

GUV SHUNS TOXINS, KINDA

Gov. Ted Kulongoski has declared May 2006 "Toxic Injury Awareness and Education Month," but it's unlikely that the people of Oregon will know it. The governor issued the proclamation with so little fanfare that even his communications director hadn't heard about it.

On April 4, Kulongoski issued the proclamation to recognize people who have developed chronic debilitating illnesses due to exposure to toxins. "Toxic Chemical Injury is often characterized by heightened sensitivity to very small amounts of air pollution, petrochemicals and other toxins found in our everyday products and environment," the proclamation reads. "Toxic Injury may include multiple, often disabling, illnesses ... and can be life threatening." There is no known cure.

The governor's communications director, Lonn Hoklin, said he was unaware of the proclamation and has not issued a press release. He could not name any events planned to observe Toxic Injury Awareness and Education Month. Neither Kulongoski nor his spokespeople would be available to comment by press time, Hoklin said.

For Kulongoski's critics on the left, the issuance of the proclamation without significant follow-up or outreach smacks of hypocrisy. Kulongoski appointed the current State Board of Forestry, whose seven members all have close ties with the timber industry and have approved private forestry practices that involve large amounts of herbicides. Exposure to herbicides and other forestry-related chemicals have been linked to toxic illnesses.

"Ted gets liberal every two and a half years," said former Congressman Jim Weaver of Eugene. "Kulongoski's basically a Republican. He does all this pro-corporation stuff for three and a half years, and then BOOM! All of a sudden it's environmental awareness." — *Kera Abraham*

TEEN CENTER MOVES AHEAD

If dreams could come true, the slog of planning would be worth it — or so it seemed to those working on Monday to get a teen center in Eugene.

The day was warm, the upstairs room at DIVA stuffy; an industrial fan blew, masking teen leader Will Ross' soft voice. Everything Will said in English, UO Spanish major Kalene Ardt translated — audibly — into Spanish.

Three groups — LEAD, an organization for low-income youth; the Youth Action Board (YAB) of Lane County Positive Youth Development; and Juventud FACETA, an immigrant youth group of Amigos Centro de Servicios Multiculturales — have spent years on the dream of the teen center, working in partnership with Dan Close of the UO's Family and Human Services program. Recently they identified the old fire station under City Hall as a potential space, and tomorrow, they meet with city staffers. Monday was one last chance for hard decisions.

LEAD Director Maj Rafferty gave an update on the proposed hours and budget, which were approved in the first hour. The main sticking point came in how to define the youth served by YAB and Juventud FACETA, whose age ranges run through the early 20s, far past LEAD's cut-off age of 17. Should 18-25 year olds be volunteers? Could they use the teen center services? LEAD staffer D Cohen pointed out that anyone over 17 would need a background check (*un chequeo*, Ardt learned).

Itahi Diaz, youth outreach worker at Amigos and YAB youth coordinator, said, "YAB understands that 18-25 year olds will be volunteers; they are OK with that." But confusion persisted. Finally, LEAD teen Maya Rios motioned for a vote. Maya explained that in consensus, one thumbs-down was a block; three thumbs-sideways equaled one thumbs-down. Ardt translated, but before she could finish her translation, all the thumbs were out and up: unanimously approved. — *Suzi Steffen*

BIG CAT CONFLICTS

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved a plan April 13 authorizing active cougar hunting as long as "cougar conflicts" such as livestock kills remain higher than 1994 levels, when Oregon voters passed a ban on hound hunting for cougars.

Supporters of the plan point to public safety concerns and depleted populations of deer, elk and bighorn sheep as evidence that cougar numbers have grown beyond the point at which their current level of protection can remain in balance with human, game and livestock interests.

"Oregon's cougar population has grown substantially since the management plan was updated last," ODFW Wildlife Division Administrator Ronald Anglin said. "Cougar conflicts remain at unacceptably high levels in many areas of the state." The ODFW estimates the current population at 5,000 and intends to maintain a minimum population of 3,000.

Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense, objects to the characterization of the plan as a response to a cougar population explosion. "This is not a scientific endeavor, it is a political process," Fahy said. "The ODFW has been actively soliciting cougar complaints from the ranching community and sightings from the general public. They use fear as a tool. There has never been a fatal or non-fatal cougar attack in Oregon."

Fahy hopes that intense public pressure on Gov. Kulongoski's office will highlight the complexity of the cougar issue and ultimately reverse the April 13 decision.

"We share a border with a state much more densely populated than our own. California has had no sport hunting of cougars in 33 years and they only kill 125 cougars a year due to livestock predation. Why are cougars such a problem in Oregon but not in California?"

— *Adrienne van der Valk*

West Lane Herbicide Spray Schedule

• **ODOT** District 5 roadside nighttime spraying scheduled April 27 on Hwys 126 E, 58, 99 S, Cloverdale, McVay, N. Territorial and other frontage roads. Nighttime spraying during week of May 1 on Hwys 126 W, 36, 101 and Territorial. (ODOT District 5 IVM Coordinator Dennis Joll: 686-7526; daily spray information: (888) 996-8080. Complaints — Becky Thoreson: (503) 986-4366.

To obtain or renew a "No Spray Area" permit, call Lane County Public Works: 682-6911. To subscribe for notifications of spray applications and other forestry operations, call ODF: W. Lane, 935-2283; E. Lane, 726-3588.

Compiled by Jan Wroncy, Forestland Dwellers, 342-8332

TARGETING GENOCIDE

Tens of thousands are gathering for a national rally in Washington, D.C., April 30 to stop genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan, and rallies are also happening in Seattle, Portland and Eugene. The local gathering is planned for 2 pm Sunday at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza at 8th and Oak.

An informational gathering is planned after the rally at Cosmic Pizza at 8th and Charnelton, and a follow-up community meeting is planned for 7 pm May 3 at First Christian Church, 1166 Oak St.

Mayor Kitty Piercy has named Sunday "Eugene Stop Genocide Day" and speakers for the event include Sheik Ishaq Jud, photo-journalist Paul Jeffrey and Rabbi Yitzak Husbands-Hankin. The program also includes spoken word by Iana Matthews-Harris and closing music by Kudana Marimba.

Participants are asked to donate new blankets to be sent to Sudanese refugees. Checks can also be written to Lane County Darfur Coalition and sent to the coalition at P.O. Box 50511, Eugene 97405.

The purpose of the rallies nationwide is to pressure Congress and the White House to support "a real multi-national peacekeeping force to protect civilians in Darfur and end the genocide," according to MoveOn.

The web-based MoveOn says as many as 400,000 civilians have died in the Darfur region, more than 2 million people have been displaced, "and yet the United States and other leading nations won't intervene and stop the killing."

Why the resistance to intervention? MoveOn quotes a *Los Angeles Times* story about the Bush administration's reliance on the Sudanese government for military intelligence on terrorists; and quotes a Congressional Research Service report that the administration is concerned that holding these Sudanese officials accountable could "disrupt cooperation."

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Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

ADAM PETKUN

During his freshman year in Eugene, Beaverton High grad Adam Petkun served an internship with Associated Students of the UO, the student government. As state affairs coordinator for ASUO the following year, Petkun brought students to Salem to lobby for needs-based aid to access higher education. Elected student body president as a junior, he served out his term while completing degrees in political science and economics. Throughout college, Petkun also volunteered with the Bus Project, a Portland-based group backing progressive candidates for state office. "We go to a swing district with a bus-load of volunteers and talk to voters door-to-door," he explains. "We try to engage them in the process." After UO graduation and completion of the Bus Project's first PolitiCorps training camp last summer, Petkun now directs the Bus Project of Lane County. "We have a smaller bus," he notes. To learn more about the Bus Project, the coming summer's PolitiCorps training and volunteer opportunities for the 2006 campaign season, visit busproject.org

