

• Two things are irritating about the recent **neo-Nazi talk** and “Sieg Heils” at the Pacifica Forum: 1) The forum is held in a taxpayer-funded meeting room and rebroadcast on taxpayer-supported Community Television, and 2) People in Lane County actually showed up and joined in the hate speech. But banning Pacifica Forum from campus or restricting its content would be counterproductive. It’s best to keep radical and even outrageous ideas out in the public where they can be challenged and debated openly. Teachable moments abound, and we need to be reminded that we don’t have to scratch very deeply through Eugene’s liberal veneer to find bigotry, hatred and violence.

Hate speech can incite violence, or at least make the targets of the attacks feel unsafe. The most effective response is for the community at large to stand up and loudly challenge hatred and injustice at every opportunity. Such action not only shows the bigots that they have no support; it also serves as an example for young people who are still forming their ideas and attitudes about people who are, on the surface, different from them. Young and old, we all learn by example.

• “At this festive season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we should make **some slight provision for the poor** and destitute,” wrote Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*. But a city of Eugene Downtown Safety Task Team says, “Bah humbug!” Only one member of the 15-member committee supported more housing and help for the home-

less mentally ill and addicted who haunt downtown. “More jail space!” the mean-spirited committee appointed by city executives snarled instead. Just like Scrooge’s line about street people in his Dickensian downtown, “Are there no prisons?”

• ODOT is considering proposals for art to festoon its \$200 million monument to global warming, the **widened I-5 bridge**. How about something similar to that popular under-freeway Freemont Troll in Seattle? The big cement troll clutching a VW bug snatched off the overpass is a popular tourist attraction and symbol of auto ambivalence. Eugene’s version could feature a giant osprey swooping down to snatch an SUV out of the stream of traffic. Or how about a really great great blue heron with an impaled Hummer in its beak?

• You might see one of the **wonderful sights in the valley** this time of year, if you’re lucky. Drive north of Eugene out Highway 99 along the Long Tom River drainage or around Fern Ridge Reservoir and look for a sculptured old oak tree with six or seven or more huge white birds perched in it. Those are great egrets, increasingly winter residents here. The egret-oak combination could be a holiday greeting card.

• Gotta slap **R-G reporter Ed Russo** on the wrist for writing Dec. 17 about “public drunkenness, panhandling, drug dealing, vandalism and other crime.” If begging for money were a crime, we’d have to jail every teenager, preacher and bell-ringing Santa.

• We’re wrestling with **climate change** on the local, national and international levels, but we’re not making much progress. One of the factors delaying real solutions is a new round of “manufactured doubt,” according to Dr. Jeff Masters’ WunderBlog at <http://wkly.ws/10>. Masters likens the anti-climate change campaign to previous PR campaigns to discredit research linking smoking to lung cancer, asbestos to lung disease, chlorofluorocarbons to holes in the ozone layer, and others. Eventually the science wins, but the purpose of manufactured doubt, he says, is to delay legislation or meaningful action for as long as possible, assuring continued profits for industry.

Regarding the stolen emails on global warming research, Masters concludes his blog post saying, “There is no sign of a conspiracy to alter data to fit a pre-conceived ideological view. Rather, I see dedicated scientists attempting to make the truth known in face of what is probably the world’s most pervasive and best-funded disinformation campaign against science in history.”

These tactics are also highly effective in election campaigns. Well-funded candidates these days hire cut-throat PR firms experienced in devious tactics.

What can we do about manufactured doubt? Not much, other than expose it when we see it. Corporations are by law required to act in the best interests of their shareholders and maximize profits; and since an ethical framework is missing on Wall Street and in much of the corporate world, we are beset with strategic

disinformation, the ignoring of scientific evidence and other tactics that run contrary to the public interest. Masters’ WunderBlog has some discussion about possible legislative solutions.

• A little perspective on this upcoming **Rose Bowl** game, please. Not to be raining on the roses, but we have been reminded that Ohio State is college football royalty. The Buckeyes often play in the national title race and they last won it all in 2002. The Ducks generally are playing for second in the Pac-10. The Buckeyes boast six Heisman winners, including the only player to win it twice, Archie Griffin. The Ducks put Joey Harrington on a Manhattan billboard to try for a Heisman, but it didn’t work. Ohio State routinely fields all-Americans; 36 former Buckeyes made opening day rosters in the NFL this year. The Ducks put one guy on the all-Pac-10 conference team. Ohio State’s starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor was the most celebrated recruit in the country when he chose Ohio State. Oregon quarterback Jeremiah Masoli came out of community college largely unnoticed and was buried deep in Oregon’s depth chart until injuries landed him on the field last season. But for now the Ducks are favored. None of this stuff will matter when the game starts on Jan. 1 in Pasadena.

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

read us on the web at www.eugeneweekly.com



We believe in Greenpower

84% of Americans say they support green energy.

What about you?

Eugene Water & Electric Board customers who believe in green energy can now choose Greenpower. Sign up and learn more at www.eweb.org/greenpower or call (541) 685-7000.



Rely on us.

