

own soldiers and countless Iraqi civilians, not to mention the draining of our federal treasury! The war must end, and the sooner we leave, the sooner the terrorists, who feed off of hatred, will lose their main argument for recruiting: U.S. occupation. It seems clear to me from reading their own accounts that our soldiers have felt beaten down by an unending deployment into a meaningless war.

Let us hope the debate continues to rage in the halls of Congress on this vitally important issue. Justice can never be served by silence; indeed, democracy can only flourish where there is thoughtful discussion and vigorous dissent.

*John Jordan-Cascade  
Eugene*

**BOORISH AUDIENCE**

My wife and I attended the Neko Case/Eric Bachmann concert recently (at the McDonald). We love her music, her vocals, songwriting and the excellent band backing her up. I also thoroughly enjoyed the music of Eric Bachmann. Due to no seating on the main floor, we sat upstairs in the balcony, but the obnoxious drunks in the crowd made it the most disappointing, worst concert experience we ever had. During Bachmann's set, people partied as though there was no performer onstage. I was ashamed to be part of such a rude audience.

Finally Case's set started, and we looked forward to the audience paying attention to the music. Alas, the general chaos was replaced by some particularly obnoxious behavior by several boorish people who liter-

ally bellowed at the top of their lungs between every song "We love you Neko" and the like. Case herself made a few references to the drunks in the crowd, as had Gillian Welch at one of her concerts at the McDonald. There seems to be a pattern here, one which makes us loath to try again despite the appeal of many of the acts booked.

Several people left before the show was over, and had I not spent \$52 for the tickets, we would have left also. Perhaps the venue needs to have a bar in order to meet expenses. If that is the case, why can't some staff be appointed to patrol and monitor the upstairs and require loud people to quiet down? Let's get with it, folks!

*P.R. Lanz  
Eugene*

**Cultivating Corridors for the People**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: UO Law student Zach Welcker received a standing ovation for his introduction of PIELC keynote speakers March 1. We've reprinted most of his speech with his permission. He thanks Becki Kammerling for speaking with him.*

On behalf of the students of Land Air Water, I'd like to thank you all for coming to Eugene to help us celebrate the 25th Annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. We are honored to have Vandana Shiva and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. here. We are privileged to have many former co-directors in attendance. Because of their vision and dedication, this conference has grown from an initial gathering of 15 speakers and 75 attendees into the world's most important environmental law conference. The global reach of our 24 previous meetings has been staggering.

Despite our successes, we still have a great deal of work ahead of us. Powerful governments and businesses continue to exploit our natural systems for short-term economic gain. Neighbors continue to turn against neighbors while corporations steal the farm and dance stealthily away. The world cooks like never before while the chef in the big white house is just beginning to admit that we have turned on the oven. Subdivisions named after ecosystems they destroy continue to hoist street signs bearing names of threatened species. The politics of fear continue to shift our attention toward the personal losses we might sustain rather than collective losses we are all enduring.

As we look to meet these types of challenges in the next 25 years, we must respond to them systemically. For instance, we should not consider our work to stop a clear-cutting operation here in Oregon to be complete until we are certain that it won't relocate to Brazil. We should not deem the protection of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to be final until we have an energy policy that makes development of its oil reserves altogether unnecessary. We should hesitate to celebrate the recovery of the gray wolf until we have eradicated the mentality that nearly caused the wolf's demise.

Our work as citizens of this Earth requires us to tap into the depths of our imagination in order to reach out to people who are reluctant to join the environmental movement. We need to weave together solutions to social and environmental problems in such an intricate pattern that it becomes impossible to separate the two.

If a corridor of suitable habitat is created between two isolated grizzly bear populations, there is a good chance that a bear or two will keep walking as long as there are berries along the path and plenty of fish in the river it follows. Our hope is that all of you will use this conference as an opportunity to create a vision for the future that is so compelling and so inclusive that masses of people will wind up fighting to protect our planet without remembering when or why they even started along the path.

When the 50th PIELC convenes, may the participants look back to this conference as the spark that ignited a unified movement for justice. We need this catalyst like a polar bear needs pack ice, like a farmer needs fertile soil, like a spawning salmon needs the waters where it was born. We should not wait for the next Katrina or tsunami to exert our collective power. We need to start cultivating this power today.

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