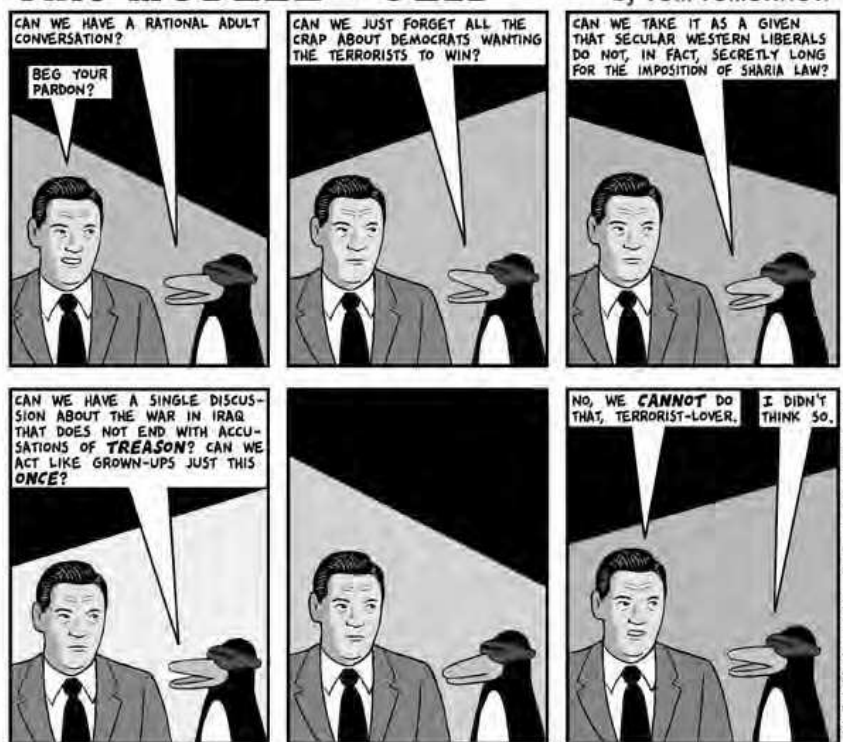


THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs



Patrick Farr

FARR SLIDE OF THE MOON

This Saturday, in front of a rolling video camera and a bar full of witnesses, Patrick Farr will moonwalk into the future. Or possibly the post-future. In any case, he hopes to make history. Confused? You should be. Farr, a soft-spoken, 24-year-old Eugene native whose hobbies include ballet, playing bass guitar and restructuring universally accepted notions of space-time, will attempt to break the world record for the "greatest distance moonwalked in one hour." At the same time, he'll be making a statement about technology's failure to deliver on its promise of a bet-

ter future. Oh yeah, and none of it has anything to do with Michael Jackson.

"I kind of see the moonwalk more as like, Neil Armstrong," Farr says. "And I really see Neil Armstrong as the failure of the future." But by the future, Farr really means the present. And anything still to come is the post-future. As you may have guessed, all this coincides splendidly with the 100th anniversary of Futurism, the Russo-Italian art movement that shunned reverence for the past and glorified speed, violence and technology.

"One hundred years ago, we had all these promises: technology, communism, capitalism, fascism even," says Farr. "They were going to make things better for us. But really, the future has completely failed us. Nothing's really changed that much." One thing that has changed, though, is the ability for aspiring record-breaking moonwalkers to practice on a treadmill, which Farr has been doing for the past six months. Originally, the idea was to use the treadmill to beat the record. But, says Shawn Mediaclast, owner of the Museum of Unfine Art and Record Store and Farr's unofficial promoter, "That idea was recently abandoned. We didn't want to risk Guinness saying that could be rigged or something."

Mediaclast, appearing as the Audio Schizophrenic, together with DJ Dan Craig, will help spin the soundtrack to Farr's epic feat during the Freaks in the House event at John Henry's. Freaks has been a regular reprieve for the weird and the wonderful for the past two years or so. It was here that Mediaclast first got to witness some of the relentless energy that will fuel Farr's push for glory this Saturday. "He treats this event almost like it's a workout," says Mediaclast. "He gets there early, and he'll dance all night, for four or five hours."

Of course, to beat the moonwalking record, Farr will only need to keep moving for one hour, but he'll need to cover more than 1.5 miles in that time. If this sounds easy, think again. The moonwalk, which Farr says can be broken down into a series of movements known in ballet terms as *pique*, *fondue* and *glissade*, is a highly unnatural motion.

