

the name. Until then, the eyesore will be renamed Woolly-Aster Hole.

OCTOBER

ODOT cancels the WEP after the primary reason for its construction was removed. Wal-Mart announced plans to move its supercenter, the largest retail outlet in the region, to land near I-5/Beltline, declaring that the freeway through wetlands was taking too long.

City of Eugene park officials announce that the entire south hills ridgeline, including Spencer's Butte, will be logged and bulldozed to build more houses for rich Californians. "Come on, people," said Parks Director Jimmy

Bedlam during the press conference. "Endangered plants and birds don't pay property taxes. It's time to get our priorities straight."

With a generous contribution from Phil Knight, the Oregon Bach Festival cooperates with the U.S. Olympic Committee to bring innovative new events to the track and field trials planned for Eugene in 2008, since the music and sports events are scheduled to overlap. New sporting events will include: the tuba put, similar to the shot put but with the goal of landing the heavy ball in a marching tuba player's horn; the bassoon triple jump, similar to the Olympic event but while



playing a bassoon; and the javiolin toss, involving throwing a sharpened string instrument. Nike announced that all musicians will be given new Nike Shox Bomber shoes and redesigned tuxedos with tails that swoosh. Nike has a new marketing campaign to go with the Bach track event: "Just play with it."

The city of Springfield bans Styrofoam restaurant and deli take-out containers, and announces plans to implement free, mandatory auto emission testing for older cars, funded by taxes on major polluters. Once again,

Eugene councilors cry foul.

NOVEMBER

Lane County's new electronic vote-counting computers indicate Jim Weaver as the winner in the 11th House District, Phil Barnhart the winner in the County Commission race, and Debi Farr the winner in the Eugene City Council Ward 3 race. None of these candidates had filed for the races they won, but a cost analysis by the county administrator determined it would be in the taxpayers' best interest if they just assumed their new positions, rather than call for a new election. Electronic voting glitches across the state were suspected in election results that ousted every Democrat in the Legislature. One theory is that the computers actually counted campaign dollars instead of votes, then broke down when overloaded.

To help raise money for a \$50 million locker room spa renovation, the UO has branded and marketed a new malt liquor beverage to be sold at Autzen football games. Cold Drunk Duck will come in tall-boy sizes and be distributed by roaming vendors in the stadium and to tailgaters outside. To increase sales, the UO rally squad was directed to implement new cheers, including the ever popular, "Chug! Chug! Chug!"

The Register-Guard apologized last week for instigating business flight from downtown Eugene with its relocation to Chad Drive a decade ago, and announced plans to move downtown again. "We realize now that urban sprawl is bad for the community and we were a big part of making that OK," said Publisher Binky Baker. Baker denied rumors that the *R-G* was just moving to cheap downtown land to cash in on selling its building at the I-5/Beltline interchange for a new Wal-Mart supercenter.

UO Ducks win a place at the consolation Sagebrush Bowl to be played at the rodeo grounds in Lakeview New Year's Day.

DECEMBER

After eyeing completion of their new hospitals in 2007 at a combined cost of \$600 million, PeaceHealth and Triad announce they will swap cities again in 2009 at an additional cost of \$1 billion. The move came about after PeaceHealth announced plans to move to an old gravel pit adjacent to Triad. The new hospital will be called RiverPit. In unrelated news, local health insurance rates triple, again.

Lane Transit District rolls out the first phase of its bus rapid transit project, EmX, which shuttles passengers from downtown Eugene to downtown Springfield in an articulated hybrid bus. It eases traffic congestion, minimizes tailpipe emissions and saves passengers six minutes of travel time — but due to service cuts made to finance the \$20 million project, it's the only public bus left in town.

The city of Cottage Grove announces new system development charges that actually cover the cost to taxpayers for new construction. Cottage Grove also bans new stores larger than 100,000 sq. ft. Once again, Eugene councilors cry foul. **EW**

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