

• What will Eugene area residents get out of the visit this week with The Osprey Group consultants John Huyler and Dennis Donald? Just about everything we are telling the transportation experts about the West Eugene Parkway will be fed back to us, with some trend analysis. They called it a "conflict assessment" at their frank, lively and good-natured sit-down with the public April 10. They plan to return in May to hold another meeting. Ideally, out of all this information gathering and analysis should come some sense of whether this deadlock can be resolved as a community, which will have an impact on whether the WEP is built, killed or altered. Everyone who has submitted testimony and provided an e-mail address will get a report. It's not too late to weigh in on the big questions they are asking: How did the WEP situation evolve in the way it has? And what will it take to move ahead? Contact them by e-mail or snail mail via www.TheOspreyGroup.com

• We're going to look carefully for national articles by Benoit Denizet-Lewis after hearing him speak on the campus last week. His topic: "Hot Type: Writing about Sex and Sexuality in America." A few of his observations: He writes about sex and sexuality in part because so many people write about it so badly; sexual predators are the big story now; the Internet has transformed sexuality, probably not for the better; the Internet was supposed to bring us together, but it has hurt us in romance and intimacy; this is probably the first generation of gay kids to have normal adolescence and sexuality; in other countries kids are not on the Internet so much. Only in his 30s, Denizet-Lewis is the youngest contributing writer in the history of *The New York Times Magazine*. He already has published broadly.

• This week Eugene will bid farewell to one of the city's most exuberant and committed patrons of the arts, Carolezoom Patterson. Last summer she and her husband used their life savings to buy a commercial building across from Triomphe and Bel Ami on Willamette Street that will house local performing groups including the Eugene Ballet and the Eugene Concert Choir among others. Patterson moved to Eugene in 1994 and got involved in the arts scene in 2000. Patterson is in a wheelchair and due to complications, is no longer able to drive. In February, she and her husband sold their Eugene home in the Friendly neighborhood and moved to Portland where it's easier for her to get around unassisted. "In my own printmaking and in becoming involved in arts advocacy, I've found new strength and meaning," Patterson said. "I will miss the rich and vibrant arts community we have in Eugene, but I'll stay involved from Portland. I won't be far away." DIVA on Broadway is hosting a going-away party for Patterson Friday, starting with the showing of a documentary about Patterson made by her cousin, *Independent Little Cuss*, at 6:30 pm and a reception at 7:30 pm.



These Stairs, a recent print by Carolezoom Patterson

• Eugene Councilor Bonny Bettman is fed up with what she calls a "hostile environment" at City Hall, and she went public with it this week. Bettman has been fuming over a sarcastic e-mail sent to her last month by accident by Assistant City Manager Jim Carlson. The message, intended to go to Johnny Medlin, director of Parks and Open Space, said simply, "She's baaack," referring to Bettman's return from a United Front trip to Washington, D.C.. We're not sure what "She's baaack" was intended to mean, but it does conjure up scenes from the horror film *Poltergeist*. Bettman says the snide comment is typical of how she and other assertive councilors are treated by city staff. In her letter to City Manager Dennis Taylor this week, Bettman says "the disparaging e-mail reveals a bias and lack of professionalism within the city organization that is more than just tolerated by the those at the top; it is explicitly condoned, generated, and modeled by city leadership." Taylor's response was short: "Bonny - You are correct. That is an offensive email. Thank you for bringing it to my attention for appropriate action." Carlson is out of town and has not returned *EW's* request for comment. Meanwhile, we are seeing copies of e-mails from the mayor and progressive councilors in strong support of Bettman's concerns. In the end, this flare-up is not about personalities, but reflects deeper problems that need to be addressed in city management.

• Five years after selling its students to the Coke and Pepsi corporations, School District 4J has finally opened its eyes to the obesity and other damage the corporate products inflict on kids. The district is considering a recommendation from a wellness committee and the superintendent to get the pop machines out of high schools. But despite ample evidence of harm and public outcry in 2000, the district signed a contract with the corporations to indenture student health to corporate profits for the next eight years. The \$300,000 4J got for selling its students didn't go to education, or health or fitness, it went to build some grandstands for football stadiums. The district shouldn't sit on this immoral contract for another three years while students rot. They should cancel or buy it out now. If the corporations really are good citizens and want to avoid a public backlash, they won't extort a high buy-out price.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

news Briefs

FAKE GRASS TOPS PARK PRIORITIES

What's a higher priority, making a pond that has drowned at least four kids safer, a new teen center downtown to keep kids out of trouble, paving over school fields and laying AstroTurf, acquiring threatened riverfront and ridgeline land for more bike and hiking trails, a downtown square, park tables for chess, building a big skateboard bowl at Washington-Jefferson Park, building a white-water park for kayakers, building a course for mountain bike stunts, or restoring Amazon Creek for a natural park in back of the fairgrounds?

After hours of testimony pleading different projects, the Eugene City Council went for the AstroTurf April 10, adding \$5 million to a November bond measure for covering four grass fields at 4J middle schools and one field at Bethel High School with the synthetic surface.

It's unclear why the council chose the fake grass over the other projects, which had far more support at the hearing. AstroTurf advocates, including officials from local organized sports leagues and former Mayor Jim Torrey, had lobbied the council behind the scenes for the last month to put their project in the bond.

Charles Warren, a major donor for the Chamber of Commerce's conservative political action committee, testified that the synthetic fields would be less muddy and allow more playing time. He said a planned \$20 million bond for acquiring parkland threat-

ened by development and rising costs might not pass without support from AstroTurf supporters.

But David Monk worried that adding the \$5 million in hard AstroTurf, which he said many people don't like to play on, could hurt chances of the acquisition bond measure passing by increasing the voter sticker shock.

Warren and a couple other artificial grass boosters were far outnumbered at the hearing by the two dozen Bethel residents who came with yellow ribbons to plead for safety improvements to a dangerous park in their neighborhood.

Sauna Davis brought pictures of her teenage son and nephew who drowned in the steep old gravel pit at Golden Gardens Park last year. She choked when describing how they died at the park with inadequate safety access and where at least two other children had also drowned in recent years. "Nothing has been done at Golden Gardens Park after 12 years and four lives," the mother said. "It has to stop."

City councilors later said they would look for some limited money for safety improvements in the park but didn't include anything in the November bond measure for major improvements. One leader from the Friends of Golden Gardens Park said it would cost about \$400,000 to buy land and re-grade the steep slopes of the pits.

By comparison, each AstroTurf field paving included in the measure will cost about \$1 million and will require about \$500,000 in resurfacing work every decade. Use of the AstroTurf fields will be tightly restricted and limited largely to organized sports leagues. — Alan Pittman

WHAT'S WRONG WITH EUGENE?

The impact of land use planning on neighborhoods, the urban core and the economy is being examined in a two-part series at City Club of Eugene. The first in the series was