

Imadacloprid, a pesticide found in the neonicotinoid family, is used on various fruits, vegetables, forestry and even turf. Germany recently put a temporary ban on neonicotinoid pesticides after a misuse of the product was deemed responsible for the death of millions of honeybees. The ban may make other countries think twice about their use of pesticides.

A recent lawsuit filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council claims that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is refusing to disclose records about neonicotinoids. The EPA has not responded to multiple records requests for studies done on the chemicals since neonicotinoids were given conditional registration in 2003.

Congress gave the USDA emergency funds to study honeybee losses in 2007, and if you're worried about your ice cream, rest assured that Häagen-Dazs gave a \$250,000 research grant to UC Davis and Pennsylvania State University to research honeybees.

"We should most definitely follow our European beekeeping friends' lead," says Smith of the German ban, "until the manufacturers of neonicotinoids can prove conclusively that these chemicals aren't lethal to bees and other beneficial organisms, including animals and humans." Smith adds, "In the meanwhile there are good, safe, organic alternative pest controls."

Smith urges people to not purchase anything with imadacloprid. Brand names of this pesticide to look for are Confidor, Merit Admire, Legend, Pravado, Encore Gaucho and Premise. For more on the bees and pesticide issue, go to www.vanishingbees.com

—Cali Bagby



Doomed bees

BAROQUE OBAMA?

The imagination and technical skills of local graphic designer Taft Chatham have turned to the presidential race this year. Chatham's Barack Obama T-shirts, cards and posters are showing up around town, including his "Baroque Obama," reportedly a very popular shirt with musicians associated with the Oregon Bach Festival.

Chatham is a substitute teacher and also known in the community as the former owner of *The Comic News* (before Don Kahle) and the Bijou movie theater (before Robert McNeely, aka Michael Lamont).

He says he sold about 400 "Baroque Obama" shirts for \$15 each at the Olympic Trials and continues to market them and three other designs, including a Star Trek Vulcan-inspired "Barok," at Prince Pückler's, House of Records and the UO Street Fair. Triangle Graphics does the printing.

Chatham says his profits on the shirts are minimal, and he donates \$1 to the Obama campaign for each shirt sold. — TJT



HOUSING BUST

While developers have complained that they need more urban sprawl to build on, the demand for home building has declined sharply.

Residential building permits in the city of Eugene dropped 39 percent from 2006 to 2008, according to a comparison of year-to-date numbers. In 2006 through Aug. 26, builders had received 1,074 construction permits. For the same period this year, the city gave out 652 permits.

The decline in building follows a decline in demand for new homes. The Regional Multiple Listing Service reported this summer that the local unsold housing supply

• **It's been a quiet week** here in Lane County with the Eugene City Council on break, people gone to the coast or into the mountains and gardens needing harvesting. We have bleary eyes from staying up too late to watch the Olympics, and now the Democrats in Denver are keeping us up at night as we watch their speeches and listen to the talking heads. The convention is highly scripted but still inspiring for Democrats, particularly the words and demeanor of Teddy Kennedy and Michelle Obama Monday. Barack Obama's speech this week can be seen free on a big screen downtown at the McDonald Theater (see Thursday Calendar).

Adding to the distractions from local politics is Duck sports. UO football madness is about to kick off, literally, with a home game against Washington Saturday evening at Autzen. Go Ducks! But maybe the distractions are OK. We can all use a little break from the sometimes tedious struggle to maintain some semblance of democracy and justice in our little piece of the world. Let's relax for now and then hit it hard in September when the days get cooler and the politics hotter.

• **Bobbywatch.com** is the place to go if you are *not* on vacation from local politics. The new website documents the "behavior and voting record" of Lane County Commissioner Bobby Green. The site provides voters with lots of reminders of Green's poor environmental record and support for big tax breaks for polluters. In Green's defense, he does have a good record on gay rights and other social issues. His opponent, Rob Handy, is also a social progressive, leaving LGBT civil rights group Basic Rights Oregon in a quandary and endorsing both candidates. BRO is advising their members to look at other issues in deciding who gets their votes. Unfortunately for Green, the vast majority of decisions made by the County Commission are on land use and other environmental issues, not on social concerns such as gay rights.

• Eugene's once-active **Copwatch is making a comeback**, inspired by general misgivings about the way the EPD is being run – from the lack of power given to the police auditor and citizen review board to the recent Tasing of a UO student and allegations of police brutality. Copwatch programs worldwide are grassroots organizations that monitor the police, often through videotaping police activity. Eugene's group says it's not just the EPD they'll be monitoring; they'll be keeping an eye on private security firms as well as Homeland Security officers.

Organizers aren't ready to go public yet, but here at *EW* we're happy to take donations of good used video cameras and editing equipment and pass them along to Copwatch.

• Aug. 27 is the one year anniversary of the death of 10-year-old **Vaclav Hajek**, killed by a car while walking his bicycle from the skate park across a busy four-lane Bailey Hill Road. A community effort is afoot to create a permanent memorial for the boy near the skate park. A makeshift memorial with flowers and candles is still in place beside the road, and city staff have been good in working with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to reconfigure Bailey Hill Road to make it safer. Young Vaclav's death was followed by the death this year of bicyclist David Minor at 13th and Willamette, and a temporary memorial marks that site as well. Neither will last forever. The Hajek family and friends are wanting to create permanent memorials for those who have lost their lives in pedestrian or bicycle accidents. The city has a Memorial Bench Program already in place, but perhaps something more than a bench could be erected to honor the victims and also remind everyone passing by to be more careful. A water fountain has been suggested. Want to help? SELCO Credit Union branches now have a "Safe Passages Memorial Fund" set up, account number 453949.

• We wrote about Eugene's **Weekday Market at the Tango Center** as it was opening back in July, but the new indoor marketplace is not generating enough foot traffic to make it grow and thrive. Come on, people, get on down to 194 W. Broadway and do some serious browsing and shopping. Hours are 10 am to 4 pm Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Dancing and dance instruction still happen evenings. The website for the market is under construction at www.weekdaymarket.org

• **Eugene and UO missed out on two prestigious lists.** *Outside* magazine's August issue picked its "20 best towns in America," placing Corvallis fifth after Oakland, Crested Butte, Seattle, and Chattanooga. Here's why: "In recent years the city has picked up verve from a new promenade on the Willamette River and a steady transition to renewable energy. The new riverfront park, completed in 2002 as part of the vision statement, has helped attract more than a dozen new cafes, restaurants and spas, proving that being farsighted isn't so bad after all."

Sierra, the magazine of the Sierra Club, chose the "10 Coolest Schools: Our Annual Green College Guide." Middlebury College in Vermont tops the list, followed by the University of Colorado, Arizona State University, University of Vermont, University of Florida, Warren Wilson College, Oberlin College, University of Washington, Evergreen State College and Tufts University. Maybe next year.

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