

CITIZENS TO REPORT ON STATE OF CITY

The Eugene Mayor's State of the City address was held this week (1/7). But it's followed by the Citizens State of the City and County (CSCC) report at noon Monday, Jan. 12, at Harris Hall, 8th and Oak. Local activists will talk about "the critical issues of our time," says environmental educator and activist Jan Spencer.

Spencer says the annual CSCC is an effort to "draw attention to the critical failures by the media, governments, business, educational institutions and nongovernmental organizations to address the fundamental causes of the ecological, energy and economic crises."

Key issues will include regional food security, transportation, land use and restorative forestry. Detailed information on the CSCC will be posted after Jan. 12 at www.sustaineugene.org

Aleta Miller will discuss how the city and county can cooperate to strengthen food security through relocating food production and developing infrastructure for processing, storage and distribution. The CSCC report includes a proposal to use the Lane County Fairgrounds as a hub for a new initiative to help make our region's food supply more self sufficient.

Blogger and activist Mark Robinowitz will talk about why federal, state, county and city governments want massive increases in highway funding to stimulate the economy, despite peak oil and peak traffic. He says our priorities should shift to road and bridge repair, upgrading regional rail service and preventing planned cuts in LTD bus service.

Robert Emmons, president of LandWatch Lane County, will describe the consequences of weak regulation, lack of enforcement and the state's "Big Look" land use task force for city and county planning efforts

Samantha Chirillo of Cascadia's Ecosystem Advocates will highlight how clearcutting, large-scale native public forest thinning and forest biomass extraction for electricity and liquid fuel would destabilize our climate and economy.

Spencer will present a "letter from the future" that describes a 2025 scenario greatly benefited by timely region-wide policy changes in 2010.

PEOPLE'S AGENDA FOR REAL CHANGE

The 2008 elections energized and mobilized millions of Americans to political action, but will most people now just sit back and wait for the Obama White House to "fix" our nation's problems? Activists in

Lane County have a better idea.

Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC) is hosting a series of public forums "to help build popular momentum behind the progressive goals of President-elect Obama's campaign," according to Dan Goldrich of CALC's Progressive Responses program.

"Now that the election is over, it will take continued outreach, organizing and popular involvement — including pressure on Congress — to enact the progressive changes that brought Americans to the polls to elect Barack Obama," says Goldrich.

The first forum will be at 7 pm Thursday, Jan. 15, at Harris Hall, 8th and Oak in Eugene. The topic is "Afghanistan/Pakistan/India: Time for a New U.S. Peace Strategy." Speakers will be Goldrich and Stan Taylor. LCC instructor Nadia Raza will be the moderator.

Following programs will be on globalization and immigration Jan. 24, "Removing the Nuclear Option" Feb. 4, and Guantanamo and torture Feb. 18. The series is expected to continue in March with presentations on climate change and other major issues.

See more details in next week's *EW* or check the calendar at www.calclane.org



WILL THE OBAMA ADMIN KILL FEWER ANIMALS?

Barack Obama isn't in office yet, but the enviros are already lobbying his cabinet choices in an effort to undo some of the effects the Bush administration has had on lands and wildlife. On Jan. 2, a coalition of 115 groups, ranging from humane societies to environmental groups, faxed a letter to the President-elect's appointee to be the secretary of agriculture, Tom Vilsack asking that he put an end to the government slaughter of wild animals.

The secretary of agriculture heads the USDA, which develops and executes policy for farms, ranches and stockyards as well as some public lands. The USDA oversees a little known agency called Wildlife Services, also known as Wildlife Damage Management. According to the letter, Wildlife Services kills millions of animals a year "primarily on behalf of agribusiness."

Josh Laughlin of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands Project, one of the signatories of the letter, says, "It is long overdue that we



• **Letters to Obama** are coming in for next week's issue, but there's still room for more. Send to letters@eugene-weekly.com by 5 pm Friday, Jan. 9. What would you like to see, generally and/or specifically, from the Obama administration in the next few years? We will be bundling up copies of next week's issue and mailing them to the White House just in time for the inauguration Jan. 20.

• On a related note, we're pleased to see a growing interest by local people in working with and **supporting the Obama transition** team and administration. What a change from an eight-year focus on *fighting* the Bush administration! The Obama administration also needs to be held accountable, and one way to do that is for us as individuals to become educated on the issues and organize grassroots efforts for positive change.

A good example is the upcoming public forums planned by Progressive Responses, a program of Community Alliance of Lane County. The first forum is Jan. 15. See "People's Agenda" in News Briefs for details.

• **The Archimedes Movement** is meeting in Salem this week as we go to press, and on the agenda is trying to figure out how to get all the various groups and factions to find common ground in solving our health care crisis. Former Gov. John Kitzhaber is providing leadership in this effort, and it's a monumental task. Obama has a plan for universal health insurance, Hillary Clinton has a plan, Sen. Ron Wyden has a plan, different state governors have different plans — just about everybody and her dog, and her dog's vet, have a plan.

One key to creating cheap and equitable health care for the 21st century is reining in the uber-powerful health insurance industry, but it's a tricky business. Even the federal government's Medicare program is administered in part by private insurance companies. Wyden wants to keep private insurance and just regulate the hell out of it. Kitzhaber is thinking Oregonians should have the Oregon Health Plan as an option to private insurance. Many physicians' groups and individuals are calling for a single-payer plan, with private insurance still available for those who can afford it, or as a supplemental plan.

The biggest problem with private health insurance is that it doesn't just skim off the top; it takes a ravenous bite. Ross Perot calculates that about 35 percent of health care expense goes to private insurance companies. That's higher than some other analyses, but all the estimates overshadow by at least 20 points the single-digit overhead of Medicare, Medicaid and the Oregon Health Plan. Our nation is spending about \$2.3 trillion a year on health care, and it's getting worse. Can we really afford to continue the waste, greed, corruption and injustice that pervades our current private health care system?

The timing for change has never been better: reform-minded leadership moving into the White House; a more willing and committed Congress; a public outcry for substantive change; an economic crisis that demands broad cost-cutting measures; and innovative work on health care reform at the state and local level, demonstrating what can be done.

To participate in the process, visit www.wecandobetter.org or call the Archimedes Movement offices at (503) 709-8574.

• **Battle of the clinics?** The independent upstart Eugene Urgent Care is working to build up a nice and friendly clinic for walk-in medical care seven days a week at 13th and Patterson, a response to PeaceHealth closing its urgent care facilities at 12th and Willamette. PeaceHealth must be worried about the competition because we're now seeing big color ads in the *R-G* for urgent care at RiverBend, a fine and large facility but inconveniently located in north Springfield, far from Eugene's population center. We can't help but cheer on the little guys.

• Makes us proud, and so sad, to read the cover review in the Jan. 4 *New York Times* Sunday book section. It's about **The Mercy Papers**, a memoir by Robin Romm, who grew up in Eugene, went to South Eugene High School, and clearly has launched a brilliant writing career with two books and many short stories. Scribner published this "furious blaze of a book," to quote the reviewer who gently recounts Romm's story of her last three weeks with her mother, Jackie Romm, who lost her nine-year fight with cancer at age 56. Jackie was a tough, respected and often feared Eugene lawyer. This review suggests that her daughter is fiercely building on Jackie Romm's strengths, this time in letters rather than law.

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