

ROLLING STOPS FOR BIKES?

The Portland-based Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) is calling for a new state law that would make it legal for cyclists to roll through stop signs after yielding the right of way if there are other vehicles at the intersection. The bill, being drafted in Salem, is inspired by Idaho legislation.

The Idaho law passed in 1982 and has reportedly not led to increased bike collisions and injuries. A similar bill (HB 2768) was introduced in Oregon in 2003 and passed the House but did not make it through the Senate. BikePortland.org reports that Senate support is expected to be stronger this time.

What about Eugene's more dangerous intersections? A provision in the bill would allow Oregon cities to require bikes to come to a complete stop at certain marked intersections. Stop light rules would continue to be enforced for cyclists.

Supporters of the bill say constant stopping and starting is energy-inefficient, slows commuting time, is a danger for riders with toe clips or shoe cleats and adds an element of police paranoia to bike riding. Changing the law would also free up police time to focus on more dangerous activities by motorists and bicyclists. Reckless bike riders would still be subjected to tickets.

A response to frequently asked questions about the bill can be found at www.bta4bikes.org — *Ted Taylor*

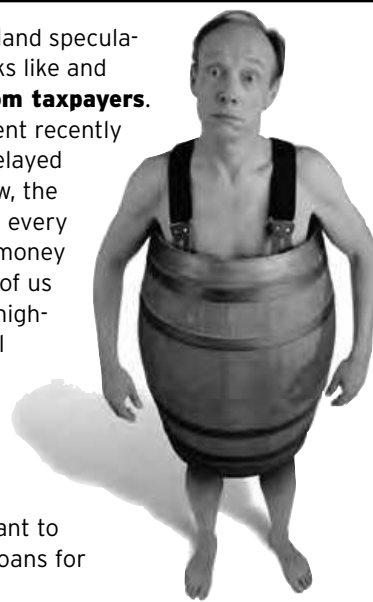


ACTIVIST ALERT

• **The Police Auditor Ordinance Review** Committee meets from 5 to 7:30 pm Thursday, Feb. 5 at the McNutt Room at City Hall. Public input time is at the beginning and end of the meetings. Guest speaker (by phone) will be Pete Sandrock, a Portland attorney and consultant specializing in government administration. Sandrock will speak and answer questions on the issue of "concurrency."

• **Eat Here Now**, a local foods community potluck honoring local farmers, is planned for 6 to 9 pm Saturday, Feb. 7, at

• With the economy down, local developers, land speculators and their allies have wrangled what looks like and smells like **no-interest, high-risk loans from taxpayers**. Springfield's developer-dominated government recently enacted a taxpayer subsidy in the form of delayed planning and systems development fees. Now, the developer lobbyists and R-G want to stick up every other government in the state for taxpayer money as well. Are they crazy? How about the rest of us poor schmucks? Where are our no-interest, high-risk loans? With the same money, many local businesses and other taxpayers could create far more jobs than the over-building developers. That's why the banks won't lend to them. Hey, how about no-interest loans for any taxpayer who has something better to do with their taxes? If you really want to help the developers, how about no-interest loans for low-income home buyers?



• **Jim Klonoski** was an academician and progressive activist whose impact will ripple through our world for generations. He died Jan. 30 at age 83 after a short illness. A celebration of life is planned at 2 pm Friday, Feb. 6, at the Jaqua Concert Hall in The Shedd at East Broadway and High.

Many of his former UO political science students can be found holding office and performing public service all over the country, following his fine example. He was chair of the Lane County Democratic Party and Oregon Democratic Party, unusual efforts for an academic. His students learned to reason, listen, examine the political history and fabric of this country, and always care about other people. Just as he inspired his students, he inspired and supported his wife, federal Judge Ann Aiken, in her professional and public service. Jim Klonoski was a great American.