SLANT

• Many law school professors at UO are up in arms over what they perceive as a display of cultural incompetence by Johnson Hall. In the search for a new law school dean, university prez Frohnmayer allegedly offended one of the UO's top candidates, a Mexican-American legal scholar who has authored several books on immigration, race and civil rights. In the words of one law school professor, who asked not to be named (another source provided his e-mail to EW): "[T]he central administration folks impeded and bungled the law school's dean search that caused perhaps the most heralded candidate in the history of our school ... to withdraw from the dean search even though he had the universal endorsement of our law school faculty." The e-mail went on to suggest that two distinguished law school professors of color might resign in protest, adding their names to the Exit Files. The facts are hard to pin down, since neither Frohnmayer nor the candidate nor the involved law school professors will comment on the record. But let's hope that Vice President for Academic Affairs Lorraine Davis meant it when she said, "We try to increase the diversity of our faculty and our leadership when we can." And let's hope the candidate in question reconsiders applying for the position.



• Great turnout at the Take Back Our America rally Saturday. The daily rag reported a crowd of 500, but we figure maybe twice that number were packed in shoulder to shoulder. DeFazio was in fine form, reminding us that just talking to each other isn't enough. We need to talk to the thousands of people around us who are moderate and undecided about the big issues of war, justice and accountability. And the way to pull the rug out from under the Bush administration and neo-cons is to sway the 2006 elections at all levels. Let's not forget that the same destructive ideology at work in the White House is also at work right here in Lane County.

• Circuit Court Judge Lyle Velure's recent attempt to shoe-in his own successor got us wondering what other backroom deals have been going on over the years. Most circuit court judges are appointed after resignations mid-term, avoiding elections. The upcoming judicial election in Lane County is the first in 15 years. But secret deals certainly happen all across the spectrum of public office. Who ends up on the ballot or on the short list for appointments is highly political. Let's let our imaginations run wild: Jack Roberts is running for the Oregon Supreme Court. If he succeeds, that would create an executive director vacancy on the Lane Metro Partnership. You can bet somebody, maybe Bobby Green, is already jockeying for that appointment, maybe with help from Roberts. Suddenly we have a vacancy on the County Commission. But it wouldn't be sudden for somebody like Jennifer Solomon, who could be strategizing right now with Green for her appointment to the commission. If so, Solomon probably has some political ally in mind to take her place on the council. Maybe some EWEB commissioner? And on and on it goes. Mostly it's benevolent insiderism, but it's not very transparent, not very democratic, and it doesn't build public confidence in our political system. What are the solutions? For starters, substantive campaign finance reform would get more good people to run for office, and file earlier. Blue-ribbon panels could help take some of the politics out of appointments. Local media need to constantly watchdog this process, and not just wait until filing deadlines.

• What do the people of Oregon do if the Legislature doesn't adhere to the law as laid out in the state Constitution? We go to the courts and ask the judges to require it. That's not a wildly radical position, especially when the constitutional issue is so critical to the state: funding for public education. Last Tuesday a complaint was filed in Multnomah Circuit Court for a group of plaintiffs, including our own School District 4J and the Crow-Applegate-Lorane school district. The complaint says the Legislature has failed to fund our schools at a level to meet the quality goals established by law in 1991. The complaint asks that the court require the state to come up with \$1.8 billion for the 2005-07 education budget to meet these quality goals established by law. Think about that. A breath-taking remedy. A foundation headed by Paul Kelly, attorney and former NIKE exec, and including Eugene attorney Art Johnson, is behind this creative effort to force our elected representatives to obey the law. Similar challenges have been filed in 38 states; 21 courts found in favor of plaintiffs, saying the court had the authority to find the legislatures in violation of their constitutions in school funding. EW will provide more details as this case develops. For now, as Oregon citizens, we cheer this bold stroke to force our elected representatives to do what the law requires and what the state so desperately needs.

• One concern we have about the Whole Foods council vote last week is that the public hearing testimony didn't seem to account for much. Numerous critical issues were raised by the citizens and few of those issues were addressed before the final vote. Are we going to see the same scenario play out when the council votes on the Conner, Woolley & Opus parking garage? Right now, out-of-state corporations are designing our downtown, not the citizens, or even city staff. And it's obvious to us, based on letters to the editor and public testimony, that the people of Eugene don't want their tax dollars going to redundant parking projects benefiting national retail chains. We predict frustrated taxpayers are going to remember the Whole Foods fiasco when the city comes begging for a new City Hall bond measure in 2008. And that's a big problem. New civic facilities, if done right, could be an important part of downtown revitalization. The first public forum on the new City Hall is at 6 pm Thursday, March 23 at First United Methodist Church on Olive Street.