

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

2007
AN INCOMPLETE, SUBJECTIVE, AND ALTOGETHER INADEQUATE YEAR IN REVIEW
PART THE FIRST

JAN. 30: TOURING A CATERPILLAR PLANT, BUSH "DOKINGLY" TRIES TO RUN OVER REPORTERS WITH LARGE TRACTOR.
RUN--OR I'LL SQUASH YOU LIKE THE BUGS YOU ARE!
A HEARTY LAUGH IS ENJOYED BY ALL.

FEB. 18: WASHINGTON POST EXPOSES SHODDY CONDITIONS FOR VETS AT WALTER REED. CONSERVATIVES DRAW ONLY LOGICAL CONCLUSION: GOVERNMENT RUN HEALTH CARE DOESN'T WORK!

MARCH 9: AFTER YEARS OF ASSURANCES THAT THE PATRIOT ACT WOULD NEVER EVER BE ABUSED, WE LEARN THAT THE FBI HAS BEEN ABUSING THE PATRIOT ACT.
--AND WHO COULD HAVE EVER SEEN THAT ONE COMING?

APRIL 11: GOOPS! THOUSANDS OF SUBPOENAED WHITE HOUSE AND R.N.C. EMAILS HAVE BEEN "INADEVERTENTLY" DELETED!
THESE COMPUTER MACHINES ARE JUST SO DARNED COMPLICATED!

APRIL 19: ALBERTO GONZALES TESTIFIES THAT HE HAS A REALLY BAD MEMORY!
SORRY--WHAT DID YOU SAY MY NAME WAS?

APRIL 26: RUDY GIULIANI WARNS THAT AMERICA WILL BE AT RISK FOR A "NEW 9-11" IF DEMOCRATS WIN THE WHITE HOUSE.
VOTE FOR ME--OR YOU'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

APRIL 29: MITT ROMNEY SAYS HIS FAVORITE NOVEL IS "BATTLEFIELD EARTH."
A MAN-ANIMAL GAINING LEVERAGE OVER A PSY-CHLO?
HAH! THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN!

MAY 21: DEMOCRATS CAME ON WAR FUNDING, BUT VOW TO BE VERY, VERY SURLY AROUND THE PRESIDENT.
WHEN HE SAYS "HELLO," WE'LL JUST LOOK THE OTHER WAY! THAT'LL SHOW HIM!

JUNE 11: LARRY CRAIG IS ARRESTED FOR SOLICITING SEX IN AN AIRPORT BATHROOM; TRIES TO KEEP INCIDENT QUIET.
PEOPLE MIGHT GET THE WRONG IDEA!
WE WIDE-STANCERS ARE OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD!
SUCCEEDS FOR 13 WEEKS; AFTER THAT, NOT SO MUCH.

JUNE 11: BILL O'REILLY WARNS OF PINK-PISTOL-PACKING LESBIAN GANGS ROVING AMERICA'S CITIES, FORCIBLY INDOCTRINATING CHILDREN INTO THE HOMO-SEXUAL LIFESTYLE!
BE AFRAID! BE VERY AFRAID!

JULY 23: IT'S DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE QUESTIONED BY AN ANIMATED SNOWMAN!
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, COULD ANY OF YOU FEEL ANY MORE DEBASED THAN YOU DO AT THIS VERY MOMENT?

www.thismodernworld.com

news Briefs

BYRD REPORTS BACK FROM CLIMATE TALKS

If labor doesn't take a lead role in dealing with global warming, then business and industry will, turning solutions for global warming into a means for increasing corporate profit at the expense of workers, according to AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd.



Barbara Byrd

Byrd joined 85 other trade unionists from around the world, including 25 from unions in North America, at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bali earlier in December and reported back last week.

"I was struck by several things," Byrd told the union's *Weekly Update*. "First, the scientific evidence is overwhelming that global warming is occurring faster than expected, with devastating consequences. Even the Bush administration has finally acknowledged the scientific data.

"Second, the rest of the world, and our brothers and sisters in the global union movement, feel a great sense of urgency to deal with the climate crisis. We have much to learn from them.

"And finally, we have an opportunity to deal with the crisis in a way that will create jobs and increase social justice, not just here in the U.S. but around the world."

Byrd said the WTO was a strong presence in Bali, "trying to convince us that free trade will

solve global warming. We know what a false promise free trade has been when it comes to economic development in general. We must act now to move our own agenda of green jobs, social equity, and global solidarity."