• **Layoffs at EW?** We've been immune in large part to the tribulations of mainstream media, and we even posted record revenues in 2007 and 2008. But surprise! 2009 is not looking so good. Some of our loyal advertisers are predicting they will spend fewer dollars this year. We are still solid and debt-free, but to stay that way, we need to make some adjustments. Last week, we reshuffled job descriptions and painfully cut the equivalent of about three full-time positions. We figure this is a temporary move, based on the fact that our readership remains strong, with nearly 90,000 readers in print and 250,000 page views on our website each month. The economy *will* turn around, and people will always appreciate a free newspaper and an alternative voice.

How can you help? The best thing to do is support our advertisers and buy local goods and services whenever possible. These small businesses keep jobs in our community, and keep us afloat. Additionally, many struggling nonprofit organizations would love to advertise in *EW* in order to promote their services and build community support. If you have the resources, you could help them do just that, and get a tax write-off to boot.

• Students are familiar with www.RateMyProfessor.com where they can log in and comment, and read comments about profs on campus before taking a class. We discovered this week www.RateMyCop.com where you can log in and make comments about the officer who just pulled you over, helped protect you or Tasered you. Comments are anonymous, the site says, unless you make threatening or abusive comments. Then they turn you in to the cops.

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

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

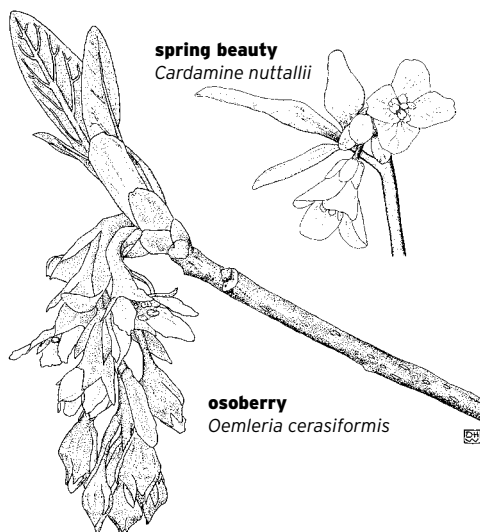


Walking down to the ponds this morning, I said goodbye to two old friends, apple trees with the most delicious apples for passersby. One blew down last February, and one was cut only this month. I'll miss seeing their blossoms. It makes me reflect that time is not measured only by hours, days, weeks or years but that it is also measured in life cycles. Life cycles may be very short or very long; none goes on forever.

Gray green lichens and tufts of dark green moss are prominent in the mowed grassy areas under old bigleaf maples and oaks. These have been blown down in winter storms. Paradoxically, this is the time of the year when they grow the fastest. Turnover of lichens, mosses and liverworts that grow on and blow out of tree branches are important sources of nutrients to the forest trees. Short-lived species sustain long-lived ones.

You can tell the western pocket gophers don't hibernate. Their mounds pooch up even in this freezing weather. They are breeding through February and will produce litters next month.

Our flowering season begins in the middle of February. The osoberry, whose buds we examined in December, will burst forth by the end of the second week. Don't take them indoors – they are pollinated by flies and so smell of something that attracts them, like old cat box odor. Blooming with the osoberry is our lovely spring beauty, called this because it is the first pink flower of the year.



spring beauty
Cardamine nuttallii

osoberry
Oemleria cerasiformis

David Wagner is a botanist who has worked in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches mosses and is president of the Eugene Natural History Society. He may be reached at fernzenmosses@me.com

WAR DEAD

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq began on March 20, 2003

(last week's numbers in parentheses):

- **4,237 U.S. troops killed*** (4,236)
- **31,004 U.S. troops injured*** (30,984)
- **167 U.S. military suicides*** (167)
- **317 coalition troops killed**** (317)

• **1,123 U.S. contractors killed** (accurate updates NA)

• **98,848 to 1.1 million civilians killed***** (98,731)

• **\$593.5 billion cost of war** (\$591.6 billion)

• **\$168.8 million cost to Eugene taxpayers** (\$168.2 million)

* through Feb. 2, 2009; source: icasualties.org; some figures only updated monthly

** sources: icasualties.org, defenselink.mil

*** highest estimate; source: iraqbodycount.org; based on confirmed media reports; other groups calculate civilian deaths as high as 655,000 (Lancet survey, 2006) to 1.1 million (Opinion Research Business survey, 2008)