

outcry from environmental and animal protection groups. The areas are in the Rogue Valley in southern Oregon, Malheur County in Eastern Oregon and near Heppner in north-central Oregon.

Although voters passed Measure 18 in 1994, banning the hunting of cougars with dogs, the agency continued to use agents with hounds to track and kill cougars. In 2007, the Oregon Legislature enacted HB 2971 to clarify the law. Now ODFW can use volunteer agents to hunt the big cats. But after a meeting of ODFW commissioners on Friday, Jan. 11, those agents cannot have a record of felony convictions, wildlife violations or violations of animal cruelty, animal abuse or domestic abuse laws.

According to Fahy, hunting cougars can aggravate rather than decrease problems with humans. To date, no human has been killed by a cougar in Oregon.

Cougar advocates fear the cougar kill numbers will continue to rise. Fahy says, "It's unprecedented. This is a slaughter."

Josh Laughlin of Cascadia Wildlands Project says, the group is "seriously considering" options, including "a legal challenge to the state and federal proposal that has begun to slaughter Oregon's big cats."

— Camilla Mortensen

## CALL CENTERS PREFER U.S. ACCENT

Eugene's downtown is getting a new Enterprise Rent-A-Car call center in the old Symantec building, and callers will have their questions answered in Pacific Northwest-accented English.

As it turns out, you don't have to call Eugene to get an accent from the West Coast. Companies are aware of the angry reactions some American customers have to an East Indian accent and are starting to train Indian workers

to speak like Americans in a process often called "accent neutralization."

Companies like Communicaid teach Indian workers to speak English without a British-influenced Indian accent. Microsoft began sending a Seattle-based language instructor to India in 2004 who asked her trainees to listen to NPR and watch Ken Burns documentaries to neutralize their accents. The trainees preferred watching movies like *Independence Day* and sitcoms, the *Seattle Times* reported.

Call center jobs pay well, both in Eugene and abroad. Enterprise workers can make \$37,000 a year including wages and benefits, the *R-G* reports, and an Associated Press article reports that Indian call center workers make more than employees in most other professions.

However, according to the AP article there is a trade-off. Indian call center employees are stressed out from late nights dealing with angry, rude American customers, and they are "facing sleep disorders, heart disease, depression and family discord."

— Camilla Mortensen

## CHALLENGING MILITARY'S MEDIA BLITZ

The U.S. military is facing a recruitment crisis, and without a draft in place, the Army is struggling to find enough new soldiers to fill its ranks. So the military has turned to public relations firms to create a massive advertising campaign.

In turn, peace activists are challenging the Pentagon PR blitz.

Two noted anti-war activists are coming to Eugene to talk about what

they call the "military recruitment complex" and give support to local peace activists countering local military recruitment efforts.



## Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

### THE REV. STEPHEN LANDALE

"I am passionate about making liberal religion a vital force in American society," says the Rev. Stephen Landale, who will be installed this month as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church in



Eugene. Raised in Williamsport, Penn., the youngest of 10 kids in a Roman Catholic family, Landale was introduced to the UU Church shortly after his 1990 graduation from Cornell with a degree in urban studies. "I was drawn to the focus on Jesus as a human exemplar rather than as the unique son of God," says Landale, who enrolled in UU's Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley. From 2001 through June of '07, he served his first settled ministry at the Bell Street Chapel in Providence, R.I. "My church was the first in the state to oppose the U.S. initiating war with Iraq," he notes. "For a couple of years, I was the most visible religious leader supporting equal marriage rights." Because of limited space at UU Eugene's East 40th facility, Landale's installment ceremony will be hosted by the First Christian Church, 1166 Oak St., at 4 pm Sunday, Jan. 27. See details at [www.uueugene.org](http://www.uueugene.org)

- We're pleased to hear that **McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center** won't be building its high-traffic new hospital at the end of a dead-end road north of town. This was a bad idea from day one. So where does the hospital go from here? McKenzie-Willamette's rival PeaceHealth is busy working to monopolize health care in the region by maintaining a nontrauma hospital at its old Eugene site while building a mega-hospital in north Springfield. From a marketing and accessibility standpoint, it makes sense for McKenzie-Willamette to build a high-rise hospital as close as possible to Eugene's population center. Most hospital stays involve a stream of family and friends. In addition, hundreds of doctors, nurses and other medical workers live in the south and southwest hills, not far from downtown. Less convenient, but still close to town and public transportation would be just about any site along Franklin Boulevard, even Glenwood.

