

INTERNET SCENE SITE OF SAFE SURFING

With all the smut on the Internet and all the children in Eugene's public library and all the computers with free, unfiltered Internet access, are youth being corrupted?

No, says Library Director Connie Bennett in a recent written response to a City Council query.

"There have been no known incidents of children inadvertently viewing possibly inappropriate sites being used by adults," Bennett writes.

The new library and its branches have been open for nine months now with 43 Internet computers running 136 hours per week. In all that time online (90,560 hours), there has been only one report of viewing inappropriate material, according to Bennett. The incident involved adults only on the second floor of the downtown library.

A much bigger, though still small, Internet problem the library has is patrons arguing over who gets to go online next on the popular computers. About two such incidents are reported every week.

— Alan Pittman

FANS OF FOX NEWS HAVE SKEWED VIEWS

Regular viewers of the Fox News Channel are nearly four times as likely to hold inaccurate views on the war in Iraq compared to those who get their news from National Public Radio or the Public Broadcasting System, according to a recent study by the Program on International Policy Attitudes, which studies foreign-policy issues.

The study surveyed 3,334 Americans who receive their news from a single media source. Each was questioned about whether he or she believed Saddam Hussein was directly linked with the 9/11 terrorist attacks, whether weapons of mass destruction have already been found in Iraq, and whether world opinion favored the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Eighty percent of Fox News viewers held at least one incorrect belief, compared to 23 percent of public broadcast listeners/viewers. Following Fox viewers in erroneous beliefs were CBS at 71 percent, ABC at 61 percent, NBC and CNN at 55 percent, and print media readers at 47 percent. The study is available at www.pipa.org/

I-105 BRIDGE ACCESS PRONE TO CRUNCHING

Mayor Jim Torrey and Councilor Gary Papé have asked the city to look into what it can do to make the crash-prone, giant intersection at 6th and 7th avenues and Washington Street more safe, but there may be little that can be done.

The intersection at the I-105 on-ramp downtown averaged 22 crashes per year over the last decade, the fourth highest number in the city, according to a memo from city police and traffic engineers. In 2002, the intersection had 38 crashes, which may likely put it in the number one spot when all the data are in.

About three-fourths of the crashes were rear-end collisions caused mostly by excessive speed. Drivers weave and merge to get on the interstate at the intersection. When they slow down, mergers are hit by speeding drivers from behind.

Police wrote 81 tickets at the intersection last year. In 1999 there were 119 tickets and fewer accidents. But police can't focus on the intersection without decreasing enforcement in other unsafe parts of town. Policing the intersection is difficult and requires two to three officers at once because there aren't safe areas to pull over cars and police have to pursue drivers speeding away up I-105. But police have already stepped up enforcement and will do more as time permits, according to the staff memo.

City traffic engineers have tweaked lights to limit speeding but can find no obvious changes to the layout of the intersection that would make it safer. — AP

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



CURB YOUR FALLOUT

This year's curbside leaf collection in Eugene runs Nov. 3 through Jan. 16. Dates are subject to change. The dates for the first of two rounds of pickup are Nov. 3-7 for north Eugene, Nov. 10-14 for central Eugene, Nov. 17-21 for southeast Eugene, Nov. 24- Dec. 5 for southwest Eugene, and Dec. 8-12 for west Eugene.

For more information about the leaf program, call the leaf hotline at 682-5383. For leaf collection in Springfield and outside city limits, call the county at 682-8565.

COUNTY INITIATIVE TARGETS ENFORCEMENT

Lane County residents may get a chance to vote to follow Seattle's example and make marijuana offenses the lowest law enforcement priority, freeing up police resources to go after violent crime. Seattle passed a similar initiative Sept. 16.

Sensible Lane County, a political action committee, is working to get an initiative on the ballot that will amend the Lane County Charter. The Lane County Cannabis Initiative prohibits the expenditure of public funds for marijuana enforcement, arrests, prosecutions and county jail time.

The initiative "forbids Lane County law enforcement from contracting with the federal government, as is the current practice, for marijuana eradication," says a statement

from the PAC. "More importantly, county law enforcement is barred from cooperating with federal raids on medical marijuana patients and caregivers."

"You don't have to partake to understand the injustices," says Pam Driscoll of the Lane County Pacific Green Party. Driscoll notes that tobacco kills about 390,000 Americans a year, prescription drugs kill 100,000, alcohol kills 80,000, cocaine kills 2,200, heroin kills 2,000, aspirin kills 2,000, but no one has been killed by marijuana.

Sensible Lane County can be reached at P.O. Box 1121, Fall Creek, 97438 or online at <http://sensiblelanecounty.tk> or e-mail nejc@resist.ca — TJT

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

• In our Oct. 16 Slant column about LCC we wrote about the Legislature's three-year tax hike helping "save the college from massive program cutbacks." Those cutbacks are not likely to happen right away. According to LCC's administration, repeal of the Legislature's tax package would cost the college about \$900,000 in funding for the biennium. But because Lane based its 2003/04 budget on a lower allocation, no program reductions are expected this year. LCC's budget and programs would be affected in 2004/05.

• In last week's story, "Unfettered Expression," we misspelled the name of Suzanne St. Cyr.

Happening people

Ken Ehler

Just inside the entrance to the new Eugene Public Library, take a left turn to find the Second Hand Prose Bookstore, adjacent to the coffee shop. Friends of the Library volunteer Ken Ehler has worked nearly full-time all this year to



establish and manage the bookstore, an adjunct to the library's annual sale of donated books. "Ken is energetic and dependable - he's done an outstanding job," reports Friends President Edith White. "In just a few months, the store has made \$15,000." A native of Chicago (and still a Cubs Fan), Ehler moved to Arizona at age 10 and earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from UA in 1972. He worked as a research chemist from California to Switzerland and points between until 1989, when he arrived in Eugene for a job at Molecular Probes. "They design fluorescent dies for basic biomedical research," he explains. An avid reader, Ehler started volunteering at the library in 2000, and began reading to kids in the SMART readers program at Adams/Hillside School a year later. He retired at age 56 last year to concentrate on volunteer activities. "My focus in life is getting books into the hands of readers," he says, "especially children."

DAYS OF THE DEAD

