

sues of fish and, to a lesser extent, in the muscle tissue.

Mercury comes from natural mineral sources as well as human sources like mining. PCBs are chemicals that were widely used in electrical equipment before they were banned in 1976. They are still entering the food chain and, like mercury, can adversely affect fetuses and infants.

If you're concerned about sustainability as well as health, thanks to the Internet and text messaging, you can find out which fish are OK to eat on your cell phone before you order a meal.

Text 30644 on your cell phone with the message "FISH" and the name of the fish you're thinking about eating, and the Blue Ocean Institute will get back to you within seconds thanks to their new "Fishphone" service. Or you can use the Internet to access the Monterey Bay Aquarium's listing of sustainable seafoods that also notes which ones may be high in mercury: www.montereybayaquarium.org/mobile/sfw/

Currently the guide has farmed and Atlantic salmon on their "avoid" list as non-sustainable and mercury tainted. Wild salmon from Oregon, California and Washington are listed as a "good alternative" and wild Alaskan salmon are a "best choice."

If pets rather than infants are your concern, you should know to never feed Pacific Northwest salmon to your pup. Salmon and other freshwater fish in the Cascades can carry a microorganism that is toxic to dogs when eaten, though it has no effects on humans. — *Camilla Mortensen*

METH MOUTH EXPOSED

Is "meth mouth" overhyped? The federal Office of National Drug Control Policy is featuring graphic close ups of mangled, rotted teeth in a national ad campaign (some have run in *EW*). Some critics have compared current federal anti-drug messages to laughable, earlier propaganda efforts like the 1937 film *Reefer Madness*.

Meth does hurt teeth, but not directly, *Slate* media critic Jack Shafer has written, citing medical studies. The decay



comes not from direct chemical erosion, but from the dry mouths, soda habits and poor dental hygiene that are side effects of meth addiction, according to Shafer. He notes that similar dental damage can come from many other prescription and legal drugs, such as alcohol. "But don't expect anybody to call it 'Miller mouth.'" — *Alan Pittman*

WAR DEAD

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq began on March 20, 2003

(last week's numbers in parentheses):

- **3,815 U.S. troops killed*** (3,804)
- **27,767 U.S. troops injured*** (28,009)
- **122 U.S. military suicides*** (122)
- **301 coalition troops killed**** (300)
- **933 contractors killed** (accurate updates NA)
- **81,405 Iraqi civilians killed***** (81,119)
- **\$458.2 billion cost of war** (\$456.2 billion)
- **\$130.3 million cost to Eugene taxpayers** (\$129.7 million)

* through Oct. 8, 2007; source: icasualties.org; some figures only updated monthly

** estimate; source: icasualties.org

*** highest estimate; source: iraqbodycount.org; based on confirmed media reports; other groups calculate

SLANT

• Good news that the new owners of **McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center** may be taking a serious look at locating their new hospital somewhere besides out in the country north of Eugene. We never could figure out the rationale for either hospital building far away from population centers. Community Health Systems now has an excellent opportunity to compete with PeaceHealth by building medical facilities south of the river and in or close to downtown Eugene. Patients, doctors and hospital employees will appreciate a more convenient location, and that will translate to more business while saving people and the environment from sprawl. Where to put an urban hospital? Most of downtown is empty parking lots and poorly occupied buildings. How about the huge clinic site at 12th and Olive PeaceHealth has said it will abandon? Another good site would be the Lane County Fairgrounds. Unfortunately, our community depends on the whims of a stock market-oriented corporation 3,000 miles away.

• More good news: Some Eugeneans, including some of our staffers, were happy to learn that although they still can't get married, they will soon have a limited number of something resembling marriage rights. Yes, it's true, the conservatives behind a ballot initiative to undo the **domestic partnerships** bill passed by the Oregon Legislature this year (one that would give people things like inheritance rights and hospital visitation rights) failed to get enough people to sign their initiative. Word is still out on whether the mean-spirited groups gathered enough homophobic signatures to put a companion **anti-discrimination bill** on the ballot, but we hope Oregonians didn't sign, and wouldn't vote, for discrimination. What's that rallying cry – "Oregon is For Haters"? Let's not go there.