- The *R-G* is once again egging on some sort of **development race to the bottom** between Eugene and Springfield. A recent *R-G* news story proclaimed the "starting bell" has rung in a fight between Eugene and Springfield for siting McKenzie-Willamette's new hospital. An *R-G* editorial followed, arguing that Eugene "often loses development competitions with Springfield." Really. That must be why Eugene's population growth rate has outpaced Springfield's since 1990 and why about two-thirds of Springfield's working folks work in Eugene. How about a race for most livable city?

- **Gas station owners in Eugene** are threatening to go to the voters again if the City Council doesn't sunset a temporary 2-cent-a-gallon fuel tax that was tacked onto Eugene's 3-cent fuel tax in 2005. But the council should call their bluff and extend the 2-cent tax for a couple more years to give the Legislature time to raise the state gas tax. An attempt to raise the city tax from 5 to 8 cents and make it permanent was nixed by voters in November, but voters shouldn't get too riled up about keeping the tax at 5 cents for two or three more years. Meanwhile, Eugene's pot holes and pavement cracks grow bigger.

- As we go to press this week we hear Ethan Nelson, chair of the **Whiteaker Community Council** and a member of the board of directors, has resigned. No reason was given, but Nelson's representation of neighborhood interests on the city's Opportunity Siting Task Force was the subject of a "no-confidence" vote that passed 17-7 at the WCC general membership meeting Jan. 9. Nelson's opponents claim he has a conflict of interest due to his employment with Vista Construction. In an email to the WCC Board dated Jan. 14, Nelson says he has turned over organizational documents to Majeska Seese-Green and coordinated an "information exchange" with the newly elected WCC Vice Chair Michael (Miguel) Board.

- *R-G* stories and editorials frequently label anyone who doesn't agree solidly with the paper's right-leaning, pro-sprawl agenda as "liberals." Anyone who matches the ***R-G's* political litmus test** is a "moderate" or "conservative." Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy gets the "liberal" label, as does County Commissioner Bill Dwyer. Huh? We know the *R-G* didn't endorse them, but in the spectrum of local politics these two clearly have moderate to conservative voting records. Piercy annoyed liberals on Hynix tax breaks, downtown developer subsidies and pro-sprawl hospital siting. Dwyer, who had a moderate to conservative record in the Legislature, backed the conservatives' failed flat tax and recently dissed South Eugene Commissioner Peter Sorenson for a board chairman seat.

- **John Kerry has endorsed Barack Obama**, saying Obama can really bring people together, which sounds good, but is that really what we need in America? Do progressives need to find common ground with people who don't believe in science, are OK with torture and unprovoked warfare, think diplomacy is a waste of time, want public schools privatized, think low-income people don't deserve health care? Do we look for compromise with people who dismiss corporate abuse, massive deficits, the destruction of the environment, the growing gap between rich and poor? No. America is in the middle of an ideological showdown, and it's not time for kumbaya; it's time for revolution. So when it comes to picking our next president, the big question we should be asking is not who can bring us together, but rather who has the power to bring peace, prosperity and justice at home and abroad.

- **A similar ideological clash** is evident on the local level as well. Divisiveness on the Eugene City Council, for example, is painful to watch, and some call for compromise. But should our police department be only partially transparent and accountable? Should we allow the creation of an independent city auditor to be only half independent? Should development interests be allowed to dictate half our planning policies? Should we strive to be only partially sustainable in our policies and practices? We welcome the times when we do come together as a community to accomplish something in the public interest, such as building a new library or supporting our schools; but let's not shy away from democracy's noisy, rude clash of ideas and perspectives. May the best ones win.

*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](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)

## EARLY DEADLINES

The *EW* offices will be closed Monday, Jan. 21 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. For our Jan. 24 issue, the early deadline to reserve display advertising space will be 5 pm Thursday, Jan. 17. For more information call 484-0519.