

about the prevalence of mercury in our waterways and air pollution, both from coal plants suddenly exempted from the Clean Air Act by Bush as soon as he got into office in 2000.

Kennedy tied the tens of millions of dollars given to the Bush campaign by the coal industry to continued exemptions, and he talked about ways that industries subvert democracy through monetary donations. In addition, he said, they can do this because “we have a negligent and indolent press in this country.” But it’s not just that media outlets are controlled by six giant corporations, he says (as depicted by *The Nation*’s National Entertainment Chart at www.thenation.com/doc/20060703/mediachart), it’s that Ronald Reagan’s ending of the Fairness Doctrine in 1988 encouraged talk radio and industry consolidation and discouraged investigative reporting for the sake of entertainment reporting. He concluded with an appeal to nature as the basis for American democracy and American values. “Those of us who know that [America] is worth fighting for,” he said, “have to take it back now from those who don’t.”

— Suzi Steffen

ACCOUNTABLE ANNEXATION

Everywhere else in the state, local elected city officials vote on sometimes controversial annexations after holding public hearings. But in Eugene a boundary commission appointed by the governor makes the decision at meetings rarely attended by the public.

Responding to complaints about annexations in the River Road/Santa Clara area, a bill in the state Legislature would do away with the local Boundary Commission. The bill has the backing of most local representatives, but is opposed by city of Eugene staff.

Backers of the bill are “trying to make it more difficult for annexations to occur,” said City Manager Dennis Taylor at a City Council meeting last month in which staff recommended making defeat of the bill a top lobbying priority.

But the council rejected that and voted 7-1

to make the city’s position on the bill neutral. A vote to support the bill failed 3-5.

Opposing the legislation isn’t worth the political capital, argued Councilor Bonny Bettman. “Look at the political reality,” she said. “It’s going to pass; it’s going to get signed.”

Councilor Andrea Ortiz said many of her constituents in River Road/Santa Clara are angry at annexations performed by an unaccountable, unelected board without a public face in the community. The Bethel area was annexed years ago, but many people there still angrily vote down tax measures, she pointed out. “They’re still pissed.”

City staff warned that noncontiguous annexations would be more difficult without the Boundary Commission, requiring “cherry stem” annexations that would be subject to reasonableness legal standards. A lack of annexation could effectively block some development. Also, the city may have to figure out a new mechanism of restricting extensions of sewer and water services beyond city limits to control costs and sprawl.

Although the council voted to not oppose the bill, a majority of councilors still appear to favor the city’s longstanding goal of annexing unincorporated, urbanized islands in the city to provide more efficient services and to have residents pay their fair share of city taxes.

“There are close-in county residents who have a duty to participate in the city’s responsibilities,” said Councilor Mike Clark.

“I foresee a day when all of River Road/Santa Clara is in Eugene,” said Councilor Jennifer Solomon.

Councilor Alan Zelenka agreed. “I think we’re on the right path,” he said. “We’ll end up with all of River Road/Santa Clara in the city.” — Alan Pittman

ANTI-WAR RESOLUTION ON AGENDA

The Eugene City Council will be asked to approve a resolution Monday, March 12, seeking withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

A time for public input is expected to begin at 7:30 pm in the council chambers. A rally in support of the resolution will begin at 7 pm outside of council chambers.

The resolution was passed unanimously by the city’s Intergovernmental Relations Committee Feb. 22. Councilors Bonny Bettmann, Betty Taylor and Chris Pryor are the committee members.

If the council passes the resolution, Eugene will join the nearly 300 other U.S. cities that have passed similar resolutions.

The resolution’s central demand is that Congress use its “power of the purse” to cut off further funding of the Iraq occupation by U.S. forces

— except for funds necessary to carry out a safe, rapid and orderly withdrawal that fully protects American troops from harm — and to support Iraqi reconstruction efforts.

Lane County commissioners Feb. 14 passed an anti-war resolution that came out of the county’s Mental Health Advisory Committee. The resolution calls on Oregon’s congressional delegation to “reduce the number of U.S. troops engaged in wars and to take action to provide federal financial support targeted for the welfare, safety and health of returning veterans affected by their participation in war, their families and communities.”

March 17 marks the fourth anniversary of the Iraq War, and a number of local peace, justice and environmental groups are gathering at 10:30 am at the Lane County Fairgrounds for a march to the old federal building for a noon rally. A benefit for Ehren Watada and Suzanne Swift will be held that evening, from 7 to 9:30 at Cozmic Pizza.

WOLF SEASON?

A Friday morning panel at the PIELC featured representatives of Defenders of Wildlife, the Confederated Tribes of the

Umatilla Indian Reservation, and of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife debating not only Oregon’s controversial wolf reintroduction plan but also the recent federal proposal to remove gray wolves from the endangered species list in the Northern Rockies and parts of the Pacific Northwest.

Reintroducing wolves to Oregon will no



longer be a possibility if states such as Idaho and Wyoming use lethal methods to control wolf populations. Wyoming proposes to allow all wolves to be shot on sight. Idaho gov-

ernor C.L. “Butch” Otter recently announced a plan to kill 75 percent of the wolf population, stating “I’m prepared to bid for that first ticket to shoot a wolf myself.”

Oregon ranchers fear wolves will decimate their livestock; however, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, domestic dogs are responsible for nearly 20 times more sheep kills than wolves.

The public can comment on this plan to delist the gray wolf until April 9. For more information contact the Cascadia Wildland Project at www.cascwild.org or to make comments email WesternGrayWolf@fws.gov. Include “RIN number 1018-AU53” in the subject line of the message. To comment by mail, write to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Gray Wolf Recovery Coordinator, 585 Shepard Way, Helena, Mont. 59601. Include “RIN number 1018-AU53” in the subject line of the letter. — Camilla Mortensen

QUASHING COMMENT

Saturday afternoon’s PIELC keynote speaker, Dinah Bear, is the general counsel of the Council on Environmental Quality with an office across the street from the White

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