

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

ARRESTS AT STAND DOWN

Eleven local residents were arrested and charged with criminal trespass Friday, Nov. 18 as they peacefully protested against the war in Iraq. Seven protesters were arrested for blocking the entrance to the UO ROTC building, and later in the morning four individuals were arrested for refusing to leave the Army recruiting center on Bailey Hill Road across from Churchill High School.

Nov. 18 was "National Stand Down Day," a day of direct actions at recruitment centers and government facilities supporting the war. The coordinated protests were sponsored by the Iraq Pledge Of Resistance, which organized the civil disobedience at the White House Sept. 26 in which Cindy Sheehan and 374 others were arrested.

"Supporters gathered in solidarity while holding photos which graphically displayed the human cost of the war," said Michael Carrigan of Progressive Responses. "Both actions were carried out without incident."

All were cited and released on their own recognizance and will appear at 1 pm Dec. 2 at in Eugene Municipal Court. Supporters are encouraged to attend.

Carrigan said with the death and suffering continuing unabated in Iraq, local activists decided it was "time to put their bodies on the line and take decisive action against the faltering Bush administration's Iraq war."

Mental health social worker Jacque Travis was arrested and said, "Increasingly, the best I can do is admit in shame and rage that resources are not available no matter how many 800 numbers we call and wait and call again. This war is a betrayal of our responsibility to our children and our neighbors," said social worker Jacque Travis who was arrested at the recruitment office.

Organizer Peter Chabarak added, "We forced the government to show their hand and repress peaceful dissent by force of arrest, we gained much public sympathy for the cause and we ignited excitement in the movement."



Karla Cohen (left) and Doe Tabor after being arrested at UO ROTC building

- It appears PeaceHealth administrators are not the only hospital execs who have marveled over Chateau de Versailles, a 30-minute train ride from Paris. Visions of grand country palaces also appear to be driving Triad executives in Texas as they look for a site for McKenzie-Willamette's new medical center. Land-use planning might be a foreign concept for even well-traveled Texans. Worth noting in this unfolding drama is a Triad ad in the *R-G* this week seeking support for the new site and criticizing PeaceHealth's plans, saying "there is no demonstrated need to make Eugene/Springfield residents shoulder the financial burden of a third hospital – especially when physician support is lacking." The irony is that doctors will like PeaceHealth's Hilyard hospital better if Triad locates 20 minutes out in the sticks. Triad's squandering potential good will here (that could translate to revenues) by not proposing a true alternative to RiverBend – an urban facility in the center of the city, closer to where doctors and people actually live. Also, interesting idea from former Planning Commissioner Chuck Rusch in the *R-G* letters Saturday: Put the new hospital at the Westmoreland Housing site.

- McKenzie-Willamette (see above) claims "physician support is lacking," and we reported in our News Briefs Nov. 10 that a letter-writing campaign to state officials generated a lot of physician objections to PeaceHealth's Certificate of Need (CoN) application to expand and maintain its facilities on Hilyard Street. We heard from Oregon Public Health Services that a total of 77 letters, faxes and e-mails were received on the topic. Six were in support of PeaceHealth's CoN, 35 were opposed, and 36 requested that PeaceHealth's CoN be delayed and considered simultaneously with McKenzie-Willamette's CoN. PeaceHealth spokesman Brian Terrett discounted the letter-writing campaign, saying it was based on erroneous information provided by a doctor from the McKenzie-Willamette Physician Leadership Group. Regardless, all the huffing and puffing is getting tedious and irritating. Both hospitals' PR departments are on red alert, cranking out ads and press releases and organizing press conferences. All these contentious issues could have been hashed out years ago, and lawsuits avoided, if the two hospital boards had just gotten together to collaborate on what's best for the community and region. We hope state officials don't lose track of the supposed purpose of CoNs: Not to provide bludgeons for competitors, but rather to avoid duplication, and control spiraling health care costs for consumers.

- Predictably, the Eugene Chamber of Commerce and its faithful mouthpiece, the *R-G*, are decrying Mayor Piercy's recent appointment of David Monk to the board of the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority. Yes, Monk was a founder of the Oregon Toxics Alliance, and for years he has pressed the LRAPA board to put public health before industry. And yes, LRAPA has been on the brink of a meltdown since last spring, as first reported in *EW* (4/1). But let's not forget how LRAPA's troubles started: with a board heavily biased toward industry. After the board forced LRAPA's competent director to resign last January, and with the pollution-plagued neighbors of the J.H. Baxter plant getting sicker and angrier by the day, Betty Taylor was the only board member advocating for public health. In order to restore some balance to the board, Eugene moved to appoint its rightful additional member. That catalyzed a power play, with some industry folks worried that a Eugene majority on the board could hamper their ability to pollute. The Springfield and Lane County governments, heeding industry's cry, threatened to pull LRAPA's funding unless they could be assured that the board changes wouldn't result in a "heavy-handed regulatory agenda." But the bottom line is that having a local air regulation agency benefits local industries through lower permit fees, and the threat was most likely a bluff. The recent appointments of Drew Johnson, Bill Carpenter and Monk restore balance and add expertise to the LRAPA board. Mayor Piercy should be commended for the appointment.

- Gov. Kulongoski filed quietly for re-election this week, putting to rest rumors that he might not. He has been building a war chest of corporate pledges, so his filing shouldn't be much of a surprise. But will he get the smaller donations that will make all the difference in the primary? With vocal challengers on the left, his connections with Goldschmidt hanging over his head, and recent polling numbers showing him with only 27 percent support among registered D's, he's got a long haul ahead.

- It's been an insane week in Washington, D.C., leading up to the Thanksgiving break. House Republicans pushed through another outrageous bill giving huge tax breaks for the wealthy while cutting student loans and school lunches. The war in Iraq has no end in sight, and Congress squandered time on an absurd resolution "supporting our troops." Bush is waffling on his usual rhetoric that dissent is unpatriotic – he must have a new speech writer on staff. His trip to China didn't seem to accomplish anything other than keeping him out of trouble at home. ("Bush in Mongolia" would be a great song title. Send us your lyrics.) Renewing the PATRIOT Act is hung up, not on how to kill it, but rather on just how many of our constitutional rights we should strangle this time. DeFazio is back in town talking about war, influenza and property rights. Pete's strong voice of reason in public policy is something we can be thankful for in these bizarre times.

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