

WEST NILE SKINNY

What's worse, West Nile virus or the toxic insecticides that could be used to fight it?

The city of Eugene is wrestling with that question in trying to figure out how to respond to the potentially dangerous, mosquito-borne disease.

The city plans to educate the public about the risks and monitor local birds to determine when and if the disease arrives in the area.

The city is "emphasizing least toxic" ways to kill mosquitoes that could carry the disease, according to a staff memo. To control mosquitoes the city is focusing on getting rid of standing water in city parks, the sewage treatment plant and other facilities that could breed mosquitoes.

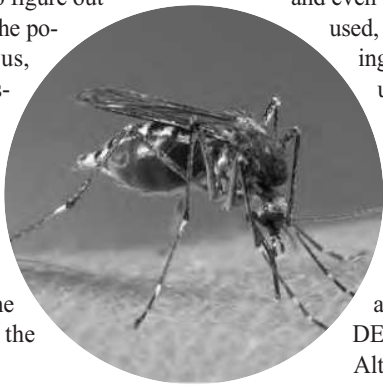
But "in a city with as many water sources as Eugene, population control is not feasible technically even if it were feasible economically," according to the city memo.

Using chemicals could kill off much more than just the mosquitoes, according to the city. "Many of the methods, such as using oil which must be applied every 2-3 days, will kill a wide range of species resulting in significant ecological and economic impacts. Therefore, these methods will only be used when it is absolutely necessary."

But the city does plan to use some pesticides in certain locations. Surface stormwater facilities could be treated with a bacterial larvicide, (Bti). Unfortunately, the pesticide also kills mayflies and other bugs that birds and salmon depend on for food.

A study by the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) found that Bti generally does less damage to the environment than chemical insecticides. But Bti can also damage tadpoles, minnows, trout and beneficial insects, NCAP found. Another pesticide that the city is considering, methoprene, can be toxic to fish, reduce diversity in wetlands and deform tadpoles, NCAP found.

About 30 percent of the U.S. population rubs on DEET repellent every year to keep



mosquitoes at bay. But NCAP strongly recommends against use of the powerful chemical. DEET has caused headaches, irritability, loss of consciousness and seizures in children and even some adults, according to NCAP. If used, the chemical should be used as sparingly as possible and washed off after use.

Instead of DEET, NCAP recommends long sleeves and pants (light colored), bug nets, window screens, draining puddles, and staying indoors at peak hours. Herbal repellants such as citronella also often work, but not for as long as DEET.

Although West Nile is all the rage on tabloid TV news, people may want to keep mosquitoes in perspective before they run out and nuke their bodies and neighborhoods with chemicals. The common cold kills about 100 times more people a year than West Nile.

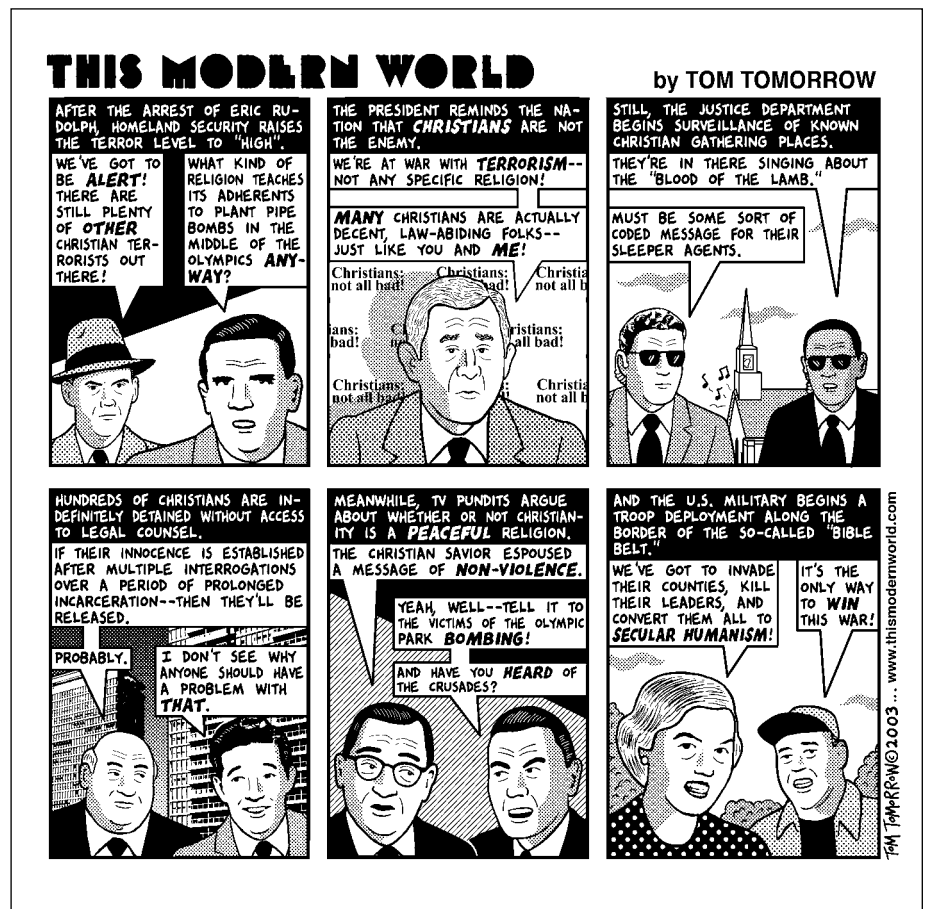
— Alan Pittman

PROTEST IN SACRAMENTO

Thousands of activists including a contingency from Eugene are converging on Sacramento for a five-day teach-in and protest June 20-25. The events coincide with a gathering of government ministers from 180 nations and transnational corporations to talk free trade, privatization of water, genetic engineering and factory farming. The Ministerial Conference on Food and Agriculture is a joint effort of the White House, USDA, USAID and U.S. State Department.

