

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THIS WEEK: THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S COURAGEOUS AND NEVER-ENDING...



THEY UNDERSTAND THAT TRUTH IS THE ENEMY--AND THAT IT WILL DESTROY THEM IF GIVEN THE CHANCE!



THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAYS THEY HAVE THE POWER TO IMPRISON JOURNALISTS WHO TELL TOO MUCH TRUTH!



IN AN EFFORT TO CONTAIN THE TRUTH, THEY'VE BEEN MONITORING REPORTERS' PHONE RECORDS--MUCH TO THE AMUSEMENT OF CONSERVATIVES EVERYWHERE!



OF COURSE, MANY ORDINARY AMERICANS ARE DOING THEIR PART FOR THE WAR ON TRUTH AS WELL!



WITH ANY LUCK, OUR CHILDREN WILL INHERIT A NATION UNTHREATENED BY THE INSIDIOUS MENACE OF THE UNFILTERED TRUTH!



news Briefs

UO APPROVES DIVERSITY PLAN

The UO faculty Senate is accustomed to meeting before a sparse audience — perhaps a half-dozen campus politicians and a sleepy student reporter. But on May 24, nearly 400 people packed into 150 Columbia Hall for what would prove to be an unusually emotional Senate meeting.

"I didn't know so many people cared about the spring curriculum report," quipped University Senate President Peter Keyes.

But everyone in attendance knew the real reason the room was buzzing: The Senate would finally vote on the contentious UO Diversity Plan, which has been in the works for almost four years and revised three times.

UO President David Frohnmayer emphasized his support for the plan, calling it "a balance between equity and ... economics." He reminded senators that the document does not reflect the views of any individual, but rather the feedback from more than 1,000 members of the university community.

Frohnmayer also denied that the plan was conceived in a 2002 lawsuit settlement with a former senior administrator, claiming that the university intended to draft the plan months before the lawsuit was filed. However, the settlement marked the first time that the university committed to the plan in writing, and a federal court retains jurisdiction over the matter.

Faculty in favor of and opposed to the plan took turns at the microphone for more than an hour. Supporters described the plan as a long-overdue first step toward equity, though some expressed concerns it doesn't go far enough. Opponents suggested that the

plan is oppressive, too expensive and unfairly gives preferential treatment to targeted minority groups.

Economics professor Christopher Ellis, a UO senator who opposes the plan, proposed a failed motion to delay the vote. He later drew hisses and boos when he said, "Part of the problem of our society is that the poor fail to achieve. The poor are also largely black and Hispanic."

History professor Martin Summers, who supports the plan, called opponents' suggestion to improve campus racial diversity by reaching out to low-income, middle-school students "disingenuous." He also spoke about his decision to leave the UO for the University of Texas, a move that prompted student protests in his support earlier this spring. He said that he accepted the offer from UT not because it pays better than the UO but because that university has demonstrated a stronger commitment to African-American studies and built a critical mass of African-American scholars. Several dozen audience members gave him a standing ovation.

The Senate soundly passed the motion to adopt the Diversity Plan by a vote of 32-6.

For College of Education staff member Shoshana Kerewsky, the vote reflects the campus community's overwhelming support for the plan. "Most of the senators agree that it's time to do something," she said. "This, at least, is a first step." — Kera Abraham

EWEB WORKERS WANT AVERAGE

EWEB union negotiators met with the EWEB board May 29 in an attempt to head off a strike. Bargaining team member and EWEB electric meter technician Rob Dotson says that the main sticking point is the difference between health care proposals.

The two sides have been negotiating since September, Dotson says. Last year's contract expired on December 31, 2005. Board members say they're offering a fair contract. But

SLANT

• We were hoping to see some movement toward adopting the collaboration model proposed for the West Eugene Parkway by the Osprey Group, but the City Council's actions last week were less than ideal. Nobody expects collaboration on the WEP to result in a local nod for the highway as-is — such an outcome would guarantee years of heavy litigation. But the council voted to keep the WEP as-is on the metro area's transportation project list, just delay funding until January 2009. What are the implications of this strategy? What are the alternatives? Unexpected consequences? Will this plan fly with the Metropolitan Policy Committee? Councilors didn't even have a chance to ask all their questions. And why the rush to light a long fuse on a big time bomb? Our primary concern is that even if we hash out a marvelously logical plan to deal with west Eugene traffic, 18 months of collaboration could be blown to bits by any number of things, including a hasty council vote made back in 2006.

• City Manager Dennis Taylor gets his annual evaluation by the Eugene City Council this week just after we go to press. We hear the level of dissatisfaction with Taylor has not improved since last year when he was berated for keeping councilors in the dark, setting policy when he should have been following policy, resisting council directions, being heavy-handed in labor negotiations, and other problems (see EW cover story, 8/4/05). He earned an overall score of 3.6 out of a possible 5. We don't expect the council to fire him, but unless his performance and communication skills have improved, it would send a clear message to deny him his annual pay raise. Kitty Piercy's tie vote was the only reason he got a raise last year. When we evolve to a strong-mayor form of city government, we might have the same kinds of problems, but at least the mayor would be directly accountable to the people. Taylor, through his secrecy and control of information, has managed to avoid being accountable to anyone but the few councilors who are trying to pay attention.

• Last week's second public forum on the Eugene City Hall Complex Master Plan looked at issues of space needs, project values and police consolidation, and the next forum Aug. 24 will look at siting issues such as access and transportation (see www.EugeneCityHall.com). What's odd is that the city just put out an RFP (request for proposal) for the old Sears Building hole-in-the-ground across the street from the new library. This city-owned lot, recently nixed as a site for a new Oregon Research Institute building, could be an excellent spot for a high-rise City Hall.

• Meanwhile, what's up with Conner & Woolley following the breakup with the Opus Group partners on the Broadway District project? We've asked, but no response. C&W should get busy if they are going to try to create a mini-Pearl District in downtown Eugene. Some competition could come from an unexpected direction. We hear that a pack of local and regional investors are looking seriously at creating an ambitious mixed-use development along the river in Glenwood. PeaceHealth and McKenzie-Willamette boards rejected the area for a hospital site, but wiser folks are seeing the potential. Cheap land, willing sellers, great location, easy bus and car access, and depending on which way you look, great scenery.

• In late-breaking news, the Oregon Bach Festival announced May 31 that co-founder and Executive Director Royce Saltzman is stepping down and will instead be work on fundraising to complete the OBF's \$10 million endowment. Saltzman, 77, will remain in his position through the 2007 festival.

