

• Oregon Democrats have a chance to fly high with their election of new state officers this weekend in Salem. Our own Dan Carol, occasional *EW* columnist and nationally known political strategist, jumped late into the race for chair but is making up for time with his whirlwind energy. He wants to succeed another Eugenean, Jim Edmunson, retiring after eight years that leave the DPO totally in power. One of Oregon's best Dem chairs in the history of the party also came from Lane County. That's Jim Klonoski, now a retired UO political science professor. Carol's competition is Carol Voisin from Ashland and two Portlanders, Meredith Wood-Smith and Mac Pritchard. Dan Carol has researched and tossed out a series of aggressive questions that challenge Gordon Smith, the big (but not impossible) target for the DPO, and he is qualified to take Smith on, having served as research director for the opposing Wyden campaign in 1995 in the only election loss Smith has ever suffered. Let's do it – Dan Carol, chair of the Oregon Democratic Party! More on blueoregon.com (including extensive statements from the candidates) and oregondemocrats.org

• Another stunning Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC) has come and gone, leaving us with fresh perspectives on old problems, and tools for more effective activism. Great job by the coordinators this year, and they tell us they are hoping to have streaming video of the keynotes and audio of select panels online by April, barring technical problems. Audio recordings will also be available on CD for the cost of production and mailing, about \$5. Keep an eye on www.pielc.org over the next few weeks. It's easy to become cynical about the state of the environment, but hanging out with this new generation of smart, dedicated law students inspires optimism.

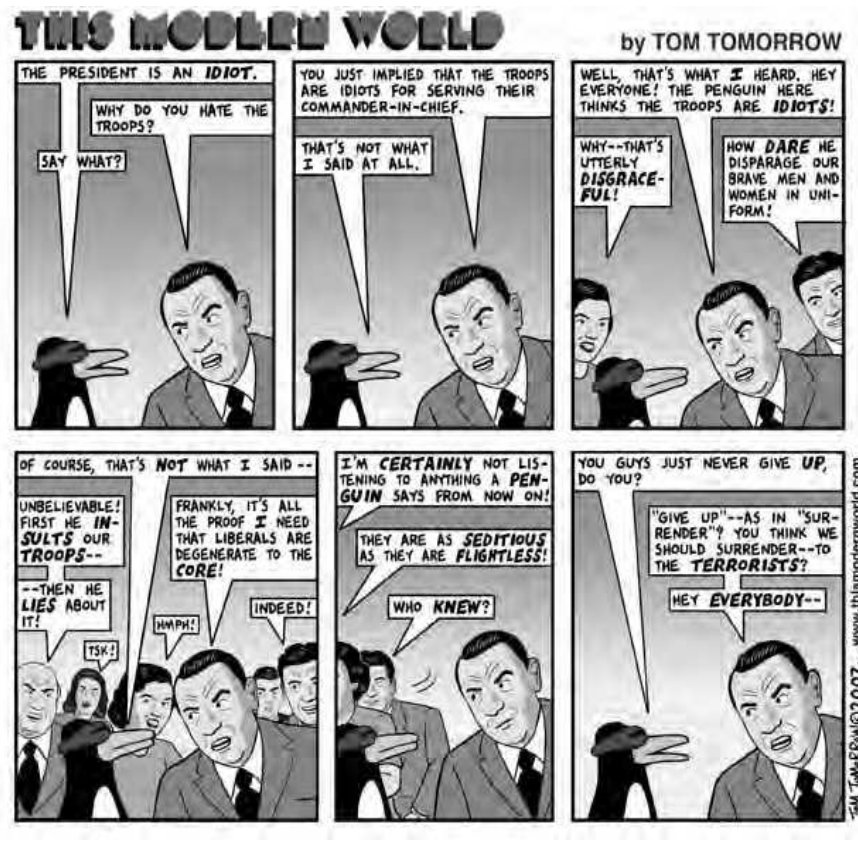
• In late January the private Pappas Consulting Group released a report critical of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at UO, saying the museum needs a more clear vision for its purpose and direction, and how it connects to the larger community. But this past weekend saw a remarkable collection of visual artists, dancers, musicians, culture scholars, filmmakers, scientists, philosophers, poets and ecologists coming together at the museum for an interactive experience called Metamedia3. The "happening," for lack of a better word, came in conjunction with the PIELC, plugging art into legal activism as well. This is what a living art museum is all about: bringing a diversity of people together in creative ways through art, and planting seeds of connection and hope for the future. Jair of the Imaginify Community Network tells us the collaboration, which attracted about 400 people, was not without its difficulties and obstacles to overcome. "We proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are an agile bunch," he says.