• After pillaging vast swaths of Oregon's natural beauty, the Stewart clan of timber barons has its eyes on **Waldo Lake**, claiming states' rights are being violated and saying motor boat noise is not as big a problem as RV generators, boom boxes and rowdy campers on shore. Heirs of the loggers have sued to block a Forest Service plan to keep gas-powered motor boats off the state-owned lake – one of the clearest, most pristine and unspoiled large mountain lakes in the world. Motor boat noise carries for miles across the glassy clear lake, disturbing the very wilderness experience hikers, bikers, paddlers and sailors came to the lake to enjoy. Outboard motors, particularly the two-cycle models, also literally pump burned motor oil exhaust into the water as they run. Careless gas and oil spills and engines lost overboard are other hazards associated with motor boats. Quiet electric motors today are more powerful and have longer-lasting batteries to provide a way for the elderly and disabled to experience the lake without spoiling it. Gas-powered boaters already have countless reservoirs, lakes and rivers to run around on. Leave this rare natural jewel to the vast majority who want Waldo preserved as unpolluted, quiet waters.

• Our editor is getting some grumpy phone messages regarding Dan Pegoda's "mean-spirited" satirical cartoon Sept. 27 depicting the **new audio crosswalk buttons** and their incessant beeping. We're reminded of Simon Bond's classic *101 Uses for a Dead Cat*. Absolutely insensitive and offensive, but funny as hell. For the record, we applaud efforts to make Eugene streets safer and more accessible for those with disabilities. But the beeping can drive you bonkers.

• Check our blog this week for photos and observations of the **Gods of Hip Hop & Comedy** show at Mac Court Oct. 6. What a fiasco, with the star attraction Lil Wayne busted and behind bars in Boise and no refunds in sight for unhappy concert-goers. Not a happy hip hop scene. Were you there? Leave your snarky rants at blogs.eugeneweekly.com As we go to press we hear from Dustin Locke at radio station 94.9 Jamz that the station is trying to bring Lil Wayne back for a make-up performance. Locke says "the promoters will issue no refunds, and ticket holders are encouraged to keep their tickets." Sounds like a discount might be in the works. Meanwhile, the station is banning stand-up comic Charlie Murphy from any future publicity or advertising on the station due to Murphy's "childish" and "obscene" behavior on the stage. Sometimes the most memorable concerts are the ones that go terribly wrong.



TODD COOPER

• The **Bush White House** has never taken responsibility for the quagmire we find ourselves in Iraq, the death and displacement of literally millions of people, and the incredible destruction and pollution of housing, public institutions and infrastructure. Instead, the administration is increasingly blaming Iran for the mess, and drawing up revised attack plans. Instead, we should be cranking up diplomacy and encouraging talks on how the U.S. and Iran can work together to restore stability to Iraq. Seymour Hersh outlines the White House's shifting targets in the Mideast and the likely outcome of one more violently insane U.S. foreign policy initiative. Hersh's 4,000-word analysis can be found in the Oct. 1 *New Yorker* or at commondreams.org.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

REFERENDUM MANIPULATION

After two city referendums made it onto the ballot in November, the city of Eugene moved to make referendum approval harder for petitioners.

The council passed a change to slightly increase the number of signatures required, but balked in a 4-3 vote Sept. 24 at allowing the city flexibility in when to schedule a referendum election.

Councilor Bonny Bettman said the scheduling proposal opened the door to the city manipulating the timing to make passing a measure harder. Bettman said the city already has "all the power" when it comes to defeating citizen referendums. "It is a very challenging process for the community to be able to do this, and we shouldn't make it any harder."

But Councilor Alan Zelenka said he was "unconvinced" by Bettman's arguments. Not allowing the city to schedule a vote when other measures were already on the ballot "could cost us a quarter of a million dollars" in election costs, he said.

— *Alan Pittman*