

news Briefs

FAIR ENERGY BILL PASSES

The Oregon Fair Energy Bill, SB 527, passed in the state Senate on June 13 by a unanimous 29-0 vote. The bill will now go to the House.

Lisa Arkin of the Oregon Toxics Alliance helped to draft the bi-partisan bill with Sens. Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield) and Doug Whitsett (R-Klamath Falls), and Reps. Phil Barnhart (D-Eugene) and Bill Garrard (R-Klamath Falls).

In recent years, residents of Coburg, Turner and Klamath Falls have complained to their legislators about the inability of local governments (and their constituents) to weigh in on decisions about large gas-fired power plants

proposed in those areas. Under current law, the governor-appointed Energy Facility Siting Council has the authority to override state and local land-use regulations in approving new power plant siting. The Fair Energy Bill would require the siting council to work with local governments if they object to such an override.

The bill also directs the siting council to consider the environmental impacts of proposed facilities and examine applicants' qualifications and financial backing when reviewing power plant siting applications.

In addition, the bill creates a Task Force on Regional Energy Policy to make long-term energy recommendations, including how to determine the need for new facilities and how to give priority to renewable energy projects.

"Both our elected representatives and the public noticed that the siting council was approving energy projects that exceeded Oregon's future need, and could destroy our environment while shipping energy to more lucrative markets elsewhere," Arkin said. "The bipartisan support for the bill indicates that everyone felt the need to build a better public process into our power plant siting rules."

— Kera Abraham

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



MORE THAN ONE AGENDA

The first item on the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA)'s June 14 board meeting agenda was clear enough: to interview two candidates for the open at-large board position and then appoint one of them.

The interviews happened. The appointment didn't.

Candidate Barbara Allen, who works with special education students in Springfield, emphasized research linking learning disabilities with air pollution. Candidate Marie Richey said that air quality shouldn't be a polarizing issue. "Our breath is sacred," she said. "That doesn't mean I'm anti-business and pro-environment."

The motion to appoint Richey failed 2-6, and the motion to appoint Allen failed 4-4. The Eugene representatives were split on the latter vote, with Betty Taylor and Drew Johnson in favor and Gary Rayor and Earl Koenig opposed.

The board then voted to re-open the application deadline until July 8. Drew Johnson questioned the legality of the board's stated preference for a Springfield resident, but LRAPA Interim Director Jim Johnson assured him it was legal.

"Are you going to advertise for an at-large member from Springfield who is anti-environment?" asked Taylor, earning chuckles

from the standing-room-only audience.

Some attendees felt that rejecting both Allen and Richey was the plan all along. "I'm not surprised," says Eugene resident Leslie Maguire. "This wasn't about the quality of the candidates. It was about an agenda."

Public health advocates allege that the LRAPA board is too slanted toward industry, while pro-business activists complain that the board is environmentally biased. Recent R-G articles suggest that the board's four Eugene representatives vote as a pro-environment bloc despite meeting minutes to the contrary. Koenig usually votes in line with pro-business board members Dave Ralston, Glen Fortune and Faye Stewart. Rayor, like at-large representative Carol Tannenbaum, is a swing vote — when he shows up. (Rayor has missed three monthly meetings since October, and he plans to miss the July meeting as well.) Taylor votes staunchly along the public-health line, only recently with the support of new Eugene appointee Drew Johnson. — Kera Abraham

GARDENERS GET BIG BILL

The city of Eugene has hit the Eugene Garden Club with a \$14,600 bill for paving the alley behind their 1645 High Street club house. The house is used by the club for meetings,

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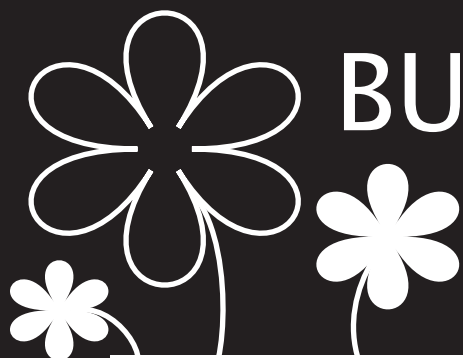
Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

Wayne Thompson

Medford native Wayne Thompson joined the Peace Corps following graduation from Willamette University in 1964. "It changed my life," says Thompson, who met his wife, Rolly, during training, then lived with indigenous people in the Urubamba Valley of Peru. He and Rolly remain active in the local returned-volunteers group. On his return, Thompson got into teaching to avoid the Vietnam draft, and ultimately taught social studies for 28 years at Roosevelt Junior High and South Eugene High School. When he and Rolly moved to Fox Hollow Road south of Eugene in 1976, they began to raise colored sheep at the suggestion of Sachiye Jones, originator of the annual Black Sheep Gathering (BSG). "I'm the shepherd's helper," says



Thompson. "Rolly understands genetics and wool. She's the fiber artist." However, Thompson himself helped put the BSG on the map when he organized the Third World Congress on Colored Sheep in Eugene in 1989. This year's BSG is free and open to the public, June 24-26 at the Lane County Fairgrounds. "We'll have over 600 animals from Western states," he says. "Fleeces are judged, then go on sale. Spinners from all over get in line to buy them."



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