

• Lots of changes with local news rags lately. The *R-G* will be publishing its Sunday arts section on Thursdays, coincidentally the same day *EW* publishes. And *The Springfield News* in February will become a FREE tabloid published weekly instead of twice a week. Come on people, stop following us – we don't know where we're going. All kidding aside, the reason conventional newspapers are floundering is not because of their format or publishing schedule; they are in trouble because their content tends to be – ahem – tired, predictable, superficial and pandering. Regardless, we wish both papers well, we do appreciate the good work they strive to do, and we hope the changes afoot bring more strength and vibrancy to local print media. You really don't want *EW* to be the only paper in town. It's scary to think how we would cover duck sports and weddings, not to mention obituaries.



TED TAYLOR

• The Mayor's State of the City Address drew a large and lively crowd to the Hult Center last week, and it was encouraging to see that Kitty Piercy, the city manager and some councilors showed up for the Citizens State of the City Address this week. Singing by the Eugene Peace Choir was a very nice touch at the mayor's address. This felt more like a Eugene event than

any State of the City Address in the past; and even contentious issues, such as the siting of Triad's new hospital, were treated with humor. Eyebrows raised when Staples was honored for sustainable business practices. As absurd as it might be to honor a big-box store for recycling, it does reinforce the idea that *everyone* has a part in this initiative toward a more livable community. More information on Piercy's Sustainable Business Initiative is available on the city website (www.eugene-or.gov) along with a citizen survey on the SBI (http://ri.uoregon.edu/programs/SBJD/SBI_Survey.html).

• Jeff Robinson, one of the best criminal lawyers in Seattle, has been hired to represent Chelsea Gerlach, the young woman from Eugene and Portland charged with involvement in the Vail ski resort arson. Prominent Eugene criminal lawyer Kelly Beckley has been associated as local counsel. Among other tests, this case will test the media's use of loaded language. You've probably followed the debate in the *R-G* about "eco-terrorism" or "eco-sabotage" What about "eco-vandalism" or just plain "vandalism"? It will be enlightening to learn what language the lawyers use.

• Interesting little "murmur" in the Jan. 4 *Willamette Week*, Portland's alt paper, about Junki Yoshida, friend of Gov. Kulongoski, hosting a Pearl District fund-raiser for Republican Jim Torrey who is challenging Sen. Vicki Walker for her seat. Ted is ticked that Vicki keeps threatening to run against him for gov, but that's a wrong-headed tactic. Yoshida should be hosting a fund-raiser for Vicki to keep her Senate seat – and help hold that Democratic majority Ted will need if he gets re-elected.



Vicki Walker



The Pentagon

• The Pentagon is strongly encouraging soldiers on leave from Iraq to promote the benefits of the war to their local media, according to *Capitol Hill Blue* online (12/30). Soldiers are given talking points in support of the White House spin, such as, "At first I was skeptical, but now I believe in what we are doing," etc. Sound familiar? The propaganda program, "Operation Homefront," is considered a success by the Pentagon. *Capitol Hill Blue* reports intense pressure on soldiers to participate, and at least one reservist says he was

promised an early release if he did a good job of promoting the war while at home. We haven't heard from any Eugene-Springfield soldiers on leave, but we do see these stories in the mainstream print and broadcast media. We did get a peculiar phone call from the Pentagon recently offering to hook us up by satellite phone with a Eugene-area soldier in Afghanistan whose job is to fly around in Black Hawk helicopters to pick up sick and injured Afghan civilians in remote areas and transport them free to hospitals for free medical care. We declined the interview, but it sounds like U.S. troops are working hard and risking their lives in Afghanistan to win hearts and minds. Skeptics might ask: How much does it cost taxpayers to operate a Black Hawk chopper? One website (www.mindfully.org) estimates \$1,500 an hour in the U.S., but it's probably much more in a war zone. The Pentagon PR guy tells us a typical Afghan rural medivac mission takes three or four hours.

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

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

SNEWS TO GO WEEKLY

The *Springfield News* has announced that it will no longer do web press printing for itself or commercial printing for numerous organizations in the valley. In the past, the *SN* has printed *Eugene Weekly*, the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, *WOW Hall Notes*, high school newspapers and newsletters for many groups, including Eugene neighborhood organizations. The twice-weekly *SN* also plans to become a free mailed tabloid and publish only on Fridays beginning in February.

SN Publisher Teresa Willmann said in an *SN* news story last week that "changing technologies and a market already well-served with quality web press operations spurred the change," and to remain competitive the paper would need "tens of millions in new equipment." The *SN*, along with the *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, will be printed at their sister paper, the *Albany Democrat-Herald*.

After many years of printing in Springfield, *EW* opted in early 2003 for higher-quality printing with all-digital technology at Signature Graphics in Portland.

The number of people losing jobs at *SN* has not been disclosed, however, layoffs are expected to include the press crew, composing room and mailroom. "We're helping them transition after the closure," said Willmann. *SN* is owned by the publishing chain Lee Enterprises, and some staffers will be offered jobs elsewhere in the chain.

As part of the restructuring, advertising design and layout will be done at the chain's Lynnwood, Wash., *Little Nickel* offices, according to Editor Finn John. Editorial layout

will continue in the *SN* newsroom.

The paper will be mailed free to local subscribers, at a price to out-of-town subscribers, and will also be available in news racks.

The shutting down of the only local, cheap newsprint press is leaving several local organizations scrambling.

"It's going to have a huge impact on us," says norma sax at the Oregon Country Fair, "because it's going to be a major thing to find a new printer. Going to Salem is not our best option because we'll have to travel back and forth." The OCF prints a monthly newsletter averaging 12 pages that goes out free to 3,500 subscribers.

Bob Fennessy at the WOW Hall says he hasn't figured out what to do yet with the monthly *WOW Hall Notes* starting in February. "We certainly plan to continue printing a newsletter as long as we are able to."

Several Eugene neighborhood newsletters have been printed at *SN*, while others are done more expensively per copy on photocopy machines. "We need to find another printer for our neighborhood newsletters," says Steve Norris of the city's Neighborhood Services. "Some of them are still doing paste-up, which is a big problem if we have to go out of town."

Improvements in technology and the use of the Internet to e-mail entire page files to printers makes distant printing relatively easy, but some organizations still do low-tech, cut-and-paste layout. — Ted Taylor

DEFAZIO BILL BANS POISON

On Dec. 16, U.S. Rep. Peter Defazio (D-Ore.) introduced a bill to ban the production, possession and import of sodium fluoroacetate, a poison commonly known as Compound 1080. According to Predator Defense Director Brooks Fahy, the highly concentrated, acute poison has been used in the West for decades to kill coyotes, wolves,