

news Briefs



PEG MORTON

Sugar Fisk drums up some attention at the Eugene Post Office.

CENTS SHOW PREFERENCES

Local tax activists gathered April 15 at area post offices to call for a redirection of federal spending priorities from supporting war to supporting social and environmental programs. They found support in both Eugene and Springfield, but also found some different priorities in the two cities on how citizens wanted their taxes spent.

Taxes For Peace Not War and Eugene PeaceWorks made camp at the Eugene down-

town Post Office. On behalf of Taxes for Peace, activist Peg Morton read a proclamation stating why she was not paying part of her federal taxes, and reported that \$3,500 of resisted income taxes from group members would be going to tsunami relief, American Friends Service Committee and other organizations. Another \$162 of resisted phone taxes were given to Brethren Housing and Cascadia Forest Defenders. Fliers with information about the federal budget were handed out to the public.

About 300 passers-by in Eugene and Springfield were given an opportunity in a "Penny Poll" to vote on where they want their taxes to go. People were handed 10 pennies and asked to deposit them in jars representing six categories of the federal budget.

In the category of human resources, Eugene residents voted for 54 percent support while Springfield residents voted for 50 percent. For military spending it was 3.5 percent Eugene, 10 percent Springfield. In funding the Iraq War, it was 2 percent Eugene vs. 6 percent Springfield. Funding the national debt was 7.5 percent Eugene and 10 percent Springfield. General government spending was 9 percent Eugene vs. 8 percent Springfield. Physical resources (infrastructure and environment) got 24 percent in Eugene and 16 percent in Springfield.

"The federal budget reflects priorities that are directly opposite to the opinions indicated by the polls," says Michael Carrigan, one of the organizers, noting results were similar to last year. "Over half of the discretionary budget appropriated by Congress this year goes to the Pentagon. The money the U.S. spends on the military equals the military budgets of all other nations in the world combined."

That same evening at the Gateway Post Office, 30 activists dressed in black protested the Iraq War, lining up for nearly six hours holding graphic images of injured casualties of the war. The signs included messages such as, "Your tax dollars paid for this," and "It's our money, stop the war."

"Positive encounters from motorists far outweighed the few negative ones," says action organizer Peter Chaberek.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



SUBSIDIZED SPRAWL

Your sewer bill will go up so developers can dodge fees and make more money under a \$144 million plan by the local wastewater commission.

Systems development charges (SDCs) normally recover the cost of expanded sewer capacity from the developers who profit from the new services. That keeps existing homeowners who've already paid for their services from having to subsidize urban sprawl.

Two years ago, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) moved to increase SDCs to cover the cost of serving new growth. The increase was recommended by a committee that studied the issue for months, but the Home Builders Association of Lane County objected strenuously. They threatened a lawsuit and the MWMC settled, agreeing to knock off about a third of the proposed SDCs.

But that big break for developers will come on the backs of ratepayers who will be forced to subsidize urban sprawl and developers' profits. The MWMC plans to increase sewer rates 6 percent this year and issue \$100 million in bonds that will saddle ratepayers with the cost of development for decades to come.

The growing city of Coburg, which does not charge SDCs, is hoping to hook up to the regional sewer system, requiring expanded capacity, according to Eugene Councilor Bonny Bettman.

The MWMC plans a public hearing at 7 pm Thursday, April 21 in the Springfield City Council chambers. The Eugene City Council plans to take up the matter with a May 9 work session and public hearing and May 23 vote. The MWMC can be contacted at nlaudati@ci.springfield.or.us or 726-3695. — Alan Pittman

"We feel enormous sadness knowing that thousands of same-sex couples who recently celebrated their first anniversaries as married couples have had those marriages painfully revoked," reads the statement. "Nothing about this decision precludes BRO or the ACLU from continuing to advocate for civil unions in Oregon courts or the Oregon Legislature. Continuing that fight is exactly what we will do."

INNOCENCE ON THE LINE

Noted civil rights lawyer Lare Aschenbrenner will return to UO to speak of his role in "Oregon's early exonerations" at 5 pm Monday, April 25 at the Knight Law Center, Lewis Lounge. The talk is free and open to the public.

Aschenbrenner will speak about his cases, his career as a civil rights lawyer, and his role in exonerating an Oregon black man who had been convicted of murder and imprisoned for 30 years, a story which recalls the case of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter.

Aschenbrenner went on to represent black citizens of Mississippi during the late 1960s when the rage of the old white power structure was at its peak. In the 1970s, Aschenbrenner co-founded Oregon's first public interest law firm and worked on environmental issues. In the 1990s, he led a successful fight for recognition of 226 Alaska Native villages.

His talk is sponsored by the Oregon Innocence Network, a group of law and journalism students currently lobbying the UO to support a clinic dedicated to freeing innocent people behind bars in Oregon. For more information, call 346-3717.

CORRECTIONS/ CLARIFICATIONS

• Gov. Ted Kulongoski got 49 percent of the vote in the 2002 election, not 29 percent as printed last week in an interview with Peter Sorenson. Also, Sorenson is 53 years old, not 48.

• An inappropriate personals ad last week referencing "Keystone" was inadvertently printed. *EW* regrets the error.

BRO CALLS FOR CIVIL UNIONS

The civil rights group Basic Rights Oregon issued a statement last week in response to the Oregon Supreme Court decision in the case of *Li v. State of Oregon* that annulled more than 3,000 same-sex marriages performed in Oregon last year.

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

Jude Hobbs

"I'm big on biodiversity," says permaculture instructor and landscape designer Jude Hobbs, who describes her own east Eugene yard as a forest garden. "My focus is edible landscape — food plants for people and wildlife." A native of the Garden State, Hobbs studied horticultural therapy before she migrated west. She ran out of cash in Medford and spent three years there as a mental-health therapist. "It was emotionally draining," she says. "I decided I wanted to work with plants." She worked at nurseries and taught organic gardening, first in Ashland, where she met Eugene native Jerome Hobbs, and later in Portland while he studied medicine. "As a self-employed person, I needed to diversify," says Hobbs, who launched Cascadia Landscape Design in 1982 and moved it to Eugene in 1987. She also teaches permaculture at LCC, and offers PC certification courses in four states. She supports local agriculture as VP of the Lane County Food Coalition. "The Willamette Valley is a breadbasket," she says. "There's no reason for people to be hungry." Learn more about permaculture and upcoming classes at www.cascadiapermaculture.com

