

• Lane County commissioners are considering **passing an income tax for public safety without a vote.** That would be a bad idea. The tax would be quickly referred and thrashed at the polls. Voter backlash would make it even harder to pass any future county taxes. Instead, the county should craft a fair, progressive personal and corporate income tax based on ability to pay. The tax should exempt households earning less than \$50,000. Businesses should pay their fair share. Revenues from the tax should go towards a more equal balance of incarceration and crime prevention. Such a fair, cost-effective tax will appeal to the liberal voters who defeated the last county tax measures.

• There's a kind of quaint honesty, and certainly transparency, about the **appointment of Pat Kilkenny**, wealthy UO donor, as the new athletic director. He'll work for nothing in a position he helped vacate by contributing big-time to the \$2 million golden parachute Bill Moos will take away with him. Kilkenny already has contributed millions to the athletic program and more is expected. As one web-footed wag put it, "We always thought the athletic department was run by the donors ... this removes all doubt!" The *Oregon Daily Emerald* reports that the chair of the athletic director search committee, law professor Michael Moffitt, says his committee, assembled in December 2006, attempted to find the best possible candidates for the job and selected Kilkenny. Moffitt hopes the new hiring will promote a new "innovative relationship between athletics and academics." Wow! But what about this innovative profitable personnel policy? Want to be assistant athletic director, law school dean, football coach, quarterback, even UO president? The possibilities and profits are endless. It could all go down on eBay with competitive bids. The university could even allow high bidders to call plays during games using their cell phones. Imagine the cash flow!

• **Imprisoned eco-activist Jeff "Free" Luers** had his 22 years-plus sentence tossed out by the Oregon Court of Appeals last week and will be resentenced to a time that better fits his crime, probably something in the seven- to 13-year range, which still exceeds the sentences given to some murders and rapists around the country. Luers was convicted in 2001 when he was 22. So what happened? The appeals court found that Judge Lyle Velure had improperly made Luers' first-degree arson acts at Romania consecutive instead of merging them; ditto for the attempted arson charges. What would be analogous to Velure's thinking? Perhaps an arsonist throwing fire bombs through three different windows of the same house should be sentenced for three different arsons? Velure had his reasons for throwing the book at Luers, but in the end, the judge will be remembered for a bad sentencing decision, and Luers will become a free man basking in international martyrdom but damaged from years behind bars. No winners here, just lots of bad decisions, starting with the striking of a match.

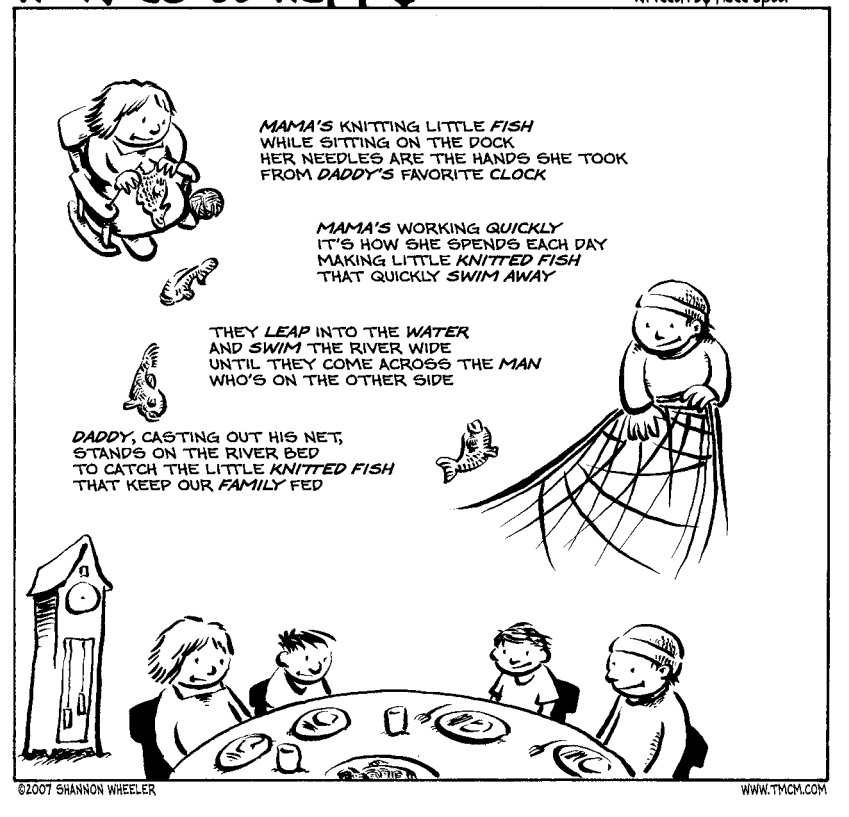
• Here's something interesting we found as we searched for *Eugene Weekly* on **Technorati**: [lorelei-lee.blogspot.com/2007/02/i-have-lost-my-illusions.html](http://lorelei-lee.blogspot.com/2007/02/i-have-lost-my-illusions.html) This blog post, by a UO science major who gave us permission to reprint the entire post (if only we had room!), made us laugh. She is *super* pissed about a letter we printed from Larry Lippert ("Rim Each Other," 2/8), in which he suggests that our running of Dan Savage's nationally syndicated "Savage Love" column means we should ... well ... you can read it in our archives at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com) or on her blog. One amusing moment in her post: "Calling Savage a slime ball is about on par with calling him a big ugly meanie. It shows that the writer has no real argument other than namecalling. As Robert Heinlein once said, vulgar idioms denote an inferior mind - but I think that was obvious in Larry's case." No, *EW* isn't into calling names (we prefer to let our letter-writers and bloggers do that for us), but we should note that Lippert and Lorelei and everyone else will get their opportunity to speak to the Savage man himself on March 15 at the WOW Hall. More info on that benefit talk coming soon.

