



## REPORT FROM FORT BENNING

A local delegation of peace activists have returned from Fort Benning, Ga., where they protested outside the gates of the School of the Americas (SOA), which has been renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). The annual demonstration draws thousands of activists calling for the permanent closing of the facility, known for training hundreds of Latin American dictators, military officers and death squads.

The group included Fred Thomas, a retired police officer; Shelley Bowerman, a UO international studies student; Sister John Backenstos, SNJM, a retired nun and English teacher; and Peg Morton, a Quaker scholar. Morton served a three-month sentence in a federal prison in 2004 for engaging in criminal trespass on the base.

A U.N. Truth Commission in the 1980s uncovered the relation of SOA graduates and atrocities in Latin America. The struggle to close the school began soon after that under the leadership of Father Roy Bourgeois.

This year the crowd of around 20,000 was about half high school and college students, says Morton. It "included organizations from union to veteran to religious, from Iraq concerns to vegan and marriage for priests," she says. "On the stage was a huge banner of Rufina Maya, who died earlier this year. She was the sole survivor of the 1980 El Mozote massacre of 800 in El Salvador. Hidden behind a bush, she listened to her children crying out, 'Mama, they are killing us!' She devoted the remainder of her life to informing the world of this massacre," reportedly involving SOA-trained Salvadoran army soldiers.

"There are half a million survivors of torture currently living in the U.S., seeking healing and urging, demanding, that our country end the practice and promotion of torture," says Morton. "We were reminded of the torture manuals found to be used in the SOA. And we were reminded that the atrocities continue, in Colombia, in Haiti and elsewhere."

Eleven people were arrested this year and will join the 226 who have served prison sentences and 51 who have served probations and home confinement related to the protests.

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



## news Briefs

### MEASURE 20-134 FELL CITYWIDE

Eugene's urban renewal Measure 20-134, which would have authorized an additional \$40 million in subsidies for downtown redevelopment, failed because it was rejected by progressive south Eugene voters normally supportive of government.

The urban renewal measure failed in all of the city's south Eugene precincts except two, a tiny downtown precinct and the Fairmount neighborhood, where

the measure squeaked past with 51 percent. Citywide, the developer subsidy failed in 32 out of 34 precincts. Citywide, 64 percent voted no.

Historically, the city's progressive south Eugene precincts have been key to passing city measures. A strong yes vote in these neighborhoods has often overcome frequent anti-tax voting in more conservative west and north Eugene.

But the vote on 20-134 was different. In one Friendly neighborhood precinct in south Eugene, for example, 64 percent voted no for urban renewal. But in the same precinct last year the vote was reversed with 65 percent supporting a parks bond measure.

In a total of eight progressive south Eugene precincts, the spread between the parks vote and urban renewal vote was greater than 25 percent. Thousands of usually pro-tax voters voted no to the urban renewal subsidy. Even in the one large precinct to support the measure, the 51 percent yes vote in Fairmount was

## CHRISTMAS GOES TO THE DOGS

It's cold out, and while there's no snow on the ground here in the Willamette Valley, a Eugene-based dog and cat adoption group, Save the Pets, is hoping you may want a furry friend to keep you warm this Christmas. They've teamed up with Lane County Animal Services (LCAS) and other rescue groups to try and find homes for 100 of Lane County's homeless pets in December.

Save the Pets will be at PetSmart every weekend from 11 am to 3 pm through December with dogs and cats needing homes. They're calling this campaign "Home for the Holidays."

As part of the campaign, LCAS has dropped their cat adoption fee to \$78 for boy kitties and \$63 for girl kitties – neutered or spayed, of course. Dog adoptions

range from about \$57 to \$132. If you mention "Home for the Holidays" at the shelter, LCAS will throw in a free pet picture.

If you can't fit a pup or a kitty into your life right now, you can contribute to the Bearen Foundation's eighth annual "Presents for Pets" drive (think Toys for Tots, only for critters).

The group has placed barrels at pet stores and veterinarians' offices around town to be filled with new and used toys, blankets and other pet items for the homeless pets at LCAS. Food and medical items must be unopened.

Go to [www.bearenfoundation.org](http://www.bearenfoundation.org) to find out more about Presents for Pets. You can find out more about Save the Pets at [www.savethepets.net](http://www.savethepets.net) and go to



[www.lanecounty.org/animals/impound](http://www.lanecounty.org/animals/impound) to see adoptable animals from pugs to kittens.

– Camilla Mortensen