

PITCHFORK REBELLION VS. THE WOPR

The Pitchfork Rebellion, a coalition of forest-dwellers who originally got together to stop the spraying of herbicides near their homes, is now up against the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) which, according to Day Owen, will increase logging by 700 percent.

Owen and the Rebellion are holding a rally to stop the WOPR at noon Friday, Dec. 21 in front of the new U.S. Courthouse, 405 East 8th Avenue.

"Clearcutting is linked to the aerial spray of herbicides," says Owen. "We're already being sprayed by the private industry. If BLM was to get their preferred option, Alternative 2, that would also increase the use of herbicides by a huge amount," he says.

After the rally, Owen and others plan to head over to the Eugene BLM office on Chad Drive and gather again at 2:30 pm. There they will seek to hand over a statement requesting the BLM not act on the WOPR until completion of the Interior Department's investigation into endangered species decisions influenced by former Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie MacDonald. The investigation, demanded by Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, includes decisions about old-growth species like the northern spotted owl.

Speakers at the noon rally include Owen, former Congressman Jim Weaver, as well as activists and forest-dwellers. — *Camilla Mortensen*

WHITEAKER ELECTIONS

The power base appears to be changing in Eugene's Whiteaker neighborhood. Until last week's neighborhood elections, some Whiteaker residents were concerned that their "collective voice" was not being represented by a majority on the Whiteaker Community Council (WCC).

The neighborhood faces the prospect of condominiums and new home developments, according to a flyer that went out to Whiteaker homes last Tuesday. The development debate is in response to the Eugene City Council's Neighborhood Initiative Plan, which seeks to increase density in existing neighborhoods "thoughtfully." A number of the neighbors feared that they wouldn't have input on development in the Whiteaker.

Other neighborhood issues include planning bus rapid transit routes, the development of a railroad quiet zone, ways of dealing with homelessness and green neighborhoods, said Whiteaker resident Kari Johnson.

According to Marcella Monroe, at-large member of the WCC, "It is really important our neighborhood association doesn't become disempowered."

The board majority had reduced WCC board meetings to once every three months instead of once a month, said Monroe, and changed the WCC's long-standing "open community discussion" to what the flyer calls a "tightly controlled agenda prepared by the board."

The WCC held midterm elections Dec. 12 to fill six vacant board positions and elect a vice chair and secretary. The previous vice chair resigned in June, citing "a consolidation of power" and "the active exclusion of particular ideas and individuals" in a letter of resignation.

Some residents were worried a contentious meeting would be held the day of the elections, said Johnson, but the city facilitator was "fantastic," and council candidates gave "rousing speeches."

After the elections, with a new majority in place on the council, the "concern is alleviated," said Majeska Seese-Green, one of the concerned neighbors. For election results, see the *EW's* Dec. 13 blog. — *Camilla Mortensen*

BLAME THE BEER FRIDGE

In case you missed the breaking eco-news on the *EW* blog: A recent scientific study has revealed that the use of "beer fridges" by our neighbors to the north has a direct link to a lack of energy savings. The study, entitled: "Who Pays for the 'Beer' Fridge?: Evidence from Canada" explores the energy waste generated by households that when purchasing a new refrigerator, turn their older "vintage" one into a "beer fridge."

"Beer fridge" is the term employed by University of Alberta economist Denise Young in her research. *EW* didn't make it up.

