

news Briefs

PITCHFORK REBELLION

More than 70 people gathered along Highway 36 near Triangle Lake Feb. 11 to protest logging companies' use of herbicides near their homes. The group, which calls itself The Pitchfork Rebellion, consists of farmers and concerned citizens who believe that timber companies that spray herbicides

on nearby forests are to blame for a number of their health problems, according to event organizer and organic farmer Day Onowen.

"We're nonviolent folks, but when we see our neighbors being poisoned, frankly, we get mad as hell," Onowen said.

Greenleaf, Deadwood and Blachly-area residents who believe they've been physically affected by the herbicides took turns speaking about their health problems. One farmer testified that both he and his 13-year-old son suffered heart attacks after helicopters sprayed herbicides on the hill behind their home. Onowen says that when helicopters spray the mountains, wind can blow the herbicides as far as 10 miles from the targeted site.

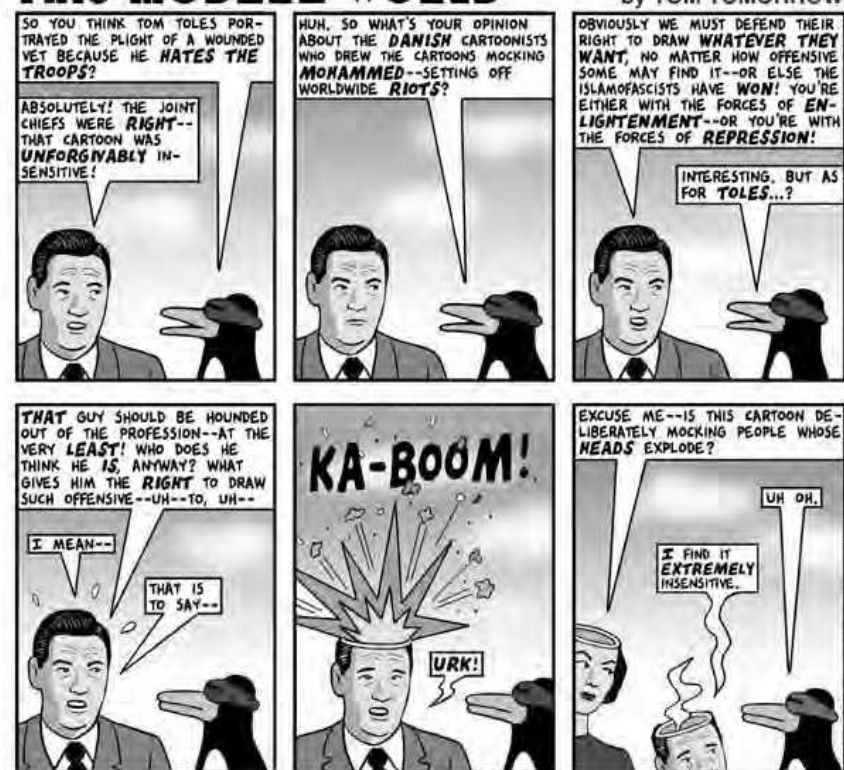
Protesters with eggs, vegetables and livestock in tow lined the street holding signs that said "Quit poisoning our children," and "No more clear cut," a reference to the heavy use

The Pitchfork Rebellion takes a stand.



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



of herbicides on freshly clear-cut forests.

"All of the mountains out here get clear cut," Onowen says. "When they clear cut, they soak the mountains with poison so that the weeds can't grow, so that when they come back to plant new little trees the weeds won't compete."

The group plans to continue fighting for a healthy community.

"We were pleasantly surprised to see that we had even more people than expected [at the protest]," Onowen says. "The one thing that we came away with a consensus agreement that this is just the beginning of The Pitchfork Rebellion."

— Danny Cross

COP AUDITOR UNDERMINED

Eugene citizens voted for an independent police auditor last fall. But now the independence and functioning of that auditor is threatened by a legal opinion that the auditor's support staff will not be independent, but controlled by the city manager.

City Manager Dennis Taylor opposed the independent auditor before the measure was put on the ballot. Now the private law firm Taylor hired and directs as city attorneys, Harrang Long Gary Rudnick, has issued a legal opinion that the auditor's staff will not be hired and controlled by the audi-

SLANT

• Connor/Woolley/Opus have removed their threat to try to have the city condemn private businesses for them downtown. That's good, and a wise PR move. But CWO also issued a new threat last week – if the downtown hold-outs don't sell for CWO's price, CWO will not redevelop any of its property downtown. That's bad. CWO's land speculation downtown has for years made for empty eyesores that have depressed downtown and made it less safe. CWO shouldn't act like a kindergartner saying that if it can't have all the blocks, it won't play. With others also willing to invest, one corporation doesn't need to own everything in the city center. Diversity is a core value of this city for a good reason. It makes for a stronger, more vital and interesting community. That's true of downtown development also.

• A showdown is brewing on the UO campus between faculty and administration. President Frohnmayer has the authority and overall responsibility for running the university, and is on the record enthusiastically supporting the funding of Pentagon research on campus. But the UO Senate oversees the curriculum and student conduct, and some Senate leaders are on the record opposing military research, particularly secret research. This debate has been going on for years, but might be coming to a head. A Senate-sponsored public forum on the topic is at 3 pm Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 282 Lillis on

campus, and out of that forum could come a resolution that would test the power of the Senate, and the power of the president. This is a confrontation worth watching in that it raises a monumental question: Is academia independent, or are universities just becoming part of the military-industrial complex? Complicating the question is the fact that some military research has beneficial civilian applications, and vice versa. We urge the Senate to set high standards regarding the ethics of technology. No one else is providing this leadership as we charge ahead developing a multitude of technologies that can either liberate us, or destroy us.

• Excellent turnout this past weekend for eight Native American films playing at the Bijou as a part of the "Imagining Indians" film festival sponsored by the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and *Eugene Weekly*. Some 473 people attended, and many of the showings were sold out, including both showings of the 1992 silent film *Nanook of the North*. *EW's* Lois Wadsworth organized this film festival that was not only a great success in terms of community response, but also told remarkable stories of North American natives, their lives, triumphs and struggles. Our thanks to everyone involved in this great event.

• Gravel is the grist of cities. It makes the roads,

parking lots, buildings and bridges. But Eugene is more than its concrete and asphalt. It's a confluence of two of the nation's most beautiful urban rivers. Riverside gravel mining has for too long threatened that valuable natural resource. Denying permits for new mines is important, but we also need to reduce our use of sand and gravel. The massive fill envisioned by the West Eugene Parkway would be a good place to start. Tearing up and recycling some of the asphalt we've already laid down would also help. The rivers bring far more to the city than just grist to pave paradise. What will our children say when they look at how we pitted our beautiful rivers to dump gravel in our beautiful wetlands?

• Tree swallows are flying in this valley with confusion about their calendar. That's the word from our staff biologist who admits to no certainty about causation. Could be global climate change. Anyway, according to David Wagner's wonderful and reliable *Willamette Valley Nature Calendar* for 2006, the tree swallows return to this area about the third week of February. Our biologist agrees, but he says that some were back this year in December and fairly large numbers were spotted early in January. That's a significant shift.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the *EW* staff. Heard any good rumors lately?