

The Collectors

Military builds database of our children.

Our youth are distressingly vulnerable. Suzanne Swift (the local young woman trying to get out of the Army because of the stress of war and sexual harassment) got recruited to the military in the way that too many are: Not having a clear alternative plan for her next step in life, she fell for the military recruiter's lies and misinformation. She was offered a "deal." For enlisting for five years in the Army as an MP (military police), she would *not* go to Iraq but would get the usual "goodies" the recruiters promote such as money for college.

Little did she know that there are two sorts of MPs – some police military bases while some police checkpoints in Iraq. Little did she know that she would be subjected to constant sexual harassment. Since recruiter promises and enlistment contracts cannot be relied upon, she was very shortly in Iraq.

Young people are vulnerable in another way that is little known: the Pentagon collects data on them.

Without Congressional authorization, the Pentagon has a database estimated to include 90 to 95 percent of all males and females, ages 16 to 25. Though in existence since 2002, knowledge of this database only became public a year ago. The reason for this database: to improve military recruiting capability.

Data gathered include: name, address, email address, phone and cell phone numbers, Social Security number, ethnicity, schools attended, areas of study, birthdate, if males have registered with Selective Service, plus much more. Data comes in from a wide variety of sources such as drivers' license processing, high school and college release of data (unless students opt out), PSAT and SAT scores (unless students refuse release to the military) and the ASVAB (a military entrance and job placement test), unless schools refuse release of data to the military. The Pentagon contracts with a private marketing firm, BeNow, owned by Equifax, a credit rating company, to run the database and to sweep the Internet for information, a task marketing firms are skilled at doing. Youth are often readily persuaded to release private information on the Internet.

Alarmed yet? It gets worse. Youth can contact this database, the Joint Advertising and Marketing Research and Studies office (JAMRS) at 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Ste. 200, Arlington, VA 22203 to stop JAMRS from mailing military recruiting materials, but they cannot remove themselves or any of their data from the database – or even correct inaccurate information, if they somehow know data is inaccurate.

Even more alarmed? It gets worse. Data can be released to national or international law enforcement agencies, tax authorities and many others *without notice of the release. And there is no provision for this database to end at age 26.*

Of the five largest events of compromised personal data, two were lost to hacking, three to stolen or lost backup data (*New York Times*, 5/23). Hacking and theft clearly occur to both governmental and commercial databases. This database exists in both realms, being run by a commercial company which sweeps the Internet daily for information and conveys it to the Pentagon on a weekly basis.

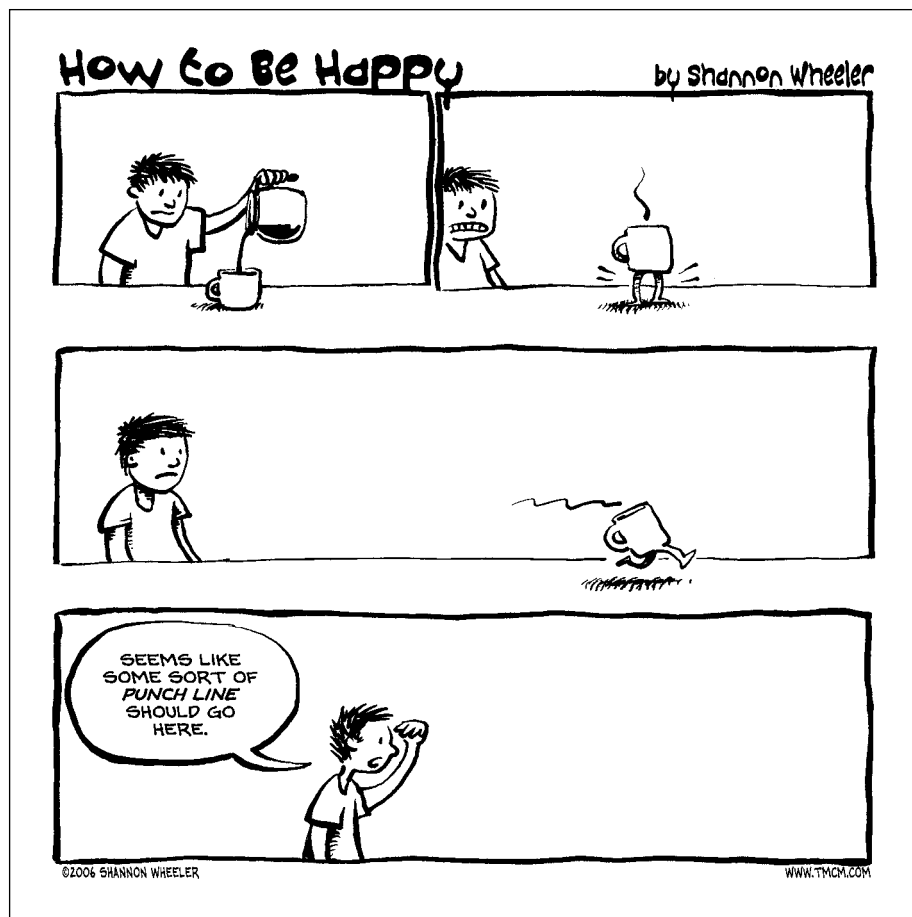
This Pentagon database – at the moment confined to youth, but having no end date – seems on track to become a permanent database on everyone. How attractive to identity thieves is a database with the key information of Social Security numbers, plus birthdates, plus lots of personal information?

