

• The city now stands on the brink of sinking **\$50 million in public subsidies** into private developer's plans to remake downtown with almost no public involvement or information. Can you think of something better to spend money on than cement parking garages? Do you want Eugene's downtown to reflect Eugene? Call the city manager, mayor and council (682-5010) to let them know what you think before it's too late.

• Attention has focused on sleek and elegant new designs for the I-5 replacement bridge across the Willamette River. But what about the old bridge? How about a **hanging garden**? Shelburne Falls, Mass. converted an old bridge to a "bridge of flowers" and a major tourist attraction. Cover the old I-5 span with dirt, and Eugene could have an even bigger hanging garden and tourist attraction. The bridge is plenty sturdy for a garden, already has ramp access and could be connected to the bike path; ODOT would do a lot more environmental damage ripping it down than just leaving it up as a hanging park.

• Oregon's livability, environment and rural scenery are threatened by the thousands of sprawling subdivisions, gravel pits and shopping malls unleashed by **Measure 37**. Some of the proposed legislative "fixes" could make the disaster worse by resolving outstanding legal uncertainties in the law in favor of quick development. Now is the time for citizens to reclaim their state from the developers. Measure 37 opponents plan to rally against Measure 37 on Sat., April 14 from 10 am to 2 pm on the Capitol steps in Salem with buses leaving earlier from Eugene. Call 431-7059 or visit www.fix37.org for information.



• **Naked tree huggers?** Letter-writer Dan Owen in our March 29 issue complained about our sexual content and suggested we might as well "stop the pretense and go ahead and have a center fold." Maybe run photos of naked women hugging trees. Foolishly, we tacked on a note saying: "Great idea." Well, photos are coming in of naked women and men, and yep, they're hugging trees. Some are old photos, some are new; some black and white, some color. The quality varies, and color is rarely available in this section of the paper, so we've decided to put them on our website for the best viewing. Look for them at www.eugeneweekly.com – and send us more.

• Bike along the Fern Ridge path this spring and listen to the **West Eugene wetlands**. A meadowlark flutes a twitter. "Biscuit-eater!" sings a red-wing blackbird. A cloud of geese cackles and circles overhead. On a log sits a silent pond turtle. Snowy egrets and great blue heron tiptoe through the marshes, spearing frogs that won't join the chorus tonight. Grasses sway in the freshly washed breeze. Now think of what this would have been like with a freeway through it. Smile at progress.

• **Gov. Kulongoski** added another star to his legacy of judicial appointments last Monday in Salem with the investiture of Tim Sercombe to the Oregon Court of Appeals. A 1976 graduate of the UO law school, Sercombe first practiced in Eugene, honing his skills in land use and government law. He moved to Portland more than 15 years ago, continuing to practice in those specialties, even serving as president of the board of 1000 Friends of Oregon. Justice Sercombe was "robed" by his wife, Jane Van Boskirk, a former Eugene actress still famous for her one-woman shows depicting Eleanor Roosevelt, stalwart pioneer women, and others. One dismal fact repeated in the otherwise joyous swearing-in of the new judge: Oregon is the 50th state in salaries paid to its judges.