Byrd called for convening a Blue Ribbon Committee on Climate Change to research the issue and help develop policy positions; participating in the governor's stakeholder meetings on the Western Climate Initiative; continuing to work with the Oregon Apollo Alliance around its green jobs agenda; and developing educational presentations for union affiliates.

More information can be found online (www.aflcio.org); search for "Bali."

RESENTENCING DATE SET FOR LUERS

A resentencing date has been set for convicted Eugene eco-arsonist Jeffrey "Free" Luers, who is now in the Lane County Jail. A hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 8 in Lane County Circuit Court, according to his supporters. The date is subject to change.

Space in the courtroom is very limited, so Luers' supporters are asking that only family and close friends plan to attend the hearing, and they are also asking that "things are kept low-key — any protest or similar activity would be acting against the wishes of Jeff and his family."

Earlier this year, the Oregon Court of Appeals reversed Luers' 22-year, eight-month sentence for setting fire to three SUVs

The Bush-appointed **Federal Communications Commission** voted this month to loosen media ownership rules and allow broadcast media owners in major markets to also own a newspaper. The FCC is claiming Americans now have a broad diversity of news sources available via the Internet and cable TV, so media monopolies are not really a problem. This vote came despite a massive public outcry against consolidation. What was the point of the long public hearings? The decision defied the concerns of 99 percent of those testifying.

Whoever controls the media controls the message, and when it comes to chain ownership of media, corporate accountants control the message through the budget. Investigative reporting is expensive. Foreign correspondents are expensive. Reharsing press releases is cheap. Big advertisers are not to be offended. There are exceptions, of course. A struggling locally owned newspaper or broadcast station might be bought out by a chain and actually *improve* its content through more professional management (eliminating nepotism) and an infusion of capital. But overall, consolidation has led to mainstream media providing less substantive content, and driving small, independent media out of the market. Twenty years ago, 29 major media owners shared a \$100 billion media enterprise. Today, six media conglomerates control a \$400 billion enterprise and thousands of investigative reporter positions have been cut. Democracy requires not only a healthy mix of voices, but also an army of journalists keeping a close eye on government, business and the arts.

What can be done about the FCC's arrogant decision? The commission may have snoozed through the public testimony, but the FCC cannot so easily ignore Congress. A bipartisan group of 26 U.S. senators has announced an effort to overrule the decision. The public can support this effort through contacting senators or participating in an online petition through MoveOn (www.moveon.org). Lawsuits are also in the works, though they could drag on for years.

Speaking of **media consolidation**, what's happening with Oregon Public Broadcasting's plans to buy KOPT-AM 1600, the local Air America affiliate? Will it affect local programming? We've asked both KOPT and OPB for updates but haven't heard much during the holidays. A few rumors are circulating. One rumor is that OPB does not have any plans for local programming — everything will be canned. But the FCC requires local broadcast stations to provide some public interest local programming. Whether OPB will do more than the minimum is the real issue. Another rumor is that KLCC is not really happy about the OPB expansion into its market despite public statements to the contrary. We checked with Steve Barton, the big cheese at KLCC, and he tells us there "probably are" some folks associated with the station "who aren't happy about this, but I'm definitely not one of those." He also thinks the "community can benefit by having OPB here."

Lane County listeners, depending on their location and equipment, can actually pick up six public radio stations. KLCC, KRVM, OPB, KWAX, JPR and KWVA can be found on the dial, according to Amy Pincus Merwin, who has the "Inform Radio" show on KWVA.

Air America in Lane County is about to go away as commercial KOPT becomes public radio KOPT. How about a group of local folks getting together to buy some struggling local radio station, pick up Air America and other national progressive programming and add local progressive talk every day? The nice thing about Air America programming is that it doesn't cost the station much since it comes packaged with national advertising. The KOPT commercial model of mixing local and national content might work with some tweaking.

Local public affairs programming, including progressive or centrist talk radio, is an important part of the media mix in any community. Will KLCC and/or OPB fill that gap? KLCC is promising changes as it moves to its new facilities Jan. 4, and the station is expanding its geographic reach with new transmitters. "We have discussed with OPB the possibility of expanding local talk programming," Barton tells us, "but it's still in the discussion stage."

Looking for bargains after Christmas? Support our advertisers, please, but also check out local thrift stores. So many people make year-end donations for tax purposes that the stores have more good merchandise than they can display. Buying used stuff is another great way to recycle.

We heard in an email from Bijou manager Louise Thomas that **Bijou owner Michael Lamont**, who opened our favorite art movie house in October of 1980, passed away on Dec. 22 at the age of 62. As we get more news, we'll post it to the blog (blogs.eugeneweekly.com). Our condolences to all at the Bijou and to Lamont's family.

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