

• Alan Pittman outlines various options for **local taxes to support schools** in News Briefs this week, and the City Council is looking at the possibility of referring some kind of tax to the voters in the May elections. But we hear there's a possible complication. Both School District 4J and Bethel School District have been planning general obligation bond measures for the same May ballot. Both districts have bonds that are being paid off, so the new bonds would not raise taxes. Both districts have pressing needs to replace roofs, floors, and aging equipment and facilities. But having multiple school measures on the May ballot could be confusing to voters. Bethel is planning to delay its bond measure if the city goes for a new tax for schools. District 4J will decide on or before its Feb. 2 board meeting. All this should be incentive for the City Council to take action soon.

• Don't get sucked into the insidious spin about **government spending** in Oregon, warns Charles Sheketoff, director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy and one of the sanest public policy voices in this state. Robert Reich hits the same theme, nationally, in *The Huffington Post* this week (see <http://wkly.ws/zr>). Oregon is in financial trouble because of the Great Recession, not because of profligate spending. Sheketoff says that relative to the income earned by Oregonians, the public sector is no more expensive today than it was three decades ago. In the current budget cycle, cuts, not increased spending, have dominated the budget picture. But some Republicans and their spinmeisters clearly see this depressed period as an opportunity to shrink the government social services they detest.

• Remember the **insane Oct. 26 public hearing** on Lane County's proposed drinking water protections? The meeting was taken over by an angry mob and with no progress possible, county commissioners canceled the hearing and shelved the overdue proposals. Looking back, what stirred the zealous property rights and Tea Party contingencies to show up frothing at the mouth? We ran across an incendiary email that went out a few days before the meeting from Dave Hunnicutt of Oregonians In Action. He wrote that the proposed protections will "devastate the rights of property owners," it will "destroy the value their property," and "this ordinance is a disaster." Hunnicutt was the sponsor of Measure 37 and has a long history of fighting land use planning with fear-mongering. It's a pity anybody buys into Hunnicutt's exaggerations. And it's a pity the property owners who came because they love the river, not because of Hunnicutt's hyperbole, weren't able to learn more about the drinking water plan.

• President Obama figures we'll have an active military presence in **Afghanistan** for at least four more years. Meanwhile, 10 more U.S. soldiers died in Afghanistan over the holidays and 57 more were wounded. No one is bothering to count Afghan casualties, military or civilian. Last week our presence in Afghanistan cost U.S. taxpayers \$2.3 billion and Eugene taxpayers \$700,000. What do we gain for our investment in destruction and bloodshed? The region is no closer to stability, peace and justice than it was 10 years ago. Only war profiteers are the ones seeing any benefit from this prolonged idiocy.

Meanwhile, American taxpayers are supporting some 700 military bases in 130 countries around the world. Bloated military budgets have brought financial collapse to many nations throughout history, including the Soviet Union. Will that be our story as well?

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

lighten up

After watching its star graduate, President Obama, negotiate the tax-cut deal with the Republicans, Harvard Law School is adding a course on the basics of poker.

— Rafael Aldave, Eugene

ACTIVIST ALERT

• A five-member committee tasked with advising the Oregon Department of Forestry on the state's **Smoke Management Plan** will meet from 9 am to 2:30 pm Thursday, Jan. 6, at ODF headquarters Building D, 2600 State St. in Salem. Public comments will be received at 2:15 pm. On the agenda will be prescribed burning, burn strategies, alternatives to burning, biomass, technology, the Regional Haze Plan, etc.

• The **Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission's** first meeting of the new year will begin at 8 am Friday, Jan. 7, at ODFW Headquarters, 3406 Cherry Ave N.E., Salem. Peregrine falcons, mule deer, and wildlife area parking permits are on the agenda. Public testimony follows the expenditure report. Persons seeking to testify on issues not on the formal agenda should call the ODFW director's office, at least 24 hours in advance, at (800) 720-6339 or (503) 947-6044.

• Lane County **Commissioner Rob Handy** is hosting three community outreach gatherings on Saturday, Jan. 8. The first is from 9 to 10:30 am at Todd's Place, 355 E. Broadway. Next is from 11 am to 12:30 pm at Sweet Life Patisserie, 755 Monroe. Third is from 2 to 3:30 pm at Sushi Seoul, 2532 Willakenzie. Handy can be contacted at 682-4203 or Rob.Handy@co.lane.or.us

• An all-day celebration of **year-round bicycle commuting** will run from 10:30 am to 5 pm Wednesday, Jan. 12, at the EMU on the UO campus. "Ride in the Rain, A Celebration of Wet Weather Bike Transportation," will feature free bike repair, music with bike-powered amplification, a rain gear fashion show, a "track-stand" competition, a community ride, and a keynote address by Cycle Oregon's Jerry Norquist. Fourteen new cargo bikes donated by Globe will also mark the launch of short-term bicycle loans through the UO Bike Program. For more information, please contact Ted Sweeney, bikes@uoregon.edu or call (503) 737-4419.