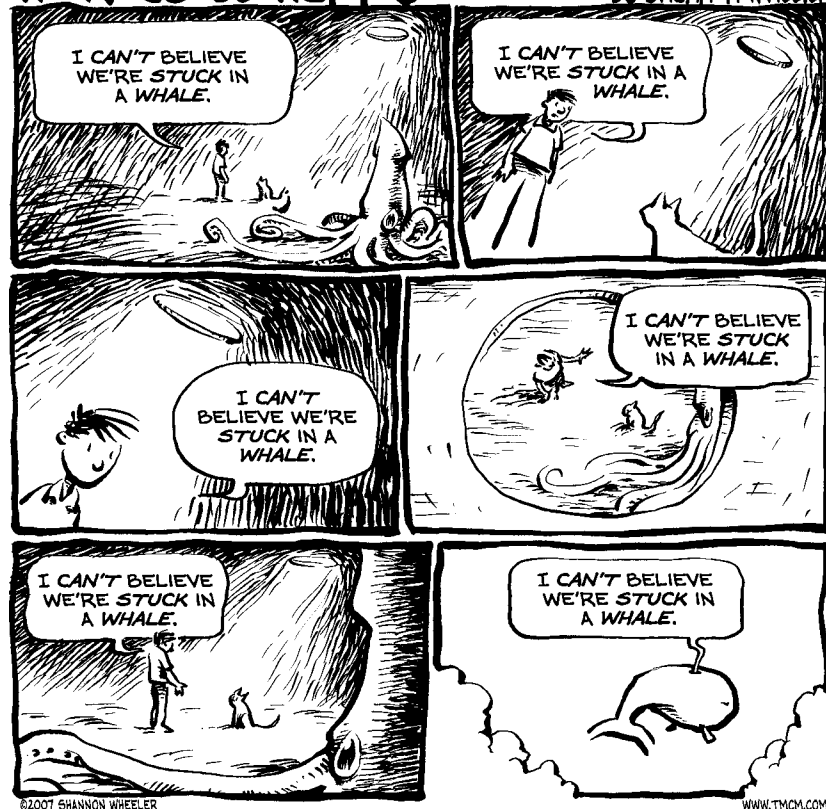
"Older vintage 'beer fridges' are costly for households to run and impose costs on the environment," writes Young in her study published in the journal *Energy Policy*.

Also in breaking eco-news is the study published online in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that says divorce is bad for the environment. The increasing numbers of divorces worldwide has led to more houses with fewer people in them.

The researchers found that divorce causes an increase in the number of houses constructed, which takes up energy and space. The new homes also use energy in heating and cooling.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



news Briefs

SURVEY SAYS ROAD TAX WON'T PASS

An \$81 million bond measure for road repair that the city of Eugene has proposed putting on the May ballot will likely fail, according to a recent city survey.

The survey last month found only 50 percent support for a smaller, \$65 million road property tax, well shy of the 60 percent the survey consultant said was needed for a money measure before an election.

More people would likely oppose a larger bond measure, according to city polling consult-

ant Barry Pack, who conducted the Nov. 14-18 survey of 400 likely voters. The margin of error was 5 percent.

"Fifty percent is not a great place to start a tax measure," Pack told the council Dec. 12. He noted that during a campaign it's easier to convince people not to vote for more taxes than to vote for them. To have a chance to pass, "starting around 60 percent would be a good place."

The Eugene Chamber of Commerce and council conservatives have pushed the property tax as a substitute for an earlier proposal for a tax on parking spaces that would have shifted more of the tax burden from home owners to big box stores that generate high road use.

The council voted to pursue the road property tax, the largest tax increase in the city's history, after the road gas tax failed in November.

The survey showed that likely voters are split evenly on whether Eugene is on the right track in general. Of voters who have heard of Mayor Kitty Piercy, 56 percent have a favorable opinion, a 4 percent drop from a survey six months earlier.

The City Council's favorable rating dropped from 47 to 44 percent. Of survey respondents, 82 percent said the council was doing only a fair



The researchers' 2005 data showed that divorced households used an extra 73 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity and 627 billion gallons of water when compared to married households.

All of this energy consumption leads, as almost everyone seems to agree these days, to greenhouse gases and global warming.

Now, if you just add "beer fridges" into the equation — assuming here that a certain percentage of newly single divorced folks may want to indulge in the "beer fridge" practice — then you're talking about a lot of polar bears sliding into the sea off of the melting polar ice thanks to drinking and divorce.

Just what is the logical conclusion from these studies is not entirely clear, but perhaps it's save the earth by staying together — and drinking warm beer. — *Camilla Mortensen*