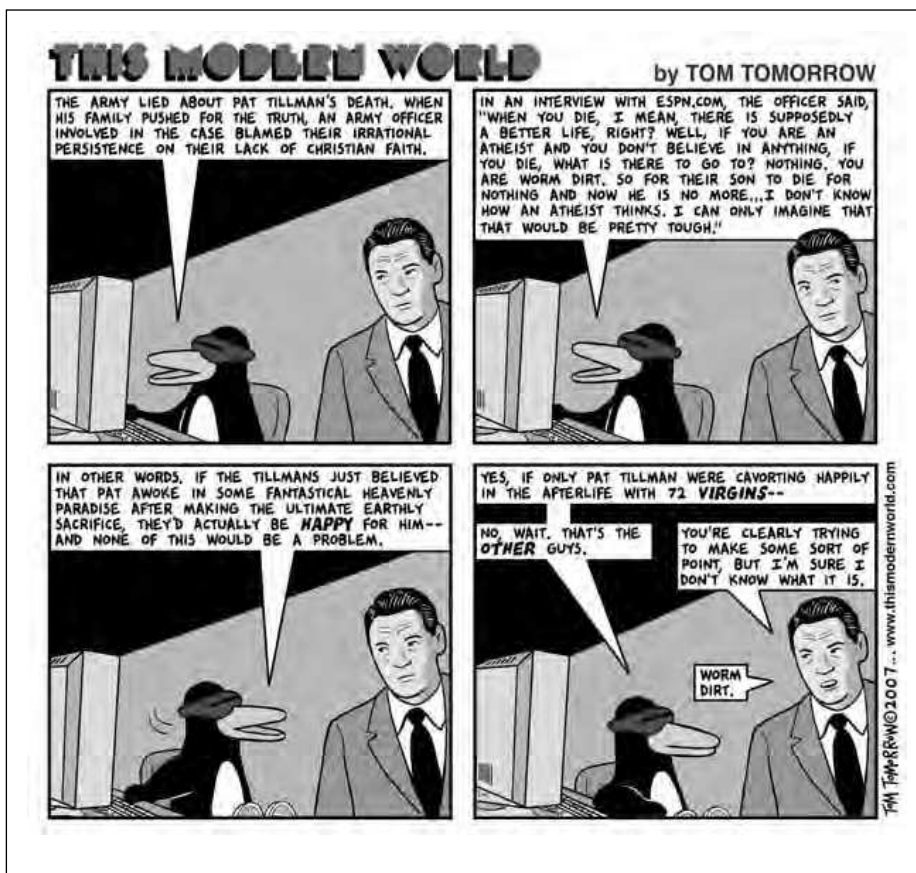
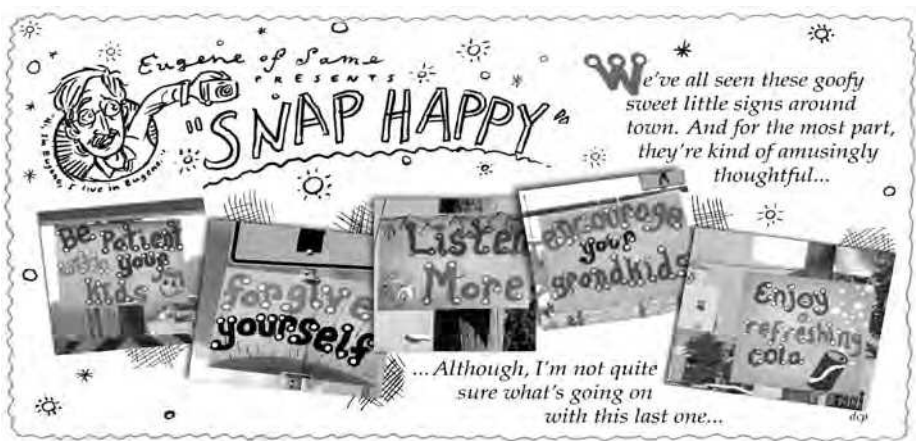


