

STAGGERING DUCKS ABOUND

Since the UO and city of Eugene endorsed public drinking by waiving laws against alcoholic parking lot parties around Autzen Stadium, drunk Ducks are causing problems.

In the West University area on Friday, Sept. 28, Eugene police issued 68 citations for minor in possession of alcohol, five citations for allowing minors to consume alcohol and 2 citations for urinating in public. The next day, the police issued 16 citations for open container and 16 citations for minor in possession.

At Autzen Stadium that weekend, police ejected 142 people from the football game, mostly drunks. Two drunk people were arrested for disorderly conduct and one for trespass. Local and state police also arrested a total of nine Duck fans for drunk driving.

Retired UO VP of Administration Dan Williams urged the City Council to waive laws against alcohol at parking lot parties around the stadium. Duck fans who drive to the game "expect the ability to consume alcohol," Williams said on Sept. 24. "We cannot be insensitive to the expectations."

Last fall the UO warned parents of the grave consequences of alcohol on campus: "Approximately 1,700 college students (aged 18-24) die each year in the U.S. in alcohol related incidents. Along with the above reported student deaths, 97,000 sexual assaults, 599,000 injuries, and 696,000 assaults were reported. ... In addition, 25 percent of college students report academic consequences from drinking, including lower grades overall, missed classes, falling behind, and doing poorly on exams."

Last year 196 people died in alcohol related accidents in Oregon, a leading cause of death for young people.

But while city police have struggled with beer riots at the UO in recent years, the UO has made millions on alcohol advertising tied to sporting events. The UO has made millions more by selling beer at games in its indoor practice facility and requiring fans who want choice Autzen parking party spots to make big donations.

—Alan Pittman



SPOTTED OWLS IN SPOTLIGHT

In the wake of this summer's revelation that the Bush administration's plan to save the northern spotted owl from extinction is "deeply flawed," lawsuits filed by local environmental groups are flying fast and furious.

Last week, the U.S. Forest Service agreed to withdraw plans to log spotted owl habitat in the Deschutes National Forest in response to a lawsuit filed by the Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project, Cascadia Wildlands Project and the Sierra Club. On the same day that settlement was reached, the same groups filed another suit to protect the owls from another USFS logging project in a different area of the same forest.

The Forest Service proposed to log 190 acres of spotted owl habitat in an old-growth reserve that burned in last year's Black Crater fire near the Three Sisters Wilderness. Conservationists argue that such burned forests are still valuable owl habitat. "Owls have evolved with wildfire," says Josh Laughlin of the Cascadia Wildlands project.

The lawsuit alleged, among other issues, "distortions of scientific research regarded spotted owl use of fire-scorched habitat." The settlement allows for the logging of 27 acres, while setting aside another 174 acres to naturally regenerate.

The new lawsuit seeks to stop timber sales that are part of the USFS Five Buttes Project near a popular recreation area in the Cascade Lakes region. The USFS proposes to log 4,235 acres that includes, as in the case of the Black Crater suit, spotted owl habitat in old-growth reserves.

The proposed timber sale would log fire resistant old-growth trees, according to Asante Riverwind of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club, which "contradicts Forest Service claims to decrease fire hazard."

The groups are not against all logging in national forests. According to Jay Lininger of Cascadia Wildlands, "the way to reduce fire hazard is to burn the forest after careful thinning that leaves big trees and their canopies in place."

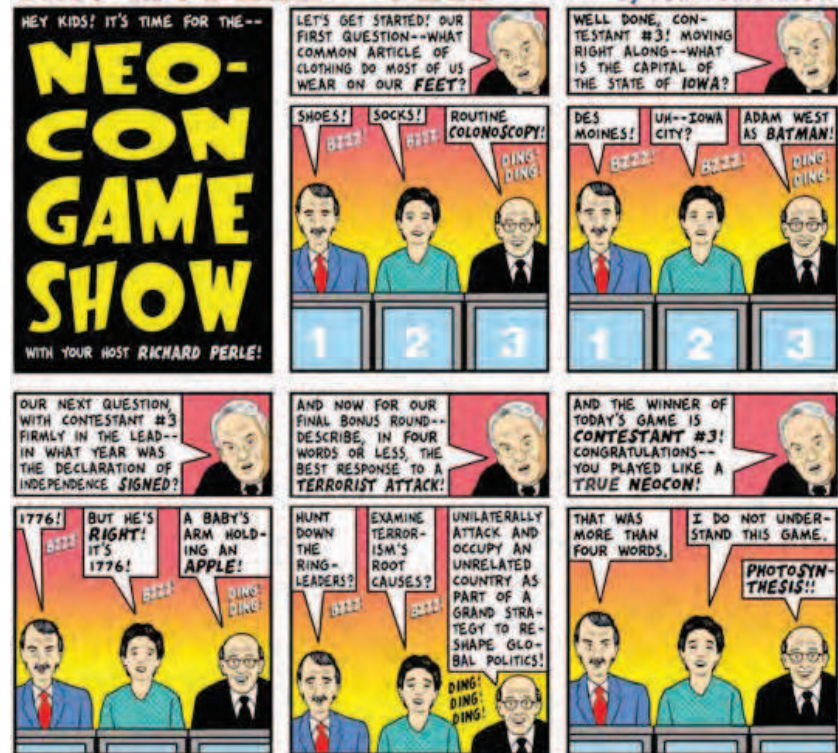
The Bush administration has been trying to step up logging on public lands; the conservation groups allege that the Pacific Northwest Regional Office of the Forest Service has tripled timber quotas for the Deschutes and other forests, emphasizing larger logs. Lawsuits have largely blocked the attempted increases.

—Camilla Mortensen



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs



FUSSING OVER FISH

The confusion over when it's OK to snack on seafood got a little worse this week after the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition issued a press release stating that the benefits of eating ocean fish outweigh the risks of mercury tainting the fish. Their recommendation for pregnant and breastfeeding women to eat a minimum of 12 ounces of fish a week contradicts the advice of the federal government, which recommends 12 ounces or less.

According to the FDA, for the average

person, the benefits of eating a limited amount of fish outweighs the side effects of methylmercury exposure. Methylmercury is toxic in high doses. It can harm the immune system, the gastrointestinal system and the central nervous system. High levels of exposure can kill you. Methylmercury is particularly harmful to fetuses and small children.

Mercury poisoning is not just an issue related to ocean fish. Here in Lane County, fish from the Willamette River as well as Cottage Grove and Dorena Reservoirs have high mercury levels. Fish in the Willamette also have high polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) levels, according to the Oregon Department of Health Services. PCBs lurk in the fatty tis-

FREEWAYS PLAN EUGENE'S FUTURE

A little-known regional government agency is pushing big freeway projects that have little to do with official Eugene plans for compact growth.

The Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has proposed \$182 million in new highway projects that seemingly ignore local land use plans and could drive more urban sprawl, according to a letter from 1000 Friends of Oregon's transportation advocate Rob Zako.

The MPO projects include \$90 million for two new freeway interchanges along Hwy 126 in Springfield, a \$22 million revamped I-5 interchange at Coburg, \$51 million for more river crossing capacity in north Eugene and \$20 million for widening West 11th Ave.

All the new freeway work isn't called for in local land use plans, according to Zako. That means the MPO's highway plans will drive new, unplanned development, Zako said. "We as yet see no evidence" that the costly road projects are consistent with local land use plans or that the projects have "been vetted at the local level (in particular with public hearings)."

Despite the huge decisions it makes, the MPO is dominated by Lane Council of Governments staff, has an undemocratic structure and is not directly accountable to voters. —Alan Pittman