

• **The timing is irritating as hell.** Lane County commissioners are finally taking action to move the Fairgrounds to a new location in West Eugene, way too late for PeaceHealth's medical center relocation and too late for McKenzie-Willamette's new hospital. Or is it? As we've editorialized before in this column, the Fairgrounds would be an excellent site for a new hospital – and McKenzie-Willamette's chosen site nearly four miles north of downtown is absurdly inconvenient for patients, visitors and employees. Plus, the siting dispute is likely to end up in court even if it makes it through the upcoming City Council vote.

A hospital on West 13th would provide easy access from downtown, south and west Eugene, western Lane County, and freeways via the Washington-Jefferson bridge. Doctors who see patients at PeaceHealth's Hilyard campus would find a Fairgrounds hospital site conveniently just 13 blocks away, about a mile. The distance for doctors to travel between RiverBend and the proposed RiverRidge Golf Course site is about five miles, with at least two sometimes clogged intersections to negotiate.

Neighbors in the Fairgrounds area might object to a medical center in their midst, but something busier and noisier than a hospital could be built if the land is sold to the highest bidder and rezoned commercial or mixed-use.

• **Regarding the terrorist label debate,** we heard a different perspective from an anonymous reader who felt betrayed by one of the convicted eco-saboteurs she had befriended. She says she herself was dragged into the investigation and now fears retaliation if she speaks out publicly. "These people are far more dangerous because they hide their intentions and actions behind a phony, lying facade of being gentle and loving. Exposing innocent lives to risk of death by fire or starving is neither gentle nor loving," she wrote, referring to the arsons and freeing of caged animals. "I feel I was personally terrorized, as was the community I live in. Yes, they ARE terrorists."

• **It's always amusing to read about Eugene** and our part of the country in the national press. Charles McGrath of *The New York Times* wrote a piece in the May *Golf Digest* describing a winter outing at the Bandon Dunes golf resort on the south coast. Instead of flying through Portland, as suggested by conventional wisdom, as he put it, "We landed in Eugene, where standard headgear is the logging cap, and drove west for a bit through Ken Kesey country, a rainforest of towering, moss-draped pines, and then south for a couple of hours along the Umpqua River, where all the fishing docks were empty. I cracked the window while passing through North Bend, where giant mounds of sawdust heaped the wharf, waiting to be loaded onto freighters; the whiff of cedar was so strong it was like driving through a pencil sharpener." Hey, you in the "logging cap," do you recognize that place?

• **A dozen EW staffers** got out of town to attend the annual convention for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies this past weekend in downtown Portland, hosted by *Willamette Week*. The confab is usually held in far-distant cities. We got to hang out with Arianna Huffington, David Iglesias, Jim Hightower, Ron Wyden, John Callahan and Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, schmooze with hip alt paper folks from around the country, ride the new aerial tram, eat salmon until we grew gills, prowl the roaring clubs and cheer on the huge and outrageous Portland Pride parade with its lively Eugene-Springfield contingency.

One big highlight was winning our **first national journalism award**. Former *EW* reporter Kera Abraham garnered a third-place feature writing award for her series "Flames of Dissent." Pardon our bragging, but this gives *EW* a total of 19 journalism awards to date for 2006 content, and we still have one more statewide contest to go.

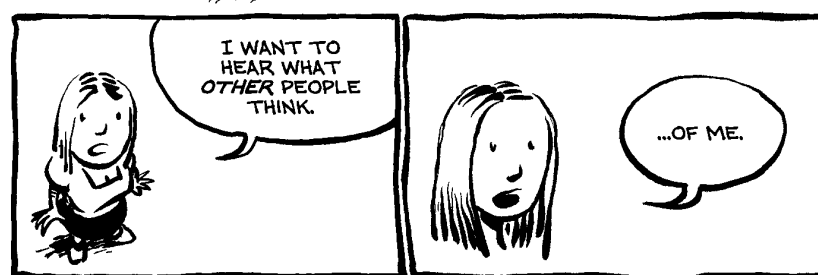
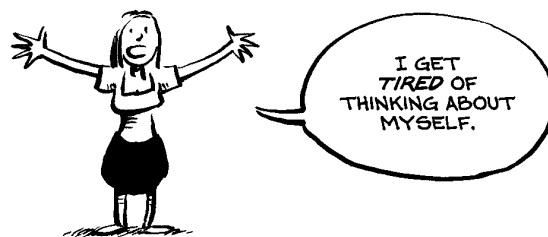
• **When the governor of New York** keynoted a fundraiser for the governor of Washington last week in Seattle, Eliot Spitzer praised citizen activists, singling out environmental activists "who have led the way." He said we stand on the shoulders of grassroots activists who have led the various rights movements in this country. Those were provocative comments from a former New York attorney general in this region where activism of any kind, especially environmental, often is suspect.

• **What's up with City Hall planning?** We hear the master planning for Eugene's new City Hall is going ahead. We're not convinced Eugene needs a new City Hall in light of other needs, but city staff and the council are charging ahead. Providing office space for the new police auditor and Office of Sustainability means city offices are scattered over 10 locations downtown. Councilors met this week to talk about financing options for buying the county's "butterfly" parking garage and the Rock N Rodeo site. To comment on the proposed new City Hall and separate new police station, email comments@eugene-cityhall.com or phone 682-5222.

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

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



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news Briefs

Tango Center, Mary Unruh of DIVA, Noa O'Hare of the Farmers' Market, builder Rob Bolman, River Road activist Jan Spencer, David Monk of CPA and numerous citizens and students.

Among other ideas, they discussed the need for small parks and open spaces in the redevelopment; the removal of parking meters; maintaining the alleyway view and pedestrian traffic between Broadway Plaza and the library; maintaining downtown's art and artists; and concerns about a Whole Foods-type market affecting local grocery stores.

The group also discussed ideas about rehabilitating older buildings, including one-story structures, rather than bulldozing them. Other suggestions included bringing back the vendor carts and subsidizing the higher rents existing businesses face in moving into new buildings.

"Many participants expressed opposition to the current large redevelopment plan being considered by City Council," said Lynn Reichman of CPA, "and voiced concerns for the viability of downtown businesses that would be dislocated or otherwise harmed by such a large construction project."

"The public space across from the library is the most important urban space the city can design at this point," said architect Paz. "It's 'the' space. It is [like] what trans-

PIT TO PIT DRAWS BIG TURNOUT

An estimated 150 to 200 people gathered downtown June 15 for Citizens for Public Accountability's (CPA) "Pit to Pit Walk," and many of them expressed strong opinions about development on West Broadway. For the walk, CPA invited the public to join local officials, architects and others to view the area encompassing West Broadway and the two excavated pits known locally as "Lake Sears" and "Aster's Hole."

City staffers Susan Muir and Nan Laurence spoke to the crowd, along with architects Art Paz and Jerry Diethelm. Other voices included City Councilor Betty Taylor, George Brown of the Kiva, Realtors Sue and Hugh Prichard, Greg Bryant of the

DIVA Director Mary Unruh addresses the crowd downtown.