• Last week in this column we said **Jimmy Carter** had been invited to Eugene to accept a Morse Award for Integrity in Politics. That information came from a former member of the Wayne Morse Park Association Board. But we heard this week from current board member Laura Olson that a decision has not yet been made on the award winner. And as far as she knows, Carter is not on the short list this time around, though he did win the award in 1989.

• Did anyone else catch the 10 pm **Sunday Northwest News on FOX** affiliate KLSR to see local newscasters investigating Hallmark's new line of personal greeting cards? Local shoppers were caught on camera examining the new cards. What did the rack browsers have to say for themselves under the glare of camera lights and probing questions by a team of crack reporters? One elderly woman said the cards were nice. These are tough, gritty stories on urban life, but somebody's gotta do 'em.

*SLANT* includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, [editor@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)

How to Be Happy "The Knitted Fish" drawn by Shannon Wheeler written by Matt Speer



# news Briefs

## WATERFRONT: EWEB VS. EUGENE

If some or all of EWEB's industrial land along the downtown riverfront becomes a park, who should pay for it?

On the surface, it doesn't appear to matter. EWEB's ratepayers are largely the same people as the city's taxpayers. But city taxes fall harder on residents than do EWEB rates.

If EWEB sells the land for less, any lost sale revenue will come from ratepayers. About one-third of EWEB's rate revenue comes from residential customers with the rest largely from businesses.

If the city pays top dollar to EWEB for the land, city taxpayers will foot the bill. About one-half of the city's tax revenue comes from residential taxes and about one-half from business taxes.

That means that if EWEB pays for the park land, residents will pay less and businesses will pay more. Whatever the city pays will fall more heavily on residents.

That disparate impact could be at the heart of tense discussions that the Eugene City Council, dominated by progressives, is having with the EWEB board, dominated by business interests.

In a Feb. 12 joint meeting, EWEB commissioners urged the City Council to quickly rezone the riverfront land for high-density commercial or residential uses. That would allow the utility to demand top dollar in selling the land to the city for a park or to a developer.

If any of EWEB's land is zoned into a park, "it has zero value," said Commissioner John Brown, a commercial Realtor. "That would be my concern, that we get a lot of open space designation."

But council progressives said that maximizing EWEB's sale value for the land might not be in the broader public interest. "You've got two values at play here — best value in terms of your sale and best value in terms of the community," Mayor Kitty Piercy said. "It isn't just simply where do you get the best bang for your buck, it's where do you get the best bang for your buck for the community."

Councilor Bonny Bettman agreed. "To me the objective is not to maximize the profit from the piece of property, it's to maximize the public benefit from the piece of property."

Piercy urged EWEB commissioners to join with the city in a collaborative planning process for the riverfront public land. "I'm imploring you to be willing to step out the door with us."

But Commissioner Ron Farmer, a Bank of America executive, balked. EWEB's goal is "to realize as much value out of that land as we can," he said. "We won't give up our rights to at least manage the process for the property were going to sell."

But Eugene councilors rejected letting EWEB master plan the site with a developer without cooperating with the city. The council voted 6-2 to bring back options for a city managed or a cooperative planning process for the downtown riverfront land.

— Alan Pittman

## COMMISH GAVE AWAY TAX REVENUE

Lane County officials are screaming that they'll have to decimate public safety if they don't get more tax revenue.

But two years ago, county officials appeared unconcerned with tax revenue when they forced the city of Eugene to give Hynix an extra \$10 million in enterprise zone tax breaks.

A Eugene City Council majority had wanted a per-job cap for its enterprise zone tax breaks. Hynix had already received about \$50 million in tax breaks. But county commissioners balked at the cap and other stricter community benefit criteria, forcing the city into the