

Area residents speak out on impact of Iraq at Town Hall meeting

Imagine nearly 20 new elementary schools or 3,000 affordable homes, or health care for 80,000 youngsters.

Nearly half a billion dollars of funds from Oregon Congressional District 1 have been spent on the war in Iraq. Columbia County's share of the financial cost of war in Iraq is over \$40 million. That could

have provided local students with 1,937 four-year college scholarships.

Decision makers in Washington, D.C., are debating multiple proposals ranging from troop escalation to a timetable for immediate withdrawal. A supplemental appropriations vote for funding in Iraq is expected in Congress later this

month; a vote that will test the impact of the recent 2006 elections on decisions relating to the war.

Congress will also decide this session whether to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, legislation that relies on timber receipts and federal lands compensa-

tions to fund approximately 4,400 school districts in 615 counties in 39 states.

Constituents in Oregon's 1st Congressional District, represented by David Wu, are not waiting for the decisions to come to them. A town hall including delegations from the five counties that comprise the 1st Congressional District, was recently held at Pacific University in Forest Grove.

Testimony from constituents to Rep. Wu highlighted human needs in the 1st District that are unmet as a result of federal funding priorities and spending on the war. The 1st District's tab for the war in Iraq is \$602,513,729.00, the equivalent of 60 new elementary schools or 3,152 affordable housing units or healthcare for 80,057 children since the start of the Iraq war.

Air Force photographer Tina Bean, a veteran and Washington County resident knows some of the personal cost of the Iraq war. She spoke of being evacuated from Iraq about a year ago, after her base fell under heavy mortar attack. Her most serious injuries carry no outward scars.

"I'm still trying to deal with the effects of being there," she said. "I knew from the moment I got to Iraq that we shouldn't be there, that this war was not something we could win and that our presence is doing nothing but making it worse."

Since being taken off the front line, she has been recovering at home in Tigard and has become an advocate for getting U.S. troops out of Iraq as quick-

ly and as safely as possible.

Rural America is also home to a disproportionate number of soldiers who have lost their lives in Iraq. The New York Times reported in July, 2005, that of the soldiers who have died in Iraq, nearly two-thirds were from rural counties. Rural Oregon is paying a high price for this war, in terms of human costs and lost investment in economies and human services.

The Town Hall held an overflow crowd, many of whom came to testify about the personal cost of war. Many were veterans, some from the current conflict, some from the Viet Nam era, and some from previous wars. Nearly all supported troop withdrawal from Iraq. Others testifying included social workers, students, teachers, health care workers, all of whom have been affected in their work or studies by the local cost of war. Cited were lack of funds for text books, medicines, diminishing social service assistance, all of which are beginning to have devastating effects in District 1.

The Town Hall was hosted by the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) and the following local groups: West County Council for Human Dignity, Yamhill Valley PeaceMakers, Columbia Pacific Alliance for Social Justice, Adelante Mujares and Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity. ROP and member groups other districts are holding similar Town Halls during the Congressional recess.

For more information, contact Marcy Westerling 503-543-8417, or marcy@rop.org.

Between the Bookends

By Sarah Vandehey, Library Assistant
Banks Public Library



Join Miss Kathy for Preschool Story time on Wednesdays at 10:15 am. Upcoming themes are:

March 7: Turtles
March 14: Bath Time
March 21: Bad Hair Day
March 28: No Storytime due to Spring break.

Have a craft project that you're working on? Join others in a craft night on Wednesday, March 7th from 5:00-9:00 p.m. in the Community Room. Light refreshments will be provided. This will be a repeating event on Wednesday evenings.

The annual Plant and Book Sale is coming up on May 4th and 5th. If you're dividing plants in your yard, we'd appreciate it if you set some aside for this event. All plants need to be in clean pots that are in good condition, well rooted, weed free and identified (botanical names are great). For more information or if you need containers, call Sheila Day at 503-324-6191.

