

news Briefs

Barbara Lee



LEE RETURNS TO EUGENE

U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee of California was last in Eugene in August 2002 when she received the Wayne Morse Integrity in Government Award. The award was fitting — the late Sen. Morse cast the lone vote of dissent on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution that expanded the Vietnam War, and Rep. Lee was the only member of Congress to oppose giving the Bush Administration a carte blanche to go to war after 9/11.

Lee, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus, has sponsored legislation disavowing the doctrine of preemptive war and led efforts to create a Department of Peace and end the ongoing genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

This week, Lee will be back in Eugene as the keynote speaker for the “Gender, Race and Militarization” conference at the UO, co-sponsored by the UO Center for the Study of Women in Society and the Women’s and Gender Studies Program. Other speakers will include authors Catherine Lutz, Lakshmi Chaudhry and Karen Houppert, who have all published books about the military.

The conference will be held from 9:45 am to 6 pm on Oct. 28 in the Erb Memorial Union on the UO campus. Lee will speak at 4 pm in the EMU Ballroom. All events are free and open to the public. For a complete schedule, visit <http://csws.uoregon.edu> or call 346-5015. — Kera Abraham

SPRAWL BRINGS BIG PROFITS

Developers flocked to the Eugene City Council last month calling for an expansion of the urban growth boundary. They blamed rising housing prices on regulations controlling urban sprawl. Homebuilders across the state are using the affordable housing argument to attack regulations controlling urban sprawl.

But rising home prices may be more about developer profit taking in a hot housing market than land use regulations.

Fueled by low interest rates and speculative frenzy, median home prices shot up 25 percent last year in Lane County. That increase of \$40,000 a home translates into high profits for homebuilders, whose building costs in labor, land and materials increased comparatively little over the same period.

Many local development companies are privately held, but the economics of homebuilding can be clearly seen in the record profits of large publicly traded homebuilding companies. Toll Brothers, for example, says in its required SEC filings that it concentrates on luxury homes for the wealthy, a market “sweet spot” that maximizes profits.

With the housing price boom, Toll’s profits have about doubled in the last two years to \$409 million with continuing such jumps projected. In the last four years, the corporation’s stock price has increased six-fold.

With rising prices Toll made nearly twice as much profit per home in 2004 than it did in 2000. No where in the corporation’s exuberant annual report to investors does the word “affordable” appear. — Alan Pittman

MILLEGAN OFF TO FED COURT

Walterville resident Kris Millegan will be in federal court in South Carolina on Halloween, defending himself and his publishing company against a lawsuit filed by the Special Forces Association (see “Sinister Forces” cover story 8/25).

The lawsuit is an attempt to shut down Tine Day Books following the publication in 2003 of *Expendable Elite: One Soldier’s Journey into Covert Warfare*, a Vietnam memoir of Lt. Col. USASF (Ret) Daniel Marvin. The book documents covert Special Forces incursions into Cambodia in 1966, as well as assassination efforts.

“If the Special Forces Association has their way, you will never know what really happened,” says Millegan. “Nothing in the book is classified or describes operations not already outed by a variety of sources.”

Millegan says the colonel became a born-again Christian and decided to tell the truth, and his “credibility makes the Special Forces Association based in Fort Bragg uncomfortable enough to launch a campaign of intimidation and harassment against the author, his publisher Trine Day and even the book’s national distributor IPG to cut off the publisher’s source of income and force him to comply.”

Millegan says he has already spent about \$20,000 on attorney fees and is scrambling to come up with another \$15,000 to defend himself. “They are trying to bully and bankrupt me,” he says.



Kris Millegan

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

Conservative Jones, boy detective



and the Mystery of the Missing Mystery

CONSERVATIVE JONES IS STUDYING THE M.S.M. FOR CLUES!
VALERIE PLAME--JUDY MILLER--SCOOTER LIBBY--NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE!

THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING SOMETHING FOR TWO YEARS--BUT FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT!



THE EVER-FOOLISH MOONBAT M'WACKY THINKS HE KNOWS THE ANSWER!

