

• Kids and jobs were dealt a blow this week with the **defeat of the city income tax for schools**. School supporters did all they could to pass the tax but couldn't overcome a mountain of obstacles thrown in their path. The City Council balked at referring an income tax on the wealthy like successful state Measure 66 and instead only excluded those living in poverty from the tax. Wealthy conservatives poured more than \$100,000, a record for a local anti-tax campaign, into defeating the school funding with lies and distortions. *The Register-Guard* and local TV news opposed the tax and spread the misinformation widely. The school board put a competing property tax bond on the ballot. Other obstacles included divisive school closures, coverage of the new superintendent's salary, teachers' union negotiations, tepid school union and board support and the fact that it's always easier to tear down something than to build it with a new idea. But it's also hard to kill a great idea. Now, Eugene knows that it doesn't have to simply be a victim of brutal school funding cuts by the state, it can do something about it in the days ahead.

• June 1 is supposed to be the date the 4J school board decides what happens to the ten-acre **Civic Stadium** site near the center of Eugene. Remember that the city generously gave that land to the school district and generations of kids and families have used it. Remember that elected officials of Eugene generously offered to help the schools with an income tax for the next four years. So why don't the district and the city collaborate to do something great with that prize property? Maybe combine the "Y" and the "Save Civic" proposals. Maybe look for federal funding to help run a trolley from the train and bus stations down Willamette to Woodfield Station. That would remedy parking issues. Maybe ask UO urban designers and city planners to come up with better ideas for ten precious acres.

• The upside of **Congressman DeFazio's town hall** at Campbell Center in Eugene May 16 was the civility. Last summer when 8,000 people turned out for all his town halls, there was remarkable rudeness. But Pete always has run these meetings with his blend of intelligence, toughness and tolerance, and Oregonians largely respect that. The downside this spring is his role in the House: minority. He's no longer chair of the transportation subcommittee. DeFazio talked mostly about Medicare and Social Security solutions. The relevant numbers most depressing to us: The U.S. spends more on the military than the rest of the world combined; the military budget is about \$800 billion, the rest of the operating budget is about \$500 billion; every agency is audited except the Pentagon; of the income for the average household in the 4th Congressional District (\$54,320), the federal government takes 20.2 percent for defense, 4.7 percent for Iraq and Afghanistan and 3% for weapons and equipment procurement.

• **Sheryl WuDunn's message** to a packed EMU ballroom May 11 was this: "The central moral challenge of this century is gender inequity." She and husband Nicholas Kristof, authors of *Half the Sky: The Greatest Unexploited Resource in the World Today Isn't Oil or Gold or Wind. It's Women*, pound that theme effectively although problems dwarf solutions. Leaving the ballroom after her lecture, most women must have shared our wonder at the luck that we, and our daughters and granddaughters, were born in Oregon rather than the Congo or some other hellhole. As WuDunn put it, "we all have won the lottery of life."

• **Ann Curry's recent elevation** to co-host of NBC's "Today" show was a fitting final tribute to Ken Metzler who died April 11 at age 82. A student of his in the UO journalism school, Curry often credited Professor Metzler with teaching her what she needed to make it in national TV news. She honored him both nationally and in Oregon when she returned to the campus as a famous graduate. He taught the important reporting course and wrote countless articles and six books, including a classic on interviewing. His service at First Congregational Church on May 9 memorialized Ken Metzler's zest for life – in the classroom, on white-water rivers, with his family and friends, in front of a keyboard, even riding with Eugene cops to learn about their lives.

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

ACTIVIST ALERT

• Reed College associate professor **Kambiz GhaneaBassiri** will lecture at 5:30 pm Thursday, May 19, in the Center for Meeting and Learning, Room 104, on the main campus of LCC. His address is titled, "American Muslims and the American Body Politic." His talk will review the controversy that arose last year around a proposed Muslim community center in Lower Manhattan.

• Oregon journalist **Jeff Mapes**, author of *Pedaling Revolution: How Cyclists are Changing American Cities*, will speak at 6:30 pm Thursday, May 19, at Cozmic Pizza, 8th & Charnelton, preceded by a 5:30 social hour and presentation of the results of a bike rack design competition.

• Congressman **Peter DeFazio** will speak at 7 pm Thursday, May 19, at Temple Beth Israel, 1175 E. 29th Ave. His talk, sponsored by J Street Eugene, will be on "The View from the House in 2011: Reflections on the Changing Landscapes of National and Global Politics."

• Lane County **Sheriff Tom Turner** and Lane County DA Alex Gardner are hosting a series of community meetings to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the public safety system, listen to community concerns and answer questions from area residents. The next meeting will be from 11:30 am to 1 pm Thursday, May 19, at the Community Center, 175 W. 7th St. in Junction City.

• **"Our Oceans – Fish in Our Future?"** is the topic at City Club of Eugene at 11:45 am Friday, May 20, at the Hilton Ballroom, 12th floor. Speakers are marine expert Gus Gates of the Surfrider Foundation, Lane County Commissioner Pete Sorenson and retired commercial fisherman and current Lincoln County Commissioner Terry Thompson.

• "Fact in the Age of Truthiness" is a free panel discussion on **opinion in news journalism** from 10 am to noon Friday, May 20, at Gerlinger Alumni Lounge on the UO campus. Limited seating. Register at uoregon.edu/reg

• **A film screening of *Grounds for Resistance***, a documentary by Lisa Gilman, UO Folklore Program director, will be at 7 pm Tuesday, May 24 at Lawrence Hall, Room 115 on campus. The 50-minute film is about Coffee Strong, a coffee shop outside the gates of Fort Lewis in Washington inspired by the activist Vietnam-era Coffee House Movement.

• Many Rivers Group Oregon Chapter **Sierra Club** will hold its monthly Beer Social from 7 to 9 pm Thursday, May 26, at High Street Brewery, 1243 High St., in Eugene. To get on the mailing list, email sally.nunn@oregon.sierraclub.org or visit <http://wkly.ws/qk>

• The Oregon **Global Warming Commission** is posting an online survey to provide feedback on the 2020 Roadmap, as well as the state's efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas footprint. The survey is at <http://wkly.ws/12c> and comments on issues of relevance to the Global Warming Commission can be emailed to Oregon.GWC@state.or.us

• The week of May 23, groups around the country are mobilizing their members to contact Congress to end the war in Afghanistan. Info at calpeace@efn.org and www.unitedforpeace.org

LIGHTEN UP

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

Why is the school board engaged in land use planning for its Civic Stadium property? The city has a whole department for that. School boards should stick to what they're good at: planning school lunch menus.

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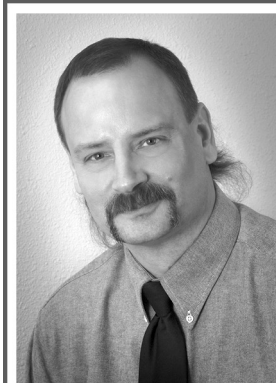
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