

Chirillo says, to her knowledge, "Eco-Advocates is the only organization in Oregon, aside from Cascadia Rising Tide, that has taken a formal position in opposition to forest biomass burning for electricity or liquid fuel on the basis of the devastating impact to our forests and is the only such group with a campaign."

Locally, Oregon Toxics Alliance has spearheaded environmental justice efforts against the pollution Seneca will emit. Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild says his group does have a formal statement on biomass, but that it's more nuanced than an outright "no biomass for energy" policy. Heiken says, "We feel that there is a significant need to restore our forests, and biomass utilization, if done very carefully,

could be part of a sound forest restoration program. Of course, Seneca's proposal is not an example of forest restoration."

The state of Massachusetts has currently suspended biomass burning proposals pending a six-month study that will determine if such plants are actually a renewable and sustainable source of energy.

"We need to invest in real energy and climate solutions," Chirillo says, "including conservation, efficiency and real renewables," and not put tax money into burning forests.

The fundraiser starts at 8 pm and will feature a brief presentation on current local and federal burning forest biomass issues and what can be done to stop it. Cost is \$3-20 sliding scale. For more information

go to eco-advocates.org, for Oregon Wild's biomass policy, check out <http://wkly.ws/20> and for OTA's stance click on www.oregontoxics.org — *Camilla Mortensen*

Q CENTER TO CLOSE ITS LOCAL OFFICE

Queer Eugene decided in early December to close its rented Q Center office on Lincoln Street as of Dec. 31. But the group remains dedicated to creating a larger, permanent community center, according to new president Julie Weismann.

The organization serves the LGBTQ community in Eugene and Springfield and says on its website: "As many of you are aware, the Q organization is in transition. The current board has been keeping the Q Center space open as well as we could, keeping hope alive as long as possible. Unfortunately, we do not currently have enough funds to keep the physical space open."

The website continues, "We also want to form coalitions with other community organizations. The current space, as you know, is simply too small to accommodate more than one group at a time. We have decided that in order to make the vision of an adequate Q Center a reality, we need to be focusing our financial and organizational energy toward this goal."

SLANT

• **Looking ahead to 2010**, it's time to get our political mojo moving again. Conservatives are cocky since Obama has not yet repaired all eight years of Bush and Cheney catastrophes. The economy is still scary, which leads people with short-term memory loss looking for someone new to blame.

A new Oregon governor will be elected for the first time in eight years. State schools Superintendent Susan Castillo is up for reelection. Half our state senators and all members of the Oregon House will be running, and the outcome is as unpredictable as who gets Tasered next in Eugene.

The new decade starts off with the Jan. 26 special election for state tax Measures 66 & 67. Ballots will be in the mail Jan. 8. The March 9 special election so far has only some Cottage Grove measures. May 18 is the big primary election for Lane County Commission East, West and Springfield positions, county assessor and at least four county measures. So far no one is challenging Faye Stewart for the East position (come on, people!). Bill Fleenor's decision to not seek reelection to the West position puts that race up in the air with three candidates so far. Bill Dwyer's retirement

brings a four-way race for the Springfield seat. We are likely to see some run-offs in November.

On the May 18 ballot will be Eugene City Council seats held by Alan Zelenka, George Poling, Mike Clark and Jennifer Solomon. Let's see some real competition this time around. It's frustrating to watch conservative candidates run unopposed and unexamined. We end up with city leaders who believe the Earth is flat, early humans kept dinosaurs for pets, and cops can police themselves just fine. Poling and Clark have no opposition so far, but Solomon will face Rich Gaston and Rich Cunningham on the ballot.

Also on the May ballot will be EWEB commissioner slots held by John Brown and Ron Farmer.

Let's make this next decade a whole lot better than the last. It starts here at home, organizing in our neighborhoods and around kitchen tables.

• **2009 has been a queasy ride** for all of us in Lane County who navigate small boats on rough waters. We're happy to report *EW* is still afloat, high and dry, and we are setting our sails for smoother sailing in 2010. We had to cinch our belts a bit in 2009, but we're

ending the year debt-free and holding steady with a record-high printing of about 40,000 papers each week and an audited readership of nearly 90,000 in print. Looking at the latest print circulation numbers for 80-some surviving Oregon papers, we are now the sixth most-read paper in the state.

• We also have some good news for our advertisers: **We are not increasing ad rates** in 2010. *EW* rates are already a bargain and highly cost effective, but we recognize that many businesses are operating at a loss or at very small profit margins, just trying to stay afloat until the economy improves. We want to help keep the wind in your sails. Thanks to all our loyal advertisers who have stuck with us this past year, and welcome to new advertisers who are trying us out as an alternative to other, more expensive, media in town.

More good news: We recently sent a check for \$2,450 to White Bird Clinic from proceeds of our Best of Eugene Awards Show in October. Since we began doing BOE Awards Shows, we have raised more than \$20,000 for local charities. We filled the McDonald Theatre this year for the first time.

• We are unhappy to hear about the **shutting down of two community papers** in Lane County. *The Tri-County News* and *West Lane News* stopped publication before Christmas, citing financial losses. Mike and Sandy Thoele sold the papers to Andrew Polin in 2008. Community papers are vital to the economic and social cohesion of small towns. And how can citizens make informed decisions if they don't know what's happening down at City Hall or in the schools?

This might not be the perfect time to leap into the newspaper business, but the economy is looking better, paper costs are down and journalism talent is abundantly available, even free. Dozens, perhaps hundreds of budding journalists earned valuable experience working for these two papers as unpaid interns. Local advertisers still need to get their products and services promoted, and small town papers don't have much competition. And despite the intense labor and stress of publishing a newspaper each week, there are few careers as engaging, interactive and satisfying.

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



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