

news Briefs

ONLY RUMORS OF BIG MONEY

As the Springfield school board race picked up steam in recent weeks, rumors flew about campaign contributions to candidates Jeff Bantz and Wade Richardson, who are challenging incumbents Al King and Bill Medford (see "Divided on Diversity," 5/5). The Oregon Bus Project insinuated that Bantz and Richardson were receiving thousands of dollars from the Republican Party and/or national religious groups, but the Bus Project's leaders had no specifics. Bantz and Richardson denied the rumors, but they, too, refused to offer more details.

The candidates' campaign finance reports offer more information. The Committee to Elect Jeff Bantz filed a certificate of limited contributions and expenditures, which means that the campaign does not have to report its finances if it neither receives nor spends more than \$2,000. The lack of a second pre-election report suggests that the Bantz campaign remains below that limit. The Committee to Elect Wade Richardson submitted a report detailing \$530 in small private contributions, \$300 of it from Richardson's friend Reis Kash. The report fails to account for the Bantz-Richardson yard signs, but Richardson says he will submit an amendment to include \$425 in-kind contributions from the Bantz campaign.

As of May 5, Medford had raised \$1,300 in contributions and King had raised \$3,100, all from small private donors. The post-election finance reports are due June 16.

— Kera Abraham

JEFF COHEN ON MEDIA SPIN

Media watchdog and former Fox and MSNBC pundit Jeff Cohen will be speaking on media bias and the role of independent media in Eugene and Corvallis next week as part of a five-city speaking tour.

Cohen begins his tour in Portland Wednesday, May 18, and speaks in Eugene at 7:30 pm Thursday, May 19 at Lillis Hall 182 at the Lundquist College of Business on the UO campus. Admission is \$10 for community members, \$5 for those "living lightly" and free for students with ID. The event is sponsored by



Jeff Cohen

the UO Cultural Forum, Eugene Media Action, Northwest Media Project, *Eugene Weekly* and the Justice Not War Coalition.

At 9 am Friday, May 20, Cohen will address OSU students and faculty in Corvallis. Call 484-9167 or e-mail dzupan@msn.com for details.

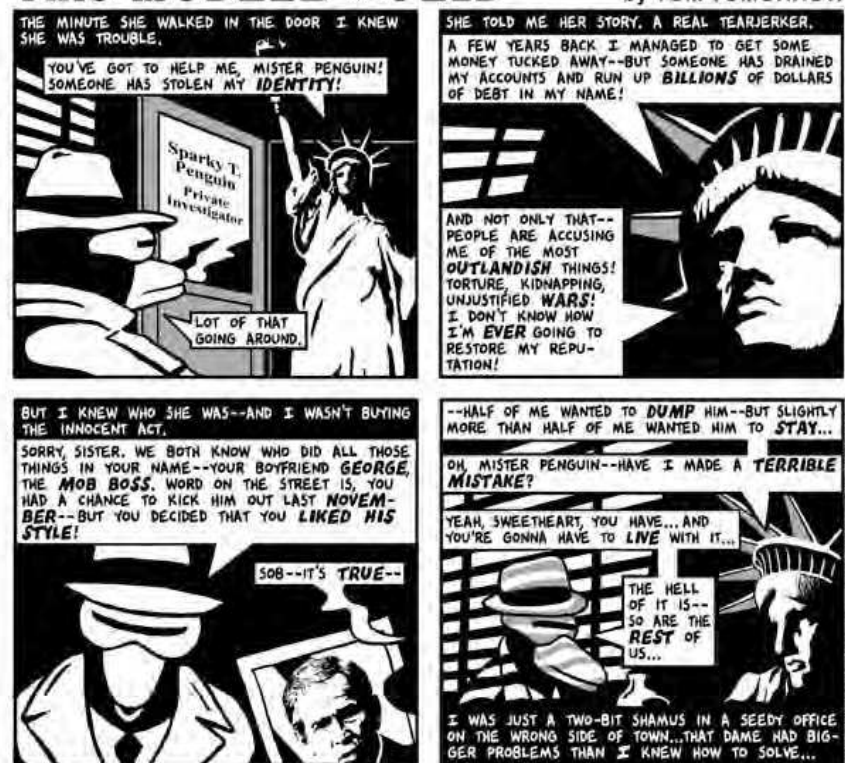
Cohen will focus on two topics: "overcoming mainstream news spin and exploring the role of independent media." Cohen is founder of the media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), served as communications director of the Kucinich for President campaign, and co-authored *The Wizards Of Media Oz: Behind The Curtain Of Mainstream News* with Norman Solomon.

