

pm Monday, Dec. 17. The event is free, but donations will go to aid flood-damaged Tabasco, Mexico. For more information call Armando Morales at 744-0954. The event is put on by Oak Hill in conjunction with Adelante Si, the *Dirección de Atención a Comunidades Guanajuatenses en el extranjero* and other organizations.

You can also attend a free choral *Posadas* sung in Spanish and English, followed by fiesta and breaking of piñata at 5 pm Dec. 16 at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection. Call 686-8462. — *Camilla Mortensen*

KERWOOD A FINALIST

Lorraine Kerwood, founder and director of NextStep Recycling in Eugene, is a finalist in the Volvo for Life Awards, and could win big bucks for her nonprofit — if enough people vote for her online before Jan. 7.

Kerwood is one of 10 community “heroes” nominated and selected in the environ-



Lorraine Kerwood

WAR DEAD

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

(last week's numbers in parentheses):

- **3,882 U.S. troops killed*** (3,876)
- **28,451 U.S. troops injured*** (28,451)
- **130 U.S. military suicides*** (130)
- **306 coalition troops killed**** (306)
- **933 contractors killed** (accurate updates NA)
- **84,779 to one million Iraqi civilians killed***** (84,250)
- **\$473.9 billion cost of war** (\$471.9 billion)
- **\$134.7 million cost to Eugene taxpayers** (\$134.2 million)

* through Nov. 12, 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

ment category. Other categories are for safety, quality of life and “butterfly” — Volvo’s youth category.

The top vote-getter in each category gets \$100,000 for his or her nonprofit, and runners-up get \$25,000. One overall winner in

PIERCY TO RUN AGAIN FOR MAYOR

Mayor Kitty Piercy announced this week that she will seek a second term as Eugene’s mayor, saying “I love this city and have enjoyed working hard during my first term to set the stage for Eugene’s future.” Piercy’s announcement was expected, and Eugene politicians have already been meeting to see who might oppose her in 2008.

Piercy is optimistic about Eugene’s future and says she wants to continue the programs she has instigated or supported. “Our local economy is healthy; our housing market is experiencing fewer downturns than many across the country; citizens are engaged in the community; and people have expressed to me that, for the first time, they know the doors of City Hall are open to them,” she said in a prepared statement.

Piercy has pushed for green jobs and sustainable practices. The Mayor’s Sustainable Business Initiative, adopted by the City Council, is designed to support and encourage the growth of businesses that use sustainable products and practices.

She said that in her second term, she will “keep the community engaged in downtown revitalization efforts to achieve a community-approved solution, and will continue efforts to advance arts and culture as visitor attractions and contributors to Eugene’s economic vitality.” She said she also intends to move forward on human rights issues, such as enacting recommendations from the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Homelessness and establishing a Youth Advisory Board.

During her first term, Piercy participated in more than 6,400 meetings and community gatherings. She meets regularly with citizen groups representing diverse interests.



TASERS IN THE TREES

Is Smokey Bear going to start zapping tree sitters? Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) recently revealed that the U.S. Forest Service purchased over half a million dollars worth of Tasers and “related accessories.”

The Forest Service right now is so short of cash that it lacks the funds to create new timber sales. According to a November AP article, the USFS didn’t anticipate the housing slump would result in a drop in lumber prices. Some of their timber sales have gone without bids. Without selling public timber, the USFS can’t plot timber sales and plan the environmental reviews necessary to log, according to the article.

However, the Forest Service was able to come up with \$600,001.52 in funds to buy the Tasers, according to records obtained by a Freedom of Information Act request by PEER. The agency purchased 700 of the devices, enough to equip every USFS special agent and law enforcement officer with a stun gun, says PEER.

TASER International proudly announced the sale in a Sept. 19 press release, stating, “We are excited about this new additional federal agency purchasing TASER technology to protect life.”

According to the TASER International release, the U.S. military has signed a five-year indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract with TASER International and has seen a “marked increase” in purchases by federal agencies.

News media across the country have reported the Taser of pregnant women and handcuffed and restrained suspects (see video on blogs.eugeneweekly.com this week). In 2005 alone, 61 people died after being Tasered.

The Forest Service has not actually begun to use the Tasers. USFS Director of Law Enforcement and Investigations John Twiss, the official who authorized the purchase, said in a letter to PEER that the agency is currently developing the training for agents to use the electronic control devices.

Executive Director Jeff Ruch commented in the PEER press release, “As a result, in addition to the howl of the coyote and the hoot of the owl, the plaintive cry of ‘Don’t tase me, bro’ may soon echo through the forest night.” — *Camilla Mortensen*



MANAGER PICK BY SMOKE PUFFS

The Eugene City Council has yet to decide whether or not it will make one of its most important decisions in secret.

City Human Resources Director Lauren Chouinard said the council is “undecided” on whether they will release a list of finalists for the city’s powerful city manager position. “They haven’t discussed that.”

The council has been meeting behind closed doors in executive sessions for the last several months to select a new city manager. Many cities, including Springfield, publicly announce the top finalists for the job before making the decision.

But in 2003, Eugene hired former City Manager Dennis Taylor in a secret meeting without publicly announcing any other finalists.

The secrecy surrounding the selection drew widespread criticism. A *Register-Guard* editorial compared the council’s secrecy to cardinals announcing the selection of the pope with puffs of smoke. “Eugene residents deserve to know who is being considered as finalists for the critical position of city manager,” stated the editorial.

Some councilors and staff have expressed concern that candidates may not apply if they think the cities where they work now will find out they’re looking for another job. But many other cities release lists of top candidates. Besides Springfield’s selection in 2005, other examples include Cincinnati, Ohio and Federal Way, Wash. Lawrence, Kan. publicly announced that Dennis Taylor was a finalist there in 2006.

Bob Neher, the recruiter the city hired to find a new manager, said that it’s up to the council whether or not a list of finalists is released to the public for scrutiny and comment. In any case, after finalists come to town for interviews and risk being seen, they will already know that their interest in the position may become public, according to Neher. “At that point we inform the candidates it can no longer be kept confidential.”

Councilors have repeatedly called the city manager selection one of the most important decisions they will make as elected officials. Eugene’s city managers have seized enormous power over city government. They rule over a staff of 1,400, a budget of \$300 million and city assets of a half a billion dollars. They control all contracts, hiring and firing, disciplinary action, promotions, audits, legal interpretations and information coming out of city government.

Chouinard said the council has so far narrowed down 78 applicants to 11 candidates in its closed-door meetings. He said that on Dec. 18 the council plans to decide on the top few finalists to interview and will conduct those interviews on Jan. 11 and 12. — *Alan Pittman*