

news Briefs



REFUGEE ART FINDS A HOME

When their kids started college in 1998, mechanical engineers Cathy and Curt Bradner embarked on a search for meaning. The former Boulder, Colo., residents sold their house, car and business, flew over the Atlantic and hopped on a tandem bicycle. Their two-wheeled journey took them across Europe and through India to Mae Sot, Thailand, where they began volunteering with one of the world's oldest refugee populations.

There, they met Burmese child care medic Maung Maung Tinn, whose paintings captured the spirit and suffering of Burmese refugee children. Cathy promoted Tinn's art over the Internet, and soon his work reached galleries across the globe. Tinn used his profits to buy medical supplies, food and clothing for the refugee children, and the Bradners, for their part, founded Art-Exiled. The nonprofit has a dual purpose: to spread awareness of the refugees' plight, and to help refugee artists to find hope amid despair.

The Bradners believe that real change comes from offering opportunity rather than aid. They are careful to avoid the "imposed aid" paradigm by including the refugees in all of the nonprofit's decisions. The collaboration has been wildly successful. Each painting fetches \$500-\$700, enough to lift some families out of poverty.

The Bradners also initiated an art training program for the Burmese refugee children, a model that they are now replicating in a Kenyan refugee camp. "The main thing you want to do in a refugee situation is to keep people occupied and positive and buoyed," Curt says. "Art is a fantastic medium for giving people a sense of value."

After more bicycle adventures in Africa and South America and a second return to Thailand, the Bradners moved to Eugene to be near a new granddaughter. The couple plans to run Art-Exiled from their downtown home, which will double as a gallery space. The Bradners will continue to promote Burmese refugees' art while expanding their focus to include work from displaced artists around the world. "We'd eventually like to be in a situation where we can help any artists who feel like they are in exile," Curt says.

The Bradners are eager to network with local artists and find other venues to showcase refugees' paintings. For more information, visit www.art-exiled.org or call 485-1133. — Kera Abraham

HIROSHIMA REMEMBERED

The Bush administration is expected to soon announce a new national space policy that will give the Pentagon the green light to move toward deployment of offensive weapons in space. Those weapons could include lasers, attack planes that descend on targets from space, anti-satellite weapons and tungsten rods fired from space platforms that would gather speeds greater than 7,000 mph and be able to penetrate underground targets.

Bruce Gagnon, veteran peace activist and coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, will speak on these topics at 7 pm Sunday, July 31 in the EWEB Community Room, kicking off a week of events planned by a coalition of local peace groups in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty limited offensive space systems, but President Bush withdrew the U.S. from that treaty. In 2003, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq was largely coordinated from space. More than 70 percent of weapons used in that war have been guided by military satellites. The Pentagon now says the U.S. must "deny" other nations use of space in order to maintain "full spectrum dominance," says Gagnon.

"In order to sell this space warfare program to the American people, the Pentagon has labeled it 'missile defense,' but in reality, the program is all about offensive engagement," says Gagnon.

Gagnon will address the history of corruption within the military-industrial complex and propose an alternative transformative vision for the nation. His talk is sponsored by Progressive Responses, a program of Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC), and is co-sponsored by Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) and the Justice Not War Coalition. More information on Gagnon can be found at www.space4peace.org