• Since 1999 *Eugene Weekly* has increased steadily in number of papers printed from 30,500 to 40,300 (thank you, loyal readers), but how have other Oregon papers done during the past seven years? The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association just came out with circulation numbers showing that *The Oregonian* is still Oregon's biggest paper, but its circulation has dropped in seven years from 347,000 to 323,000. *The Register-Guard* is second, but its paid circulation has dropped from 74,800 to 70,500. Salem's *Stateman Journal* has slipped from 58,000 to 50,200. The *Corvallis Gazette-Times* has dropped from 12,600 to 11,600. All this has happened while Oregon's population has been growing at about 45,000 a year.

• Speaking of the decline of newspapers, Bobby Kennedy Jr. had a lot to say about media's role in democracy when he spoke at the PIELC March 1. He puts a lot of the blame on corporate media monopolies and Reagan's killing of the Fairness Doctrine in 1988. Next week, when we have more room, we'll run part of the transcript of his talk. Here's a preview: *We need an informed public that is able to recognize all the milestones of tyranny. We need an aggressive and vigorous and independent press that is willing to stand up and speak truth to power, and we no longer have that in the United States of America. ... Eighty percent of investigative reporters have lost their jobs over the past 15 years. ... We are the best entertained and least informed people on the face of the Earth.*

• What's it going to take to get the U.S. out of Iraq? Congress can simply give a thumbs-down to the \$100 billion supplemental war funding bill that's coming up for a vote. Just saying no avoids both a filibuster and a veto. Politicians on both sides fear such a vote will label them as "not supporting the troops." Let's give the American people some credit for seeing through the spin. Will voters really toss out politicians who actually DO something to bring the troops home? More likely, voters will remember those who did nothing to stop the bloodshed and waste. Kudos to local folks who are doing something, including Pam Garrison and Rich Klopfer who occupied DeFazio's office March 5 and were arrested.

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



news Briefs

PASSION FOR THE PLANET

Hordes of people thronged the UO's Erb Memorial Union on the evening of March 1 to hear Vandana Shiva and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the two keynote speakers at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC). The ballroom was packed with more than 750 people, and two overflow rooms provided space for at least 500 more to watch on live feed as the speakers blasted U.S. corporations and exhorted the audience to take action on behalf of the planet.

Introducing physicist and ecologist Shiva, conference co-coordinator Zach Welcker brought the audience to its feet when he issued a stirring call for international cooperation in environmental activism (see p. 7).



Vandana Shiva

Shiva, whose ecofeminist activism and scholarship in India garnered worldwide attention in the 1990s, spoke extensively about the horrors perpetrated by multinational corporations. Looking out at the crowd, she said, "You have big work because your corporations have taken our planet as their property." Those rapacious plunderers, she said, included pharmaceutical company Novartis, agribusiness giants Cargill and Monsanto and soft drink companies Coke and Pepsi.

Much of her speech focused on "water wars" and what she called the "seed wars," seed monopolies and the dangers of monoculture and genetic engineering. Her 1999 book *Stolen Harvest* brought to international attention the genetic engineering of seeds and the impact of corporations on poor farmers, and she reiterated those concerns in her speech. "A decade of seed monopolies has pushed farmers into debt they have not known," she said. She claimed that a map of Indian farmer suicides corresponds almost one-to-one with a map of the spread of genetically engineered cotton, whose yield has not been as solid as promised. But she said her seed saving organization, Navdanya (www.navdanya.org), already has drought-tolerant, flood-tolerant, hurricane-tolerant seeds, and "we don't need to wait for Monsanto to give us genetically engineered seed."

She urged the audience to link solutions, not to work on problems in isolation, or "we'll get solutions making it worse in other sectors." She concluded by repeating her call: "You'll have to hold your government back and restrict it for the sake of Gaia, for the sake of the Earth."

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., speaking just after being diagnosed with pneumonia, delivered his more nationally focused speech with passion and to frequent applause. One of the points he hit over and over was the tie between democracy and saving the environment, and between free, investigation-oriented media and democracy. Kennedy repeatedly mentioned the Bush administration's eagerness to "put polluters in charge of every agency that's supposed to be protecting against pollution" and the effect of that on the health of his and other children. He talked