Two websites (www.sacmobilization.org and <http://portland.indymedia.org>) are among several sites helping activists prepare for the demonstrations. A local ride board is posted on the office door at 454 Willamette St., room 205, or contact Cascadia Forest Defenders at 687-8977.

"The Sacramento



ministerial is not actually billed as a WTO meeting," says the Portland Independent Media Center, "(but) the timing of the meeting to gather support for the U.S. position on agriculture in the run-up to the WTO ministerial in Mexico is no coincidence."

The first major protest is planned for 2 pm Sunday, June 22 at the Sacramento Convention Center, followed by a 10 am rally on the west steps of the Capitol building and a 1 pm march downtown.

CORPORATE WELFARE

With the state gripped in budget crisis, schools with jam-packed classrooms are closing early and the state is pushing disabled people out on the street without health insurance.

But in one area, state spending is increasing. The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECD) recently doubled the money it hands out to cor-

porations for supposed job creation. The department's budget now includes \$13.2 million for corporate recruiting/retention as well as an additional \$10 million to subsidize "shovel ready" sites for companies, according to a recent report in *Oregon Business* magazine.

OECD claims the handouts create needed jobs, but state audits have found the department frequently inflates its job creation claims.

"What is the next high tech? We've got to cast a wide net," the new OECD director Marty Brantley told the business magazine.

— AP

MARCH FOR JUSTICE

Oregon farmworkers are once again taking to the streets to support economic, social and environmental justice. The third annual Walk for Farmworker Justice begins at 1:30 pm Sunday, June 29 at the Capitol Mall in Salem, looping through downtown for a 2:30 pm rally at the Capitol.

A bus from Eugene will depart at noon from the parking lot across from First United



SLANT

The Eugene City Council has gotten raked over the coals for not immediately agreeing to rename Centennial Boulevard after Martin Luther King Jr. But oddly, the Springfield council, which rejected the renaming months ago without so much as a public hearing, has gotten off with scant criticism. Springfield wasn't given the Centennial-or-nothing ultimatum that Eugene got. Such a tactic probably wouldn't fly across the river. Springfield is supposedly looking into other options with renaming a parkway extension to the new PeaceHealth hospital as a leading option. The city better check with PeaceHealth CEO Alan Yordy and developer John Musumeci first. They may have hoped for the Alan Highway or the Musumeci Motorway. Then again, with the enormous building going in, Baldy View Road could use another name.

Speaking of PeaceHealth, Rep. Pat Farr has come out against Lane County joining the appeal of Springfield's approval of PeaceHealth's new hospital site at RiverBend. The former Eugene councilor says he's been a longtime supporter of PeaceHealth expanding its facilities and, "It's regrettable that, once again, politicians think they can plan hospitals better than health-care professionals."

But Farr's missing the whole point of the county's concern. The commissioners are not questioning the need for PeaceHealth's expansion, nor are they trying to "plan hospitals." The county is just echoing a state planner in saying this project will affect the entire region, and deserves regional consideration. And do hospital administrators get advanced training in regional transportation, housing and employment planning? Obviously not.

Will the FCC's recent decision to ease restrictions on media ownership be allowed to stand? Depends on the level of outrage expressed by the people, the courts and by our lawmakers. What can we do as individuals? For starters, we can educate ourselves and our neighbors about the dangers of corporate media cartels, we can pressure our lawmakers to revisit the issue, and we can turn off CNN, Fox, NBC, CBS, Clear Channel, etc. and get our news, views and entertainment from more independent (and usually better) sources. Likewise, we can stop patronizing advertisers who support the mega-media monopolies. The worst option is just rolling over and whining.

Gov. Kulongoski signed into law this week a bill that protects experts' free speech. The bill, introduced by

Rep. Phil Barnhart, is a response to the absurd attack on UO geology Prof. Mark Reed by the Oregon State Board of Geologists Examiners. Reed testified two years ago as a concerned citizen against gravel mining off River Road and pointed out the flawed science provided by "experts" representing gravel interests. Without Reed's testimony (which was validated in the appeals process), our county government would have been ill-equipped in the decision-making process. Eugene has a wealth of independent experts and scientists. Let's use them.

So where was the mainstream press when it came to questioning the White House propaganda on weapons of mass destruction BEFORE the Iraq war? The independent media were all over the issue in the months prior to "shock and awe." There's not much satisfaction in saying "We told you so," just sadness and anger in the growing civilian and military body counts, the unfathomable debts we have incurred, our loss of credibility and honor in the world community, and the chaos and pollution left behind in Iraq. Our favorite bumper sticker these days? "It's time for regime change - at home."

SLANT includes short opinion pieces and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519.