It seems to me that the general public is far too silent and accepting of governmental invasions of our privacy, especially when such invasions are done in the name of fighting the "war on terror" or in the name of facilitating military recruitment.

Now that our youth – as young as 16 – are in such an extensive, invasive, unneeded and probably illegal database – for the stated reason of facilitating military recruiting, are we ready to stand up and speak out loudly in protest? How many more Suzanne Swifts will it take?

Please call our senators and representatives to tell them to take action to end this database.

Carol Van Houten is co-coordinator of the Committee for Countering Military Recruitment, a joint project of CALC and Eugene Peaceworks, which works to get out information that military recruiters fail to convey to youth.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RETURN THE FAVOR

Measure 37 is not about fairness. It is about greed and opportunity. The opportunity to wholly dismantle the regulations that for more than 30 years have protected Oregon's resource lands and natural beauty from the feeding frenzy of callous exploitation rampant in other states. And its chief financial backers, the timber, real estate and construction companies, have begun to call the debt.

The recent Wildish and Lone Rock Timber Company claims for \$15 million and \$11 million, respectively, are just a hint of what's to come from Seneca-Jones, Weyerhaeuser and other long-term corporate landholders. It's certainly predictable, but is it fair for a corporation that has made a fortune from public contracts by extracting gravel and then harvesting timber from land it picked up for a dime to capitalize yet again by being permitted to turn resource land into gentleman estates?

Every year one of the local TV stations airs a Wildish video of pristine natural landscapes called "Hasn't God Been Good to Oregon." I'll not presume to speak for God, but without question, the cities of Eugene and Springfield, Lane County and the state have been very good to Wildish. We can only hope that the Wildish family will see fit to return the favor and, for a reasonable price, if not a charitable donation, make their 1,400 acres of oak and fir woodland overlooking the Middle Fork of the Willamette River a part of Buford Park-Mount Pisgah and the public trust.

Robert Emmons
Fall Creek

and Springfield and the county administrator.

It is misleading to imply that LCOG is less accountable to taxpayers. LCOG does not create or collect taxes. Almost all of the revenue that LCOG receives is for specific contracts, which makes it very accountable to the governments that are receiving the services.

Additionally, the quotation of the total travel budget implied it was excessive. LCOG's single largest travel expense is for Senior & Disabled staff to visit people that need care that do not have mobility, an expense that is necessary to provide needed services to the elderly and disabled.

The concluding sentence of the article stated that "LCOG staff recommended that LCOG threaten to seize control of the required local approval of the West Eugene Parkway." The accurate report is that members of the LCOG Board, all elected officials, assumed their responsibility to ensure that the metro area continues to receive federal money for transportation projects. The board's action was not about the WEP.

The real question is why would a publication that makes Eugene a better place by providing detailed information about local issues try to discredit a public agency by publishing misleading information? LCOG does not have taxing authority and exists to provide cost effective services to local governments as well as the elderly and disabled citizens of Lane County. *EW* loses credibility by blatantly misreporting information and making unfounded and inaccurate assertions.

Robert Swank & Warren Roe
Eugene

EDITORS NOTE: Salary numbers, including benefits, are from page 40 of LCOG's 2006-07 Work Program and Budget.

INACCURATE REPORT

Eugene Weekly is an important alternative source of information and perspective for local issues. However, its credibility is compromised when the information reported is grossly inaccurate. Alan Pittman's article in the July 13 issue titled "LCOG'S Fat" is full of false information and assertions.

The LCOG executive director's salary package is about \$123,000, which is 25 percent less than the \$164,000 stated in the article. For comparison's sake, this is substantially less than the compensation of the city managers of Eugene

FEAR FACTOR

Dear *EW*: What's with the barricades? I thought you were going through a strike, not a siege. Union fangs that produced bloody strikes like the Longshoremen Strike in 1934, the image your fences invoke, were pulled long ago and history tells that provocation was shared by both sides in that era of labor history. I assume you're not up to shenanigans so what is it? Don't you trust the folks you hired? What is the

"Passion is what epitomizes this niche of our industry. Passion for the coffee, passion for the community, and passion for the customers."

-Jay Caragay

Wandering Goat Coffee Company
Eugene, Oregon • (541) 344-5161
www.WanderingGoat.com