LAWN CHEM KILLS FISH

The Clean Water for Salmon Campaign, a collaboration of the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) and the Washington Toxics Coalition (WTC), reports that the use of the insecticide carbaryl is on the rise in the Northwest. Carbaryl's popularity increased 10-fold after the EPA banned the in-

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



secticides Dursban and diazinon, both carcinogenic neurotoxins, because of their impacts on threatened Northwest salmon. The NCAP study shows that carbaryl is also toxic to the nervous system and a likely carcinogen, affecting fish much in the same way as Dursban and diazinon. People are exposed to carbaryl when they come into contact with treated lawns or eat fish that have absorbed the chemical.

The EPA's original assessment of carbaryl placed no restrictions on the chemical. "It was obvious that the assessment was done very poorly," says Aimée Code of NCAP. In response to a notice of intent to sue from NCAP, WTC and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, the EPA has agreed to re-assess the effects of carbaryl on people, fish and the environment. Code hopes that the new assessment will result in restrictions or an outright ban on the chemical.

The EPA is also responding to a petition from farmworker, beekeeper and environmental groups seeking a ban on carbaryl. The open comment period on the petition will continue

through the end of May. Learn more at www.pesticide.org/carbarylaction.html

— Kera Abraham

CUTTING UP CANCER

Cancer is no laughing matter. But thanks to two RNs who also happen to be experienced circus performers, the serious message of cancer prevention takes the stage this week with an adult-themed clown performance.

Nurses Jake Weinstein (the show's primary actor) and Ellen Rubin created a theater piece revolving around "toxic politics" — policies allowing toxins and carcinogens to be produced, distributed and released unchecked into our environment. This atypical approach to dealing with a tragic issue is sponsored by Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA), an organization dedicated to raising awareness of the burden toxins place on our environment and personal health.

SLANT

• The deadline for ballots in the May elections is 8 pm Tuesday, May 17, and in case you missed our selected endorsements last week, we favor **Charles Martinez** and **Aria Seligmann** for the 4J School Board positions, **Rich Cunningham** for the LCC Board, and **Tom Lininger** and **Don Kimball** or **Tom Atkinson** for the contested ESD positions. In Springfield we endorse **Jonathan Light**, **Al King** and **Bill Medford**. See our editorial May 5.

• In this column last week we reported on rumors that Connor & Woolley, major holders of downtown real estate, are preparing to invest heavily in downtown residential and commercial development and renovation. If true, this is the best news we've heard in years. Is it true? The major players aren't talking yet, but our sources are reliable and tell us an announcement is coming, but now would be "premature." Downtown is part of an urban renewal district, so developers of residential buildings will likely take advantage of available tax breaks, and we might see proposals for other subsidies. Eugene isn't known for high design standards and proactive city planning, but the face of our downtown could be about to change dramatically. This would be a good time for the creation of a design advisory group that might include UO architecture and landscape professors. The city could also look at providing

new incentives for desirable kinds of development downtown, such as mixed residential/commercial buildings, and "green" designs. And this is also a good time to revisit the concept of the Emerald Canal, a millrace-like waterway through downtown that could in itself do wonders for revitalizing our urban core.

• Mayor Kitty Piercy continues to get roasted in the local daily and on talk radio for her simple choice of not planning to attend the up-coming Eugene-Springfield Mayors' Prayer Breakfast. Everyone with an opinion regarding religion and government is jumping into the fray, but maybe that's not such a bad thing, as irritating as some of the comments might be. Piercy's not dividing the community. The community's already divided. Talking about these issues is the only way we can build common ground. Let's start with the Constitution. The 1st Amendment says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." That's it. As individuals we can interpret it anyway we want, but two centuries of constitutional case law have consistently upheld the concept of separation of church and state. The big cross comes down from the city park on Skinner's Butte, the Ten Commandments monument gets removed from an Alabama courthouse, kids

can pray at home but not at school. It's not that complicated: Religion and government don't mix, and mayors are government officials. Some people get it, some people don't. The R-G editorial board doesn't get it. Springfield Mayor Sid Leiken doesn't get it. Kitty Piercy gets it.

• Oregon's education system is being eroded by lack of funding and unpredictability. Class sizes are too large, the arts are squeezed, school districts are struggling to cut millions from their budgets. We can blame the economy for part of it, but an even bigger factor is Oregon's flawed tax system that has shifted the burden from corporations to citizens. But what is our Legislature doing about it? Surprise! More tax breaks for corporations and wealthy individuals. The Oregon House this week voted 34-25 in favor of House Bill 2332-A. Under this bill, which is bound for the Senate, investors and businesses will get to shelter 50 percent of their investment profits from state income taxes, while workers' paychecks will continue to be taxed at current rates. The negative impact on schools is predicted to be \$200 million a year. The rationale is that lower taxes will boost employment; but in the real world, better education is more likely to create jobs and boost the economy. Does anyone else feel like they are being trickled down upon?