

• Is it some kind of sociological statement when a fitness temple turns into a real church? We dunno, but that's what's happening at 252 Lawrence. South Valley Fellowship is proposing to move into the old 24 Hour Fitness building if all the parking issues can be resolved. The Fellowship expects as many as 700 participants on Sunday mornings, up to 500 for evening meetings

• Lots of bling-bling at the Democratic Party of Lane County auction in the DAC ballroom last Sunday night. Like a coming-out party for the young organizers who went from the Kerry campaign to the DPLC, it highlighted Val Hoyle, new chair, and Amy Gibson, who put on the party, along with other hard-working activists. Maybe the most important person there for the future of the party was George Wingard, one of those moderate Oregon Republicans who has changed his registration and declares himself a Democrat. Wingard served in the Legislature, ran for statewide office as a Republican. Hard to imagine him hobnobbing with DeFazio, Dwyer, Bradbury, Barnhart, Piercy, but that's where he is today.

• Springfield Mayor Sid Leiken's noises about running against incumbent Bill Dwyer for county commissioner are being taken seriously by the Dwyer camp. Dwyer has a lot of popular support, but Leiken has big name recognition in the district, and potentially big bucks behind him from conservative interests. Leiken's been in the public eye lots lately, but all the attention could have a downside: Everything Leiken says or does will now be closely scrutinized, including his inside track on Glenwood development. Dwyer backers are going door-to-door gathering signatures Saturday morning for his re-election campaign. See Calendar, call 343-7250 or e-mail dwyer1@cmc.net to get involved.

• Eugene Councilors Bonny Bettman and Andrea Ortiz are getting flack for "potential conflict of interest" in letters to the R-G and most likely on e-mails lists. The complaint is that they shouldn't be campaigning for Ballot Measure 20-106 to establish independent police complaint review because they are also involved in these issues as voting councilors. By that same argument, former Mayor Torrey should have recused himself from campaigning to pass a city tax to support public schools. Or councilors shouldn't have worked on campaigns to pass police bond measures. It seems it's only a conflict if you don't like what's on the ballot.

• Hurricane Katrina is slipping from the headlines as the nation's attention turns to other catastrophes, but the story continues. Part 8 of Michael Tisserand's series, "Submerged: An Evacuee's Journal," is now up on AltWeeklies.com. This week's dispatch, "Calculated Risks," deals with evacuees' fears about environmental contamination. The series began with an EW cover story Aug. 25.

• As we go to press this week, the 2,000th U.S. soldier has died in Iraq and a local vigil was being planned for Oct. 26 at the Federal Building. In addition to the nearly 2,000 American fatalities and 15,220 American wounded (www.antiwar.com/casualties), 97 British troops have died, along with 102 soldiers from other coalition countries. Iraq Body Count (www.iraqbodycount.net) figures the number of Iraqi civilian deaths runs between 26,000 and 30,000. Regarding the cost of the war so far, photographer Kurt Jensen and Dr. Martin Jones of Physicians for Social Responsibility are planning a graphic presentation at 7 pm Wednesday, Nov. 2 at the EWEB training room. Call 485-0911 for more information.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

NEW LABOR BOARD FORMS

Over the past decade or so, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has become less and less about helping the working folks, and more and more about ensuring corporate profitability. So in a number of cities around the country, labor groups have developed their own boards to deal with labor disputes. And now we have one in Lane County. The Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network (a coalition of labor, environmental and social justice advocates) has teamed up with the national labor group Jobs with Justice to form a Workers' Rights Board (WRB). The purpose of the board is to involve community leaders in disputes where employees are "seeking justice in the workplace."

According to Claire Syrett, ESSN organizer, "workers have been let down by the NLRB in terms of having access to the right to organize." Although the WRB has no legal authority to impose sanctions or otherwise require employers to treat their employees well, the board hopes to facilitate solutions to the workers' grievances.

The first meeting will be at 7 pm Tuesday, Nov. 1, in the Bascom-Tyskeson Room at Eugene Public Library. The public is invited to attend.

The hearing will address concerns by delivery drivers and dispatchers for DHL, a multi-national package delivery company. According to ESSN, a number of the drivers have been hired through a temp agency rather than being hired directly by DHL. This has allowed DHL to avoid paying benefits or the union wages to the employees it hires directly. Thirty-two

workers in Lane County are effected and are hoping that community pressure will force DHL to stop the practice of using temp agencies to circumvent the union contract.

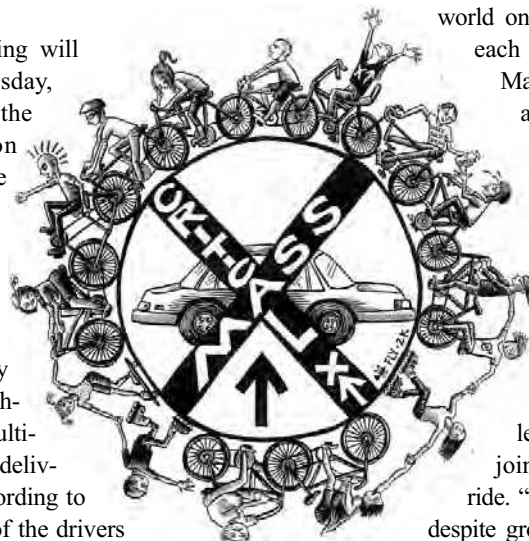
According to Margaret Hallock, director of the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and member of the board, "the WRB is intended to generate a more public discussion of specific worker concerns and their impact on the community." Even without legal authority to require changes, WRBs around the country have been effective in getting employers to make changes that benefit their employees. The local WRB hopes that they will have the same successes. Syrett expects that "as we announce the formation of the board, workers will come to us with grievances."

For more information, call Syrett at 736-9041. — Rita Radostitz

CRITICAL MASS

The monthly mass gathering of bicyclists is coming up again at 5:30 pm Friday, Oct. 28 at the corner of 17th and Charnelton. The event happens in cities all over the world on the last Friday of each month. Critical Mass was inspired by a phenomenon in urban China: At times, so many bicyclists are on streets that automobile traffic has to stop and wait.

Local cyclist Rachel Jensen says less than 150 cyclists joined last month's ride. "It would seem that, despite growing resistance to oil wars, only about one tenth of one percent of our community has been willing to demonstrate true opposition to the over-consumption of dwindling resources," she says.



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