

• **Eugene City Manager Dennis Taylor** announced last week that he's leaving. We're not surprised. Taylor has been absent for several key meetings in recent weeks, was rejected for a city manager job last year in a smaller town in Kansas and has clashed with progressive councilors during his tenure. Criticisms include: opposition to the vote for independent police review; withholding information from elected officials; putting the city bureaucracy's interests over the community's; and setting policy instead of following council direction on policy. Perhaps Taylor's greatest failure was not fully investigating the police department's failure to stop a long sex crime spree by officers against women. When EPD desperately needed a shakeup, the police instead got the message that ignoring officer misconduct will be tolerated.

But enough about Taylor; what about Eugene? Eugene needs a better manager: one who supports democracy above bureaucracy or developers; one who supports independent police review and is open to other democratic reforms of the manager's excessive, unbalanced powers. Eugene also needs an independent city performance auditor and an independent, in-house city attorney hired by the City Council to save money and increase accountability. These are reforms that a string of previous city managers have actively opposed. Our next city manager must be open to having his or her job description change to reflect our growing city. The council should move quickly in an open process to find this ideal manager.

• **The Iraq War will continue for years** and will escalate until it engulfs the Middle East and perhaps beyond while we twiddle our collective thumbs. Compromise and capitulation are the operative words as Congress and the White House pussyfoot around war funding. The solution seems simple: No funding, no war. Bush can't veto a funding bill that never makes it to his desk. But of course things are never simple, and we only get glimpses of the politics going on behind the headlines. We heard from Peter DeFazio last week saying, "It seems that only the president, his allies in Congress, and the leaders of Iran want the U.S. to remain mired in the civil war in Iraq, which is sapping our military and diplomatic strength."

Meanwhile, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported May 22 that Bush's "second surge" of troops in Iraq is on track to quietly add nearly 100,000 more combat troops by the end of the year.

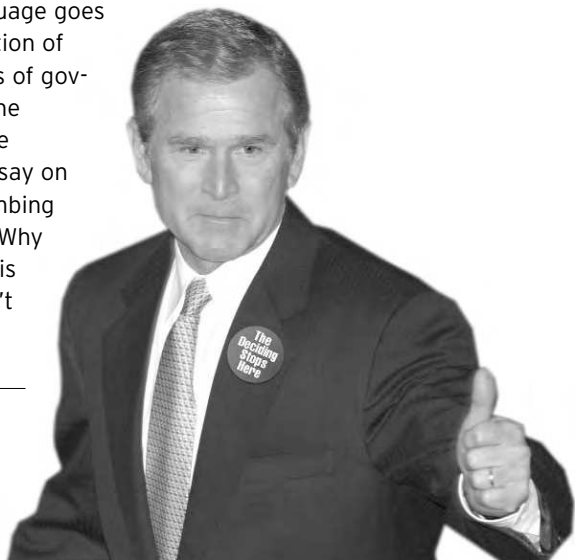
Despite the confusion and speculation, we do know a few things for certain: Our occupation of Iraq has destabilized an already volatile Middle East, emboldened our enemies and created new enemies, squandered our human and financial resources in vain, seriously damaged our reputation and credibility as a world power and shaken the fundamentals of our democracy at home.

Why are we as a society not outraged and demanding decisive action from our congressional lawmakers? Our sacrifices to date are too subtle. Unless we personally know someone damaged by this war, we remain comfortably numb at home, watching the war on TV but not seeing and smelling the rotting bodies. We have no gas or food rationing, no higher taxes, no draft. News media focus not on the brutality and futility of this war but rather on celebrity gossip and consumerism.

Where are our leaders? Democrats in Congress are still trying on their newly acquired powers and remain timid under Republican threats. Stopping this atrocity needs to come from the bottom up. So far the public's roar is just a rumble. It's time to take to the streets.

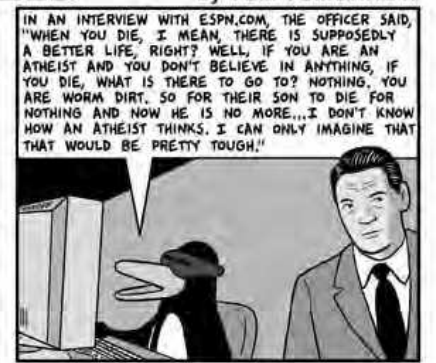
• Has anybody read the latest **National Security Presidential Directives** to come out of the White House? They pop up in a Google search. One of the latest directives involves Homeland Security and appears to give Bush dictatorial powers in the event of a "national emergency," which is not defined. The section on "Enduring Constitutional Government" states that in an emergency the president will "coordinate" a "cooperative effort among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government." The language goes on to talk about the separation of powers among the branches of government, but in the end, "The Decider" could become "The Coordinator," with the final say on huge decisions, such as bombing Iran or canceling elections. Why would the neo-cons want this executive power if they don't plan to use it?

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



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

BEAM KEEPS LOCAL FOCUS

In redeveloping downtown, Beam Development will keep its independence from KWG Development Partners and its focus on providing affordable, historic space for a diverse, local mix of businesses and nonprofits, according to Beam principal Brad Malsin.

Malsin said such a local, diverse, community-oriented project was what originally attracted his firm to Eugene. "We think Eugene is one of those cities that has not sold out their heart and soul," he said. "We're just not going to roll over."

The Eugene City Council voted last month to reject calls for a public process before committing to Portland developers Beam and KWG's plans for a massive redevelopment downtown. Beam had proposed a historic restoration of the Centre Court and Washburne buildings with affordable rents while KWG had proposed a much larger project, tearing down several blocks to build a mall-like, upscale shopping area.

After the vote City Manager Dennis Taylor said Beam had agreed to work together with KWG on its redevelopment plan for downtown. "It may be that they'll form a limited partnership."

But Malsin said a KWG-Beam merger won't happen. "We're two distinct, separate firms," he said. "We're in control of our blocks."

Malsin said Beam has focused on community-oriented historic rehabs in Portland. "We have a different way of seeing the world," he said. "We don't do the shopping mall kind of deals."

Beam has rehabbed more challenging

warehouse buildings in Portland, converting buildings that many said should be torn down into highly valued attractions, according to Malsin. He said he'd "be surprised" if the Washburne Building couldn't be similarly rehabbed.

Malsin said his firm remains interested in possibly putting housing units in the Centre Court building and set-back, live/work units on top of the Washburne Building. He said it's not decided yet whether Beam or KWG will develop the adjacent pit known as Aster's hole.

But Malsin said much depends on what the community wants in the upcoming public planning process for downtown. "We're totally committed to the public process."

— Alan Pittman

NO ANSWERS TO HIGHER CANCER RATE

Contamination in the soil, groundwater and air from industrial pollution has long been a problem in the Bethel, River Road and Trainsong neighborhoods.

Last month the Superfund Health Investigation and Education Program (SHINE) division of the Oregon Department of Human Services completed a health investigation to reevaluate the public health risks of exposure to hazardous air emissions from the J.H. Baxter creosote plant.

Despite detecting elevated levels of naphthalene, a polycyclic carbon compound that the EPA classifies as a possible human carcinogen, SHINE concluded that exposure to emissions from J.H. Baxter poses a low risk for developing long-term health problems. Eugene residents and workers continue to express concern about nose and eye irritation and elevated cancer rates.

To address community concerns, SHINE collaborated with the Oregon State Cancer Registry (OSCaR) to monitor inci-