ER--I BELIEVE HE'S BEEN INVESTIGATING THE FACT THAT AN UNDERCOVER CIA OPERATIVE WAS Outed IN AN ACT OF POLITICAL RETALIATION AGAINST HER HUSBAND.

OH, MOONBAT--WHEN WILL YOU START LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD?



THE BOY DETECTIVE SPRINGS INTO ACTION!
YOU SEE, SON, THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS!

THANKS, MISTER KRISTOL! THAT REALLY HELPS ME FRAME THE ISSUE!



THE RIGHT-WING BLOGS PROVE INDISPENSABLE AS ALWAYS!

WHAT A GOOD POINT! IF PEOPLE ALREADY KNEW JOE WILSON HAD A WIFE--THEY WASHN'T SHE ALREADY Outed?

OH FOR GOD'S SAKE, OF COURSE PEOPLE KNEW SHE EXISTED--THEY JUST DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS A CIA AGENT!



CAN YOU GUESS THE SOLUTION TO THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MYSTERY? (TURN PAGE OVER FOR THE ANSWER!)



For more information, contact Millegan’s attorney Barry Bachrach at bbachrach@bowditch.com or (508) 926-3403. — Ted Taylor

TOXICS GROUP ANNIVERSARY

Oct. 28 marks the five-year anniversary of the Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA), the only statewide organization devoted exclusively to addressing toxics and related policies. A celebration is planned that will also honor founding member Mary O’Brien.

The celebration is from 5:30 to 7 pm Friday at the Campbell Activity Center, 155 High St. For more information, call 465-8860 or visit www.oregontoxics.org

“Back in 1999, the right of communities to learn of toxics in their midst was a hot-button issue and the future of community pesticide and toxics reporting programs hung by a thin thread in the Legislature,” says Lisa Arkin, executive director of OTA. “Eugene’s landmark community Toxics Right to Know Law and the right of other Oregon communities to have a law like Eugene’s was under attack by industry lobbyists in the Legislature.”

Eugene voters passed a community right-to-know (RTK) law in 1996 that established the most comprehensive local toxics reporting program in the nation. Within a few months, industry lobbyists were organizing conservatives in the Legislature for a nearly successful attempt to kill Eugene’s law.

“In 1997 the House Democrats saved Eugene’s Right-to-Know by sheer audacity,” says O’Brien. “It was the last night of the entire legislative session. The final bill on the docket would have dealt the fatal blow to Eugene’s law. With only two minutes to go until the clock ran out, the Democrats refused to push their buttons that would have allowed a quick electronic

vote to take place. Instead, they forced a roll-call vote. The roll call could not be completed before the mandatory time limit for the session ran out.”

The industry lobbyists returned to the Legislature in 1999 and passed HB 2431 that made it extremely difficult for any other community to enact its own local RTK rules. Democrats had enough votes to support a veto by Gov. Kitzhaber, but he signed it under pressure from industry lobbyists.

In the wake of this loss, the environmental community rallied, led by O’Brien, Michael Carrigan and others from around the state. That October 1999, with a grant from the Bullitt Foundation, twenty top environmentalists met at Breitenbush to tackle the problem. The group created OTA to raise the level of understanding throughout Oregon about the need and opportunities to eliminate unnecessary toxics use and contamination.

“There was the feeling that existing groups like OSPIRG and Oregon Environmental Council just couldn’t handle it all,” says Jonathan Poisner, executive director of Oregon League of Conservation Voters who attended the summit at Breitenbush. “There needed to be a consistent effort to look at statewide toxics issues.”

Key leaders from the Breitenbush meeting formed a board of directors and OTA was incorporated as a non-profit in 2000.

Arkin says that the membership-based OTA has been defending Eugene’s RTK law, organizing local and statewide campaigns to reduce toxics use, and representing communities in their quest for safety and health. OTA had a significant victory this year, she says, when they created the grassroots campaigns that stopped two fossil-fueled power plants from siting in the Willamette Valley

“We are participating at every opportunity to raise awareness about the threat that toxics pose to our state’s health and helping communities to take action,” says Arkin.