Happening people

BY PAUL NEEVEL

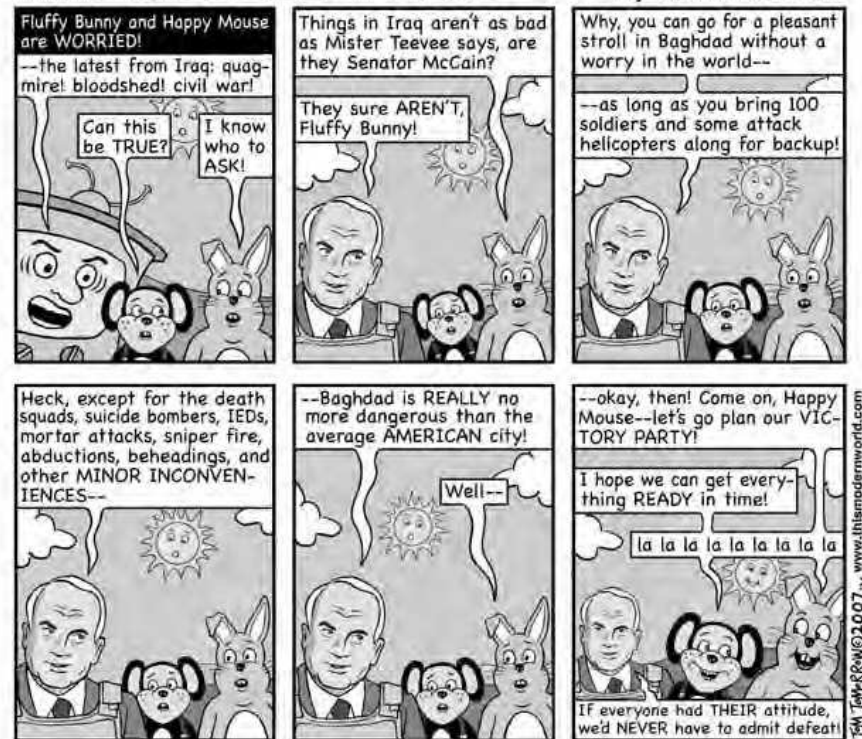
IRIS BICKSLER

When her best friend became pregnant at age 19, South Eugene grad Iris Bicksler wanted to help. "I called a midwifery school in town and learned about becoming a doula," she says. Doula is a new word for the ancient practice of women supporting other women through pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. A midwife works with the physical side of birth while a doula provides emotional and educational support. "I did the training and became a birth junkie," says Bicksler, who was also pursuing a women's studies degree at the UO. "I helped with friends and worked for free with teen clients." She married Ben Dechter, now a third-grade teacher, in 2000, and gave birth at home to their kids Sophia and Lucas. "Giving birth and being a mom helps me connect with the women I work with," she says. In 2004, Bicksler joined with doulas Shea Hardy, Bess Day, and Lisa Rignell to found Doulas Supporting Teens, a nonprofit group that collaborates with teen parent programs in five local schools. "We also offer a mentorship program," says Bicksler. "Three of our teen parents have become doulas."



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

COUNCILORS CALL FOR COP INVESTIGATION

The Eugene City Council should take action to hold police accountable for the Magaña/Lara sex abuse scandal, two city councilors said at their April 9 meeting.

Last month the city manager and police chief released their consultant's report that they said proves their contention that no police officer or other city official should face investigation, discipline or reprimand for failing in the hiring and supervision of the two convicted officers, Roger Magaña and Juan Lara. Attorneys for some of the officers' more than dozen sex abuse victims over six years called the report a "whitewash."

Councilor Bonny Bettman said it's now up to the council to take action to direct a better investigation. When the officer scandal broke, "both the city manager and the police chief said there will be a complete, exhaustive internal investigation," Bettman said. "This report is not that."

Councilor Betty Taylor said she agreed that the council should act. "A lot of people were dissatisfied and thought the report didn't really do anything," she said. "It's up to us to do something." — Alan Pittman

EUGENE LAGS IN BAGGING PLASTIC BAGS

Eugene may be falling behind other cities when it comes to eco-friendly policies.

Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams is considering a proposal to ban plastic bags as early as this summer. Portland was also one of the first cities to ban Styrofoam cups and serving containers.

Portland is following in the footsteps of San Francisco. Recently, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance that would ban plastic bags in grocery stores and pharmacies. Mayor Gavin Newsom is expected to sign the bill into law.

Last month in Corvallis, eight-year-old Jesse Marley lobbied Mayor Charlie Tomlinson to require shoppers to pay 25 cents each time they use a new plastic grocery bag.

While San Francisco is the first major city in the US to consider a plastic bag ban, several native villages in Alaska have already instituted bans on the use of plastic bags.

San Francisco's ordinance would require stores to provide reusable bags made of canvas or heavier plastic, to use biodegradable plastic bags or to provide bags made out of recyclable paper.

According to Adams' blog, paper bags are not necessarily the solution. Paper bags take four times as much energy to manufacture as plastic, and the production generates more air and water pollutants. They are made from wood pulp, which means that not only are greenhouse gas-reducing trees cut down for the paper, but the manufacture of the bags produces even more greenhouse gases, leading to global warming. Paper bags also require 91% more energy to recycle than plastic bags.

Plastic bags are made from petroleum, a nonrenewable resource. The U.S. uses 12 million barrels of oil a year to make billions of plastic bags, which become one of the largest sources of urban litter. San Francisco alone uses 181 million plastic bags every year. Plastic bags often wash into waterways where they flow out to sea and are blamed for



Bonny Bettman