAK FOR THE WELL-TO-DO

Where do you go to celebrate Wesak? A few small groups in the Eugene area are



Buddah at Wesak

likely to hold Wesak meditations at the first full moon in the sun sign Aries, also considered the birthday of Buddha. But the largest celebration in the region will be held April 22-24 in Mt. Shasta in northern California, drawing a large crowd of mostly higher-income New Age metaphysical truth-seekers. Cost is \$300 and does not include accommodations.

Polls have shown that each attendee spends more than \$250 on housing, food and transportation, pumping about \$7 million in the local economy over the past 10 years, according to event organizers at *Mount Shasta Magazine*.

Speakers at the 11th annual gathering will include Steven Halpern, Barry Carter, Michael Tamura, Ronna Herman, Mike Wright, Norma Milanovich, Dr. Joe Dispenza, Philip Madeley, Randy Masters, Joanna Cherry, Michael Peter Langevin, Amarah Quan Yin, Claire Heartsong, Barbara Bullard, Kathy Zavada, Grace Somers and Erik Berglund.

More information on the speakers, musicians and registration can be found at www.wesak.us or by calling (530) 926-5500.



Just Pull the Plug

I, _____, being of sound mind and body, do not wish to be kept alive indefinitely by artificial means. Under no circumstances should my fate be put in the hands of peckerwood politicians who couldn't pass ninth-grade biology if their lives depended on it.

ogy if their lives depended on it.

If a reasonable amount of time passes and I fail to sit up and ask for a cold beer, it should be presumed that I won't ever get better. When such a determination is reached, I hereby instruct my spouse, children and attending physicians to pull the plug, reel in the tubes and call it a day.

Under no circumstances shall the members of the Legislature enact a special law to keep me on life-support machinery. It is my wish that these boneheads mind their own damn business, and pay attention instead to the health, education and future of the millions of Americans who aren't in a permanent coma.

Under no circumstances shall any politicians butt into

this case. I don't care how many fundamentalist votes they're trying to scrounge for their run for the presidency in 2008; it is my wish that they play politics with someone else's life and leave me alone to die in peace.

I couldn't care less if a hundred religious zealots send e-mails to legislators in which they pretend to care about me. I don't know these people, and I certainly haven't authorized them to preach and crusade on my behalf. They should mind their own business, too.

If any of my family goes against my wishes and turns my case into a political cause, I hereby promise to come back from the grave and make his or her existence a living hell. — Unknown