- **Ballots are arriving** in mail boxes this week, and the biggie on the ballot is the Lane County income tax, a topic we've written about extensively in past issues. Haven't made up your mind yet on this complex and contentious issue? Next week we'll provide one final analysis, along with our election endorsements, so stay tuned. Voting deadline is May 15.
- When **Nicholas Kristof** joined in a panel on the UO campus last Monday, the Lane County Coalition for Darfur came up as one of the vehicles for individuals to join to do something about the genocide in Darfur. What to do: Educate people, circulate petitions, push political leaders, send humanitarian aid to refugee camps to show that somebody cares, donate money. *The New York Times* columnist has written and spoken thousands of words about the terrible atrocities in the African region in western Sudan, but he still says it is "not an intractable problem," pointing to both President Bush and China as key players in a solution. Importing 8 percent of its oil from Sudan, China is reluctant to pressure the government sponsoring the genocide. Bush seems to have his own oil-based problems. Our local intense two-day discussion of "Witnessing Genocide: Representation and Responsibility" showed the UO at its best. Faculty joined with guests such as Kristof and Samantha Power in lectures and panels to take that first critical step to educate people.
- **Two pudgy thumbs up** for Eugene. One, for bringing back the marathon and running it through so many cheering Sunday morning neighborhoods (see below). Two, for pulling together the most diverse voices Monday night to talk about downtown Eugene in, symbolically, the beautiful new library in downtown Eugene. Alan Pittman tells the news story this week in *EW*, but we want to extend high praise to the organizers: Mary O'Brien, representing Citizens for Public Accountability; Kevin Matthews, Friends of Eugene; Dave Hauser and Gary Wildish, Eugene Chamber of Commerce; Alexis Garrett, Eugene Redevelopment Advisory Committee; Nan Laurence and Bill Sullivan, Eugene city staff; Alan Zelenka and colleagues on the council; and, of course, Mayor Piercy and Manager Taylor supporting the total effort. We recognize that the prospect of profit probably is most important in bringing back the center of the city, but public values must be figured in the formula. That's why the Monday meeting was so important.
- We were excited to see the **return of the Eugene Marathon** this past weekend. Long-distance running in America has been shaped into what it is today thanks to Eugene residents in years past and present (think Steve Prefontaine, Bill Bowerman, Phil Knight and now UO track stars Rebekah Noble and Galen Rupp). With the 2008 Olympic trials turning the heat up a notch, it was only fitting that this premiere race would get its due. However, it was a break from the past when race organizers charted the race course to start on Agate Street and end outside the UO's football stadium. In the '80s, marathon runners finished at the historic Hayward Field, in tribute both to the sport and to the runners who have finished there. We hope future Eugene marathons add a Hayward finish to set this race back on a more dignified course.
- Cough, cough, **what are they smoking?** The state Legislature has once again failed to stop field burning. Citizens now need to light their own fire under Salem's feet with an initiative petition to ban field burning. Signatures and donations wouldn't be hard to find; just get the list of the thousands of people who have complained about the billowing clouds. If the threat of an initiative for an outright ban fails to get the Legislature to compromise on a quick phase out, send the issue to a vote.
- The silence of the politicians on **gun control** after the Virginia Tech massacre is deafening. There appear to be more calls for arming everyone for campus shootouts (imagine the frat parties!) than for any new restrictions on handguns with endless clips of hollow-points. Rational politicians know the public interest would be served by imposing restrictions on these weapons of mass destruction, but few politicians are willing to confront the strident and well-funded NRA. What can we do? Kudos to Betsy Steffensen and Eugene's Neighborhoods for Peace for persuading Gov. Kulongoski to declare May 2007 "Family Gun Safety Month." Let's join these folks in raising public awareness of gun safety issues in the Million Mom March coming up May 13.
- We heard from reader John All Burgess Jr. that at three minutes and four seconds after 2 am on May 6 the time and date will be **02:03:04 05/06/07** on the 24 hour clock. "This will never happen again," he says, "so enjoy the moment."



news Briefs

'ECO-TERROR' PRIORITIZED OVER CRIME

After a small group of radicals began damaging property in the name of the environment, the Bush administration's FBI labeled them "terrorists" and made pursuing them a top priority.

In late 2002, the FBI assigned 30 agents to a Eugene task force investigating the string of arsons, a federal prosecutor told the *Village Voice*.

But prioritizing the prosecution of environmentally motivated property destruction appears to have left more serious crimes unpunished.

The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported last month that the Bush administration's focus on "terrorism" investigations has left thousands of white-collar criminals, hate-mongers, and civil rights abusers unprosecuted, "leaving a trail of frustrated victims and potentially billions of dollars in fraud and theft losses."

White collar and civil rights investigations have dropped by two-thirds as 2,400 FBI agents were transferred to “counterterrorism” squads such as the one in Eugene, the *Seattle P-I* investigation found.

The Seattle paper estimated that 2,000 white collar criminals got away due to the drop in prosecution. Many of the swindlers’ victims were the poor and elderly, the paper noted. Civil Rights investigations of police brutality by the FBI have also dropped, according to the *Seattle P-I*.

Eugene police also made the environmental sabotage a top priority, although the department has refused to say how much time

and money were spent on the investigation. At a time the EPD was ignoring complaints from women about a police officer later sentenced for a sex crime spree and complaining it lacked resources to investigate burglaries, domestic violence and car and bike thefts, the EPD sent an officer to New York to investigate environmental radicals.

— Alan Pittman

EMISSIONS MAY CAUSE CANCER

The chemicals in the air near the J.H. Baxter wood treatment plant in northwest Eugene not only smell bad and bother nearby residents, but a recent report said some of the chemicals may cause cancer.

The Oregon Department of Human Services recently released a report on J.H. Baxter prepared by the Oregon Public Health Division and the Superfund Health Investigation and Education Program (SHINE). In 2003 the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) requested SHINE look into emissions from J.H. Baxter, but SHINE determined there was not enough information to decide if the airborne chemicals were a public health hazard.

SHINE has now conducted a follow-up report on the emissions. This report was based on air samples collected by LRAPA. Several chemicals from the wood-preserving process, including naphthalene, were detected in the air samples. Chemicals from the plant have also been found in groundwater, soil and surface water. But the report concluded that residents were not likely to have health problems as a result of long-term exposure to J.H. Baxter's emissions.

In the course of that investigation, neighborhood residents asked SHINE also to look into the rates of acute myelogenous leukemia and brain cancer in the area. SHINE is also looking into nasal and lung cancers.

The levels of naphthalene — a possibly cancer-causing chemical — found do exceed health guidelines. But according to the report these guidelines are "health protective," and