

news Briefs

COUNTY TESTS KIDS FOR LEAD

In response to high lead levels in 10 percent of recently tested local children, the Lane County Public Health Department will conduct more testing to determine whether lead poisoning is a widespread problem in the area.

The county tested 50 children, ages 6 months to 5 years, who had been exposed to certain risk factors for lead poisoning. Three of the children had blood lead levels at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter and two had levels between 5 and 10 micrograms per deciliter. The Center for Disease Control considers lead levels at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter elevated, but Lane County Public Health Department specialist Tamara Wilhite says that even half that amount is worrisome.

"Most science shows that any level of lead is elevated," she says. "We determined that at 5 [micrograms per deciliter] or above we would try to do some kind of intervention through education." Lead has been linked to a variety of health problems in children.

Wilhite is working with the county's Women, Infants and Children Nutrition

Program to test more kids for lead. The Lane County Health Department invites the general public to two sessions of free blood lead testing, limited to the first 350 kids ages 6 months to 5 years. The first session will be held at the mental health building at 2411 MLK Blvd. on Monday, Aug. 15. The second session will be held next to the Willamalane Park and Swim Center on G Street in Springfield on Tuesday, Aug. 16. Both sessions will run from 8 am to 5 pm.

— Kera Abraham

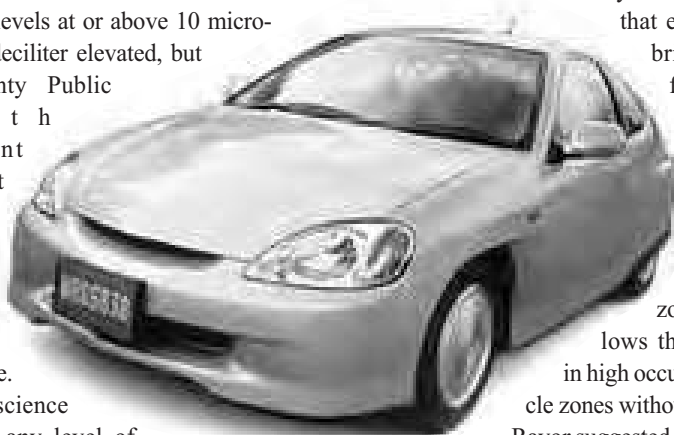
VIP PARKING FOR HYBRIDS?

So you drive a hybrid car that cuts back on fossil fuel emissions. Does that make you special? Former city councilor and current LRAPA board member Gary Rayer thinks so. Rayer wrote to the City Council on Aug. 2, suggesting that the city consider an ordinance to offer parking incentives for hybrid vehicles. He referenced an ordinance adopted by the city of Aspen, Colo.,

that exempts hybrid vehicles from two-hour parking restrictions in residential permit zones and allows them to park in high occupancy vehicle zones without a permit.

Rayer suggested a similar ordinance in Eugene that could offer free or extended parking in city parking lots, on the street and in special zones such as near the UO.

Mayor Kitty Piercy thinks it's an idea worth considering, and she plans to incorporate it into upcoming discussions about a sus-



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



tainable business initiative. "I hope there will be a lot of ideas about how we can use incentives and other encouragements for sustainable practices," she said. — Kera Abraham

LRAPA BOARD PICKS MEMBER

The Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority board of directors appointed its second at-large member on Aug. 9. William Carpenter, an environmental lawyer and former chemical engineer from Springfield, won the board seat with five of eight votes.

Politically, Carpenter's record is a mixed bag. As an attorney, he has represented clients who sued the Environmental Protection Agency for violating clean air standards. As an engineer, he has worked for oil companies in Arizona and California. He currently serves on the Springfield Planning Commission and a committee assisting the UO law student group Friends of Land Air Water.

Carpenter said that his priorities as an LRAPA board member will include finding consensus on divisive issues and avoiding mandatory auto emission controls in the county. He emphasized that clean air draws people to the region, and maintaining the air quality makes good economic sense.

David Monk, former executive director of the Oregon Toxics Alliance, questioned the legality of having two at-large seats on the board. He said that the state statute clearly mandates a seven-member board at this time, with four representatives from Eugene and no at-large members. He advised the board

that a group of citizens might sue the agency on that point.

Tight funding and staffing shortfalls are still problems for LRAPA. The board voted against offering retroactive severance payments to two employees who had been laid off without notice in mid-February.

— Kera Abraham

CELEBRATION BOOKS BANDS

Band bookings are wrapping up for the Eugene Celebration coming up the last weekend in September. The list so far includes Rock & Roll Soldiers, Cherry Poppin' Daddies, North Mississippi Allstars, Catie Curtis, Pretty Girls Make Graves, Prezident Brown and Eleven Eyes. The EC has a website (www.EugeneCelebration.com) with

links and e-mail addresses for those wanting to get involved in the big community bash.

Dates for the EC are later than usual to draw more college students. The rain-or-shine event begins Friday, Sept. 30 and continues through the weekend.

This year's theme is "Live on Broadway," and the annual arts festival will be more compact this year, featuring "an enhanced footprint that concentrates stages and attractions in and around the main thoroughfare of downtown," say organizers.

As in previous years, a Saturday morning parade is planned, along with live entertainment on several stages, a Community Causeway of local non-profit agencies,



North Mississippi Allstars

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

RUTH BELLER AND STERLING WALLACH

"Showing art is a great way to relate to people," says Sterling Wallach, recounting the brief history of the Last Friday ArtWalk. "It's been exciting to see how they respond." Wallach and his partner Ruth Beller, both of them art students in earlier days, painted large commercial murals in Florida before they moved to Eugene 15 years ago and launched their ArtTrek painting business. Inspired for years by the Jawbreaker Window Gallery at 4th and Monroe, Wallach and Beller opened their own Whiteaker-neighborhood art space, Possum Place, in September 2004. In October they organized the first Last Friday ArtWalk, with a total of five stops on the tour. "Every month since then, new people have joined," says Beller. "They open their living rooms and studios to show their art." July's Last Friday tour list had 27 stops and participants of all ages, from full-time artists to first-time exhibitors, plus a neighborhood plant sale at Scobert Park and unveiling of the collaborative Whiteaker Puzzle Project. Learn about this month's event, see a map of exhibit venues, and find out how to participate at lastfridayartwalk.org

