



# Guts Wrencher

Palahniuk, frosh food and beer money.

By Bobbie Willis & Jamie Passaro

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Hey, Eugene, where are you, and what're you doing for fun, for work, or just to pass the time? This new, occasional column is part observer and eavesdropper, part day-after gossip, reflecting upon the Eugene scene.*

## Dude, I Don't Feel so Good

As Chuck Palahniuk read a new short story called "Guts" at WOW Hall last week, several of the 550-plus audience members had to step outside for fresh air. Others put heads between knees and took deep breaths. Three fainted.

Woozie fans are all over Palahniuk's latest book tour — the running total: 39 down (two were treated in hospitals). Many others, this writer included, were left feeling kinda ookie.

Palahniuk's story, three tales of male masturbation gone very wrong (one based on an incident at the UO), was originally rejected by *Playboy* for being "too extreme." They've since changed their minds, offering to publish the story for more than 300 times his *Fight Club* advance.

Palahniuk, looking Mr. Rogers in a sweater vest and fresh from an interview with Conan O'Brien (where he caught a cold after drinking out of sickly Quentin Tarantino's cup) seemed downright gleeful about the gross-out. Ever faithful to his fans, he signed books and appendages for two and a half hours after the reading. He inscribed a copy of *Diary* for the event's coordinator, UO Bookstore's Brian Juenemann: "To Brian — Thank you for 3 More!!! Fall Downs ..." — *JP*

## From the Lunch Department

It's noon and you're caught in the lunch rush spilling from South Eugene High School to shops near 18th Avenue and Pearl Street. The adolescents saunter or shuffle in packs, some wearing headphones connected to portable disk players, others bumping like puppies in a cardboard box. Standing among them at the crosswalk, you feel a little tall. They laugh so much, you wish you were laughing with them. You think about slouching to fit in a little. But you don't, because you're the grownup.

Safeway on 18th is swamped with freshmen. "I wish we could drive," says one. But they only walk still, so they walk here each day for half an hour of freedom — freedom to talk and swear, to partake of grocery goodness.

Ten or 15 kids wait at the deli for sandwiches or the \$1.99 "Snack Attack" — jojo potatoes and a barbecue burrito. Gobs of teens sit in an eating area near the store entrance — boys and girls poured into chairs, draped onto tables, leaning into conversations about things they don't want you to hear, exploding aloud over things they do want you to hear. Their faces are fresh and bright as new apples; you smile at the sheer hope of them.

The boys eat lunches like: a bagel, a donut and a candy bar; jalapeno poppers and chocolate milk on sale. The girls, sigh, eat one kind of lunch: sandwiches, fruit, juice and water.

Mr. Brian Pech, store manager, says, "For the volume of people, these kids behave themselves pretty well." Whether there's a favorite item they wipe out, he only says, "I've seen them eat everything from sushi to corn dogs."

Polishing off the last of lunch, they disperse, orderly as a colony of ants. Pumped on food and freedom, they head back to the day. — *BW*

## The Blue Ribbon

On a recent Tuesday at John Henry's, a new band called Yeltsin opened for Pellet Gun. Maybe you wore your knit stocking cap and your black Converse and your favorite orange shirt; maybe you left your cap on all night — it was that kind of night. The band played that urgent music that vibrates your table and hums through your body, making you feel good and young and a little wild. The guitar player sounded like a forlorn Billy Idol, and the bass player looked like a guy from a literary editing class you took at the UO. "We're paying our dues," said the drummer twice during the short set.

What's curious is how you might've learned about this band — in an *EW* ad for Pabst Blue Ribbon. Curious because San Antonio-based PBR was promoting an unknown Eugene band. Turns out it was PBR's idea, part of a national marketing strategy to tap into local hipsters and the anti-mainstream values they espouse. Instead of slicky beer advertising with twins and catchy slogans, PBR "supports" bike swaps, snowboarding videos and alternative country bands like Portland's Moonshine Hangover. In a June *New York Times Magazine* article, Rob Walker compared Pabst to "some kind of small-scale National Endowment for the Arts for young American outsider culture."

