

• **Getting all huffy** with the county commissioners and threatening to recall them over the county income tax fiasco doesn't accomplish anything other than drive a bigger wedge between the people and elected officials who are trying to do the right thing. The commissioners, of course, can come up with a better tax proposal, and we think voters might go for it if it's: 1) less regressive, 2) more modest, 3) better balanced regarding crime prevention, and 4) clearly outlines how the tax will be assessed under different federal funding scenarios. Public input into a revised tax plan can help repair some of the damage.

• **Dan Carol**, national political strategist who lives in Eugene, just gave the Oregon Democratic Party four weeks of his energy and insights into what should happen in this state. Running late for state chair of the party, he came in second to Meredith Wood Smith, vice-chair from Portland who has been chalking up votes for four years. Although the delegates and officers gathered in Salem last Saturday voted 61-49 for Smith, who has long labored in Oregon party trenches, most welcomed the powerful messages of both Carol and Val Hoyle, Lane county's tough Democratic chair who nominated him. Even if the vote went the wrong way this time, the future looks good for D's in Oregon.



• Our cover story last week on **Mark Murphy's new BugE** electric car design got a few readers excited (see letters) and we also heard from the Smart Car folks in Oregon who say they have a superior vehicle that's more environmentally friendly than hybrids. In Paris we were nearly run over by these little buggers that look like half a car and drive and park anywhere, even on sidewalks. Steve Martin drove one in his Inspector Clouseau revival. These

8-foot-long two-seaters get 55 mpg or better and have been "Americanized" to conform to U.S. safety and emission standards. Mercedes-Benz makes the smart car and dealers sell them for \$25,000 to \$32,000. You can buy five BugEs for the same price and gobble up fewer resources. Where do you get a Smart Car? Lake Oswego is the closest dealer, but a UO biz major named Max Shepanek is marketing them locally and has one to show off. He can be reached at (503) 913-2004.

• When **George and Laura** drop by to see the Ailey II dance company in New York, we hope they're lucky enough to see *Axis*, "a choreoprayer for ecological balance and planetary healing." Divided into psalms called "Glacier, Greenhouse Corps..e Inc, The Warming, Requiem for the Homeless, Judgment, Arctic Lights, and New Birth (Epilogue)" this number was performed at the Hult Center last week with the amazing strength, energy, and discipline of these ambitious young dancers. They meant every movement. Maybe the arts can break the Bush oil and gas bubble and convince him to take real action against global climate change. We can even recommend a movie he and Laura and Dick and Lynne could watch some evening in the White House theater. It just won the Academy Award for "best documentary."

• Here's a modest proposal for a new 4J alternative school: **Cherry Pick Elementary** would achieve excellence by concentrating the most excellent students. Requirements that parents drive their kids to school and research and apply to the school a year before enrollment would guarantee that only students from the most educated, well-off and dedicated families need apply. Disruptive homeless, poor and transient kids that move in and out of neighborhood schools during the year will be strictly forbidden. A lack of special education programs will keep out even more of those pesky, lower achieving, ignorant students who are harder to teach and distract from teacher time devoted to elite students. Teachers will lavish time on the children by taking full advantage of the guaranteed small classroom sizes allowed only at alternative schools. The high concentration of wealthy parents will fundraise to provide exclusive programs at Cherry Pick that poorer neighborhood schools can only dream of. Why pay full price for a private school when you can get public schools to foot most of the tab? This proposal isn't real, of course, but it illustrates why the school system must continue to actively pursue reform of alternative schools.

• What's up with the **big R-G headline** March 8 proclaiming "Springfield to Host 'Simpsons' Film Debut"? Our Springfield is just one of 16 Springfields contending for the debut, but the R-G editors probably thought it would be fun to mess with readers' minds. A lot of folks just found it irritating. Local TV news carried the story the day before, so the headline gave the false impression that the decision had been made overnight.

• A week or so ago **we ran into a Corvallis couple** in downtown Eugene. They had stopped their car at a phone booth and were looking in vain through a shredded phone book for the address for Whole Foods. Big disappointment. We tend to not think of grocery stores as magnets, but people will travel great distances to fuel their passions. Opera lovers will drive to Seattle to catch an evening performance of *Julius Caesar*. Affection-starved guys will fly to Bangkok or Manila for exotic sex – or even ordinary sex. Medford foodies will drive to Eugene to shop at Trader Joe's. A little prosperity enables us to pursue the impractical.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

LT. WATADA TO SPEAK AT PEACE RALLY

Peace groups throughout the nation are gathering to speak out against the Iraq War Saturday, marking the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation. Among the speakers in Eugene will be Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to refuse Iraq deployment; Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy; Juan Stewart-Alvarez, student organizer of the Iraq Body Count Exhibit; Jo Ann Bowman of Oregon Action; and Adele Kubein of Military Families Speak Out.

Marchers will gather at 10:30 am at the Lane County Fairgrounds and then march to the old Federal Building at 7th and Pearl for a noon rally that includes music and spoken word.

An evening benefit for Watada and Suzanne Swift is planned for 7 to 9:30 pm at Cozmic Pizza. The benefit features Instruments of Change with Janet Bates, and Celtic music by Linda Danielson, Chico Schwall and Fred Wilson. Sliding scale, \$5-\$25.

Contact: Michael Carrigan at CALC, 485-1755 or calcdev@efn.org for more information.

Also timed to correspond with the war's anniversary is the HOPE Ride for Peace & Sustainability, a cross-country bicycle tour that's scheduled to pick up Oregon riders at 9 am Monday, March 19 at the courthouse in Corvallis, and head south down Hwy. 99 to the old Federal Building in Eugene. Stand

for Peace walkers from Cottage Grove are planning to join the group about 4 pm.

The national riders are sharing techniques for simplifying life and building peaceful community as they visit cities along the way.

COUNCIL OPPOSES IRAQ WAR

With the Eugene taxpayer tab for the Iraq War at an estimated \$116 million, the Eugene City Council passed an anti-war resolution by a vote of 5-3 on March 12.

"I urge the council to support this resolution," Iraq War veteran Noah Mrowczynski testified at a public hearing before the vote. Mrowczynski said the war was declared based on "lies," and he choked up when he thought of the friends he'd lost. "A lot of my fellow soldiers won't be able to make it back."

Mayor Kitty Piercy reached under her glasses to wipe her eye, and about a hundred fellow anti-war protesters stood in silent support in the council chamber.

But council conservatives George Poling, Jennifer Solomon and Mike Clark were un-