Need tax forms or help? Federal and state forms are available at the Forest Grove, Shute Park and Tanasbourne libraries (the Banks Public Library currently has only state forms). Free tax help is available at the following locations: the Forest Grove Senior Center, Hillsboro Public Libraries, Beaverton City Library, and the Elsie Stuhr Center. Some offer assistance by appointment only, others are walk in. For more information call the locations above or call us here at the library.

Some of our newest books include:

Claire and Present Danger by Gillian Roberts (aka Judith Greber). A young widow with a hidden past, Emmie Cade, quickly becomes engaged to a wealthy bachelor in this Amanda Pepper mystery. Pepper, an English teacher at a Philadelphia preparatory school spends her evenings as a P.I. She's joined by C.K. Mackenzie, formerly with the homicide squad, in the hopes of discovering why Cade's past is strewn with dead men. Will Pepper be able to unravel the mysteries of the past and a current murder in time for her own upcoming nuptials?

Slay Bells by Kate Kingsbury. All the town's children are invited to meet Jolly Old Saint Nick at the hotel in this Pennyfoot Hotel mystery. Their wishes will not be heard, though, as first Santa's helper, and then Santa himself are found dead. The former seemingly fell from the roof. The latter, the town drunk, was discovered stabbed and stuffed down the chimney in his Fa-

ther Christmas costume. Will Cecily Sinclair Baxter be able to solve these mysterious deaths and get her husband to account for his time with an enticing French singer?

Step on a Crack by James Patterson. NYPD Detective Michael Bennet is struggling with his 10 children and ailing wife while trying to rescue politicians, billionaires and celebrities from their ruthless hostage-taker. All this comes on top of a favorite former first lady's death. Will Bennet be able to defeat the cold-blooded criminal? The world is watching.

Sunstroke by Jesse Kellerman. When a businessman, Carl, disappears while vacationing in Mexico, his devoted assistant Gloria works tirelessly to discover what happened. She's motivated by more than a sense of duty...she's in love with her employer. After making endless calls, she is told that Carl died in a car accident. When Gloria is unable to locate the next of kin or Carl's will she decides to go to Mexico herself to tend to the burial. Her journey leads her to stunning revelations about herself and Carl.

There are new nonfiction choices, too.

The Audacity of Hope by Barack Obama. The junior senator and presidential candidate speaks about his vision for the future amidst bitter partisanship, terrorism, and economic insecurity. Obama, a lawyer, professor and father of two, writes with humor as he discusses his time in the senate and balancing that with his personal life. The senator also speaks about faith and the role it plays in democracy. He stresses the importance of returning to the values of the Constitution as a way to heal the political divide and restore our government.

Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire by Rafe Esquith. This talented teacher gives tips, techniques and exercises to encourage kids to do their best. Esquith teaches at a Los Angeles school where the students are poor, and first or second-generation Americans. English is often not the first language among these students, but Esquith aids them in reading literature, performing classical music, grasping algebra and just being kids. He does this by treating his students with respect, allowing them to be creative and engaged, and not settling for mediocrity.

Banks Public Library: 111 Market Street.

Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs., 12 - 7:00 p.m.;
Fri. and Sat. 12 - 5:00 p.m.

Preschool Story Time: Wednesdays, 10:15 a.m.

Phone: (503) 324-1382 for information
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Ike Says . . .

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school; although I see Chief Workman has stated that the ATF is interpreting the law other than how it is written in the Act, in regards to how long you may stay in the school. CHL holders were represented by 53% of the people on the poll, but I have a feeling that number is high.

My solution to this problem – so I don't have to fear becoming a federal felon – is buying some locking hard gun cases and cable locks for the gun rack. Does this make the schools safer? No. It is not law-abiding citizens that we have to worry about, it's somebody who

has evil intent and, at that point, laws mean nothing to them.

My final thought on this subject is that this Act places people in the position of authority in a difficult place. While they are obligated to follow and enforce the laws of the land, the political ramifications of enforcing this Act could have profound consequences in the form of support for the schools and the local police department.

**Izaak Walton League,
Nehalem Valley Chapter**
meets monthly on the 3rd
Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call
503-428-7193 for location.