Pabst has sponsored the Eugene Vespa club's spring rally two years running. "When we first approached them, we were looking for free stuff," says Matt Milletto, a 25-year-old web designer/Pabst memorabilia collector. Pabst sent jackets, hats, patches, stickers, and keychains and let them use its logos on flyers.

"Really, a lot of younger alternative or punks or whatever you want to call them beer drinkers who aren't into big corporations have always been drinking Pabst," Milletto says. "The company wants to keep that feel. They really dig sponsoring events."

Does it matter that Pabst is owned by a large company that also owns Schlitz, Stroh's and Old Milwaukee and has ties to the decidedly un-alternative Miller Brewing Company? "I know all that," says Milletto, "but I've been drinking Pabst since before the marketing. It doesn't matter."

Nor did it matter a week later at Lucky's as Yeltsin, performing between Stacked and Ailment, gave in to fans cheering, "Encore, Encore!" Then came Ailment, unfurling a PBR banner, the lead singer flashing a giant PBR patch on his jacket. — *JP*

## TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### COUNTING VOTES

Lane County Elections has followed the mandated reform (and flawed lesser-of-evils theory) by choosing a new optical-scan vote-counting system. Presumably there is a physical record (pencil mark on paper ballot), but the virtual tally will be much easier to rig than with a punch-card system.

Some questions need answers: Is the software proprietary? Will Lane County Elections have access to the code? Will audits or recounts account for ballot input and vote tally, but not the black box in between? Will anyone outside of Elections have access to the software, such as political oversight or media investigation? Or only the voting machine corporation? Will Elections allow the press to audit both the vote tally and the software data after every election?

If the company that makes the machines has the sole access to the software, and since it is a constitutional requirement to hold transparent elections, is this not by definition an illegal voting system?

Why not choose the system (hand-counting paper ballots) with the lowest error rate, the least risk of rigging, the most honest and transparent process, and which tabulates the votes in a few hours?

Is it typical or expedient to avoid a recount or audit of vote-counting procedure, especially after an actual election, rather than merely pre-testing mock-ups? (As evidenced in the 2000 coup with the suppression of any true recount in a contested election where the spectacular and primary issue was exactly how many votes were cast in Florida.)

Check out <http://blackboxvoting.org>

Bernard Nickerson  
Eugene

### DAMAGED BY WAR

As Veteran's day approaches I am haunted by a foreboding I just can't shake. Our soldiers in Iraq are experiencing things human beings were not meant to feel. If we learned anything from the Vietnam War, we learned that these soldiers will all return changed, and

many will return psychologically and emotionally damaged.

We are already hearing reports that the stateside military medical facilities are unprepared and underfunded. Will we be prepared for treating up to 150,000 returning troops suffering from post-traumatic stress? And, with the high levels of depleted uranium all over Iraq, will we be prepared to care for the myriad medical problems that will arise over the next several decades?

On this Veteran's Day, write a letter to your representatives in Washington demanding that laws be passed guaranteeing that these soldiers will not be abandoned. Anyone who puts themselves in harms way to protect our freedom should never again have to struggle for basic human needs for themselves and their families: affordable housing, enough to eat, and proper health care. Every member of congress has a pension that guarantees him or her these basic needs and much more for the rest of their lives. Don't you think the men and women they send to fight should have the same consideration?

If you display a sign that reads "Support Our Troops," here's something real we can accomplish. No matter what side of the Iraq War argument you are on, here is where we can unite.

Carol Horne  
Eugene

### GUNS & CASKETS

Many — though maybe not all of us — know the U.S. is not in Iraq to import democracy. We should complain about our leaders acting immorally. Most do not, maybe because morality can be hard to measure. But battlefield statistics are something else. They are tangible, and so can be measured.

As they mushroom, they finally may get us angry enough to act against leaders whose selfish policies bring business to munitions firms — and to casket makers.

Deaths of at least 20 soldiers, as I write this, in a U.S. helicopter shot down in Iraq boosted the daily death toll of our sacrificed children into double figures. This came as U.S. deaths in the Middle East reached the