• The next **Whiteaker Community Council** general membership meeting will host LTD giving a presentation on the West Eugene EmX Extension at 7 pm Wednesday, Jan. 12, at the Whiteaker Community Center, corner of Clark and North Jackson. Snacks provided; potluck encouraged.

• **Palestine Action Week** organized by the UO Survival Center begins with a Palestine resistance film *Bil'in Habibt* at 6 pm Tuesday, Jan. 11, at McKenzie Hall 128 on campus. Next is a presentation titled "Eyewitness in Palestine" at 7 pm Wednesday, Jan. 12, at Straub Hall 142. Next is "Anarchists

a neurotoxin, causes headaches and depression and is "not something you want near young kids." The buffer between the pesticide application and the school is 100 feet.

Wroncy and Lisa Arkin of Oregon Toxics Alliance tried to have the herbicide treatment reconsidered and discussed, but a waiver on the 15-day waiting period was granted in December, and the spray was conducted on the Friday of a holiday weekend, when most government employees were unavailable to be contacted.

In an August letter to the Blachly School Board, ODF forester Paul Clements outlined several options the school could take, including having students cut back the weeds, having contract labor cut back the weeds or have contract labor "hack and squirt."

Wroncy says much of what is being called "weeds" is actually native Oregon bigleaf maple.

Arkin suggested the school contact Walama Restoration to train parents to clear the unwanted vegetation. She was told the school didn't have the funds. Now she questions what funds were used to hire a contractor to use pesticides.

Arkin wrote in an email to member of the Triangle Lake school board that "a spray of forestry pesticides on school grounds is out of compliance with the Oregon School IPM law. As Jan Wroncy points out, this spray may also be out of compliance with Lane County Code."

IPM or integrated pesticide management generally means that pesticides, including herbicides, are used as a last resort and the risk of human exposure is minimized while pests are controlled. Under a new state law, Oregon schools must have IPM plans by July 2012. Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of pesticides.

Under the Lane County Code, Triangle Lake Charter School's lands are zoned Rural Public Facility. Such zoning is "to provide land for public and semipublic uses and development that serve rural residents and people traveling through the area and that are by nature intensive or unusual uses not normally associated with other zones,"

according to the code.

Wroncy asks, "What's a not-for-profit school on rural public lands doing involving themselves in timber production for profit?" She adds, "It's in conflict with the goal of educating children." — *Camilla Mortensen*

NEW GROUP LOOKS AT TRANSITION

A new Eugene discussion group met Jan. 2, inspired by *The Transition Handbook*. The group plans to meet at 11 am the first and third Sundays of the month at the meeting space behind Theo's Coffee Bar at Cozmic Pizza, 199 W. 8th Ave. The next meeting will be Jan. 16. See www.TransitionTownEugene.org

"Our conversation seemed to cluster around three areas: permaculture, transportation and preparedness," says Fergus Mclean, a member of the group. He says the group talked about helping sponsor this spring's Northwest Permaculture Convergence, and issues concerning natural burial, "converting the places we're buried from formaldehyde- and herbicide-drenched mausoleums to healthy ecosystems."

In the area of transportation, the group is "seeing a great opportunity to bring together the review of TransPlan with land-use plans of Envision Eugene, perhaps in town hall meetings and workshops in outlying neighborhoods." They are also looking at the possibility of rail transportation to the Country Fair, preserving existing unused rail lines and using them for bicycle-powered transport, creating the north-south safe bicycle thoroughfare called for in Kitty Piercy's September 2008 town hall meeting, and updating the city's 40-year old bicycle master plan.

The group also discussed finding ways to support police and fire department emergency preparedness planning and organization, and examining "the adequacy of police and fire fuel supplies in the event of a disruption in fuel deliveries."

Against the Wall" at 7:30 pm Thursday, Jan. 13, in the Ben Linder Room in the EMU. The last in the series is a presentation by Portland's Boycott Israeli Apartheid project at 7 pm at Straub 146.

• **Eugene School District 4J** will meet at 7 pm Wednesday, Jan. 12, at 200 N. Monroe St. to discuss the superintendent's final recommendations for achieving a sustainable budget. A board work session was held Jan. 5 and the final public hearing was delayed until 6 pm Wednesday, Jan. 19, at a location to be announced.

• Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg's 2011 **State of the City Address** will be at 11 am Thursday, Jan. 13, at the Wildish Theater, 630 Main St. This is Lundberg's inaugural address after being appointed mayor. The former council member will be serving out Mayor Sid Leiken's term following Leiken's election to the County Commission.

• **Planned Parenthood Advocates** of Oregon is launching the Lane LAT (Legislative Action Team) at 6 pm Thursday, Jan. 13, with a general meeting. Interested community leaders will meet once a month to plan political strategies and organize local events. For location and other information, contact Nichi Masters, field organizer, at 510-2025 or nichi.masters@ppcw.org to register.