



JOHN GIOVANNI CALLS IT QUILTS

Eugene's "Next Big Thing" is now Eugene's Once Big Thing.

Monday, a former band member confirmed that John Giovanni, the band that won *Eugene Weekly's* "Next Big Thing, Eugene" singles contest with its song "Slumber" has broken up. Singer/songwriter Genevieve Bellemare said in a Dec. 7

phone interview that the split up took place last Thursday. "It was one of the worst situations I've ever been in my whole, entire life," Bellemare said, adding that it was her decision to call it quits due to artistic inconsistencies. "Together we have made some really awesome music, [but] consistency wise, it's really hard for us to ever be on the same page," Bellemare said of the band, which also included bassist Zev Levine, drummer Nate Curry and keyboardist and composer Eric Valentine.

According to Bellemare, she and Valentine will continue making music together. "I'm never having another keyboardist," she said, describing their artistic collaboration as "like two heads together." Currently, the two of them are working with an agent/producer and plan on recording with a new lineup in the future.

"This is something that I have to do," Bellemare said. "I'm not a selfish person at all, but there are points where you just kind of have to be selfish."

As for the band's year together, Bellemare says she has "all good memories," even if the situation is something less than amicable right now. "I have absolutely no regrets. It wasn't anything that anybody was doing wrong. There's no negativity that made this break up."

You can read the Nov. 12 cover story "Break on Through: John Giovanni Storms Next Big Thing Competition" at www.eugeneweekly.com/2009/11/12/coverstory — *Rick Levin*

ECO-SABOTEUR STAYS IN TERRORIST UNIT



In a letter to *EW* from the Communications Management Unit (CMU) of a federal prison in Marion, Ill., eco-saboteur Daniel McGowan writes that he is not "holding his breath" for a transfer out of the special terrorist unit in which he has been held. McGowan was transferred to the unit August of 2008 from a low-security prison.

McGowan was convicted as part of what the FBI called Operation Backfire: environmentally motivated property destruction across the Northwest. No one was injured in any of the actions. He continued to speak out on environmental and justice issues from prison. McGowan was never told why he was sent to the unit.

The only other eco-saboteur currently in a CMU is Stanislas Meyerhoff who is currently at the CMU in Indiana. Animal rights activist Andrew Stepanian, given a three-year sentence under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act in a separate case, was also held at the Marion CMU.

The CMUs were covertly established late in 2007 by the U.S. Department of Justice and have been dubbed "Little Guantánamos" by the inmates. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a case alleging that the units were unlawfully built without public input and are disproportionately made up of Muslim prisoners, many of whom have never been convicted of terrorism.

McGowan writes his unit "has received a few more prisoners — up to 31 now with two-thirds being Muslim men."

He also writes that the prisoners in the tightly monitored unit recent by received an increase in phone calls — one to two 15 minute calls a week — and their visits have increased to two a month, but those visits remain non-contact. "While these changes help a little bit," he writes, "I can't help but to think it's just an example of our leashes getting longer."

McGowan's imprisonment at the CMU comes up for review in February, he writes, and he intends to ask for a transfer. But he suspects his "terrorism enhancement" will be used as a justification for keeping him in the unit.

The unit's review document states that among other criteria, a prisoner can be kept in the CMU if "the inmate's current offense(s) of conviction, offense conduct or activity while incarcerated, indicates a propensity to encourage, coordinate facilitate, or otherwise act in furtherance of, illegal activity through communications with persons in the community."

McGowan points out that his conviction "obviously cannot change." McGowan has taken classes while in prison, including completing a paralegal course, but he writes, when it comes to leaving the terrorist unit, "My impeccable behavior and participation in classes are seemingly irrelevant." — *Camilla Mortensen*

news Briefs

BIOMASS LINKED TO GREENHOUSE POLLUTION

Eugene's tiny Oregon Toxics Alliance continues to nip at the heels of the Seneca Biomass plant. Seneca's permit to build a wood burning biomass plant in west Eugene was approved by Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) in October, but OTA and other critics say the plant poses health risks to low income families, Latinos and people of color, and a disproportionately large number of disabled people from the pollution it will release.

OTA Executive Director Lisa Arkin said the group, which earlier filed an administrative appeal with the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA), has now also filed a contested case appeal under an Oregon law (ORS 183.415) that says that people affected by actions taken by state agencies have a right to be informed of their rights and remedies and are entitled to a public hearing.

Arkin said one of the issues the contested case appeal addresses — in addition to environmental justice issues, two pollution sources under one aggregate permit, particulate matter and others — is greenhouse gases. "It's not really been reported to the public the amount of greenhouse gases it will release," she said. "We've been saying all along that Seneca should report this as part of the permit."

Arkin said Seneca's permit should have "more stringent controls restricting greenhouse gases."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) director Lisa Jackson announced at press conference on Dec. 7 that greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide endanger people's health. According to Jackson, a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that said an endangerment finding such as this one was needed before the EPA could use the federal Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases from power plants, factories and cars. Jackson also said a similar finding was sent to the Bush administration, but was not acted on.

Even as Eugene seems to be going forward with this controversial biomass burning plant, the state of Massachusetts has temporarily stopped considering applications for new biomass burning permits under its renewable energy portfolio.

A Dec. 3 letter from the Massachusetts energy commissioner to "biomass energy stakeholders," said the suspension will last until the state "has the necessary confidence that its incentives for biomass energy will produce appropriately sustainable results."

Massachusetts commissioned a six-

month study of the environmental impacts of biomass energy plants from the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. The state won't move forward on the permits for at least a year.

As in Oregon, wood-burning power plants were originally encouraged by the state, but due to questions about the amount biomass plants would contribute to global warming, Massachusetts has been backing away from that support.

At their Dec. 8 meeting, LRAPA voted 5-2 to decline to hear OTA's administrative appeal, and requested their counsel to give a recommendation on the contested case appeal at the agency's January meeting, Arkin said. — *Camilla Mortensen*

CLIMATE: WILL OREGON FINALLY DO SOMETHING?

With the bigwigs gathered in Copenhagen this week for a world meeting on climate change (see analysis, page 13), Oregon appears on the brink of taking its first real action to actually fight the menace. Maybe.

Last summer a bill to require powerful regional transportation plans (RTPs) to reduce global warming failed in the state Legislature. As a warming booby prize, environmental groups pushing for the bill got an official committee to further study the issue and report back.

Now that committee, the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Task Force, appears on the verge of recommending that yes, the state actually should require the city transportation plans to reduce global warming, according to a draft report.

Whether that actually happens is another question. The draft report hints at wiggle room. One section argues that improvements in road "speed and smoothness of traffic flow" can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That's not what happened when Los Angeles designed smooth freeways that simply attracted more driving and traffic jams.

Another section of the task force's draft calls for "flexibility" in greenhouse rules to reflect local "aspirations." Springfield was dead set against the earlier global warming bill. A Eugene staff push to lobby against reducing global warming was blocked by a 5-4 tie council vote broken by the mayor.

The powerful Oregon Department of Transportation has also shown little interest in actually doing anything about global warming. ODOT is in the process of widening freeways in Eugene and throughout the state and has pushed for a 12-lane, \$3 billion freeway bridge over the Columbia River.

Previous efforts at reducing driving through the RTPs for livability, health and saving money have floundered. A decade ago cities balked at a tough rule requiring a reduction in driving per capita (VMT), and it was eliminated.

Although much depends on how it's enforced, the draft task force report does contain strong arguments for immediate action. The report cites studies of the "extensive and destructive" likely impacts of climate change on Oregon's environment, not