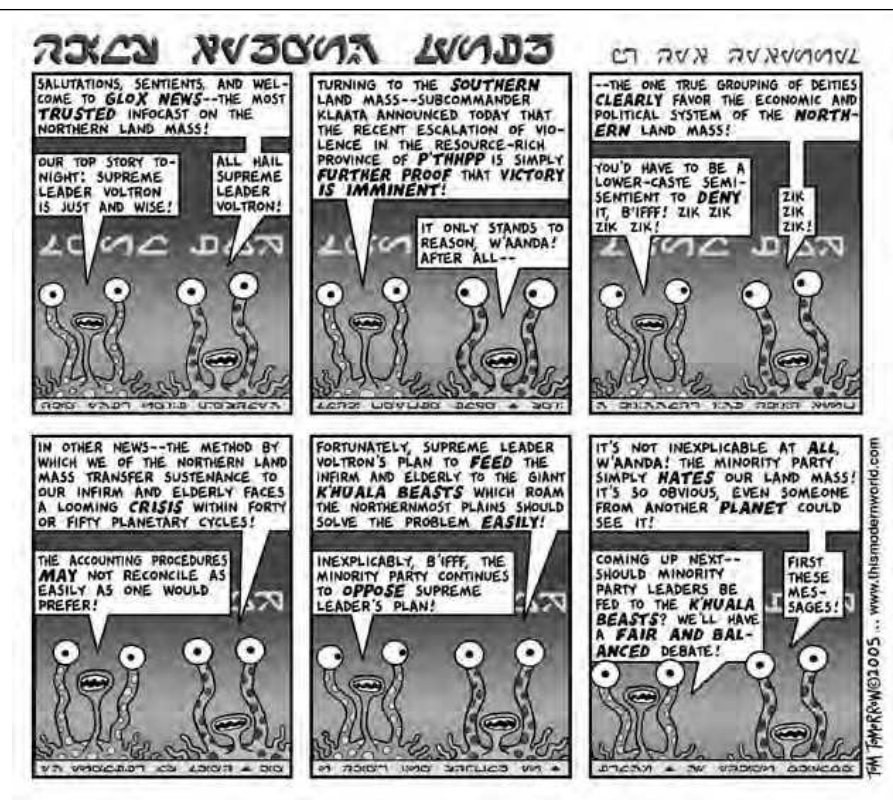
Next in the week-long series will be a video showing of *Last Best Chance* and discussion at 7 pm Wednesday, Aug. 3 at CALC, 458 Blair Blvd. The docudrama deals with the global threat of nuclear terrorism. The video is based on facts about the lack of security for nuclear weapons and nuclear materials around the world.

Then, from 4 to 7 pm Friday, Aug. 5, The Shadow Project will be presented at the Eugene Public Library, sponsored by WAND. The political chalk art is in memory of the human shadows burnt into the streets by nuclear bombs. Participants will collect materials and head out into Eugene and Springfield to create the shadows.

Aug. 6, WAND will have a table at Saturday Market, and at 1 pm Peg Morton will continue her Ribbons of Tangible Hope project around the Federal Building. A com-



Bruce Gagnon



munity gathering at 7:30 pm Aug. 6 at Alton Baker Park duck pond will commemorate the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Beyond War (www.beyond-war.org) is also involved in the Hiroshima events, displaying a local version of "The Wall," a collection of interlocking wooden blocks with peace messages. The local project will be shipped to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August to join similar walls from around the world. For more information, call 434-0256.

PUZZLE DEBUT

Landscape architect Justin Lanphear is used to looking at things from a bird's-eye view. And, as one of the hosts of the Last Friday Artwalk, he wanted to come up with a collaborative art project with a sense of place. So he dreamed up a puzzle — a BIG puzzle — celebrating his community.

First, Lanphear laid a puzzle pattern over a map of the Whiteaker neighborhood from Chambers Street in the west to Willamette Street in the east,

Broadway in the north to the Willamette River in the south. He then used a digital projector to blow it up to 8 ft. by 9 ft. and, with the help of a few friends, traced the image over plywood and cut out 144 puzzle pieces, each roughly the size of a piece of paper. He labeled the pieces with coordinates corresponding to different parts of the Whiteaker neighborhood and passed them out to volunteers during the Last Friday Artwalks in April and May. The instructions: Go to the place your piece represents, find a source of inspiration there, decorate your piece and turn it back in.

The Whiteaker neighbors are a diverse, erratic bunch, and the puzzle reflects that. Some pieces are impressionistic, but others incorporate poetry and abstract art. "The puzzle represents the collective creative perception of the Whiteaker neighborhood," Lanphear says. "There's a seemingly chaotic nature to it, but there's also a unifying element. This project is not going to last forever, but the neighborhood is like that too — constantly changing."

The biggest challenge, of course, is getting puzzle artists to turn in their pieces. So far, Lanphear has collected just over half of the pieces, but he's aiming to have 70 percent in time for the puzzle's debut during the Last

Friday Artwalk on July 29 at 845 W. 2nd Ave.

— Kera Abraham

Justin Lanphear and a few blank pieces from the Puzzle Project.

