

although a recently published study (plotting number of diagnoses against time since such preservatives were, theoretically, phased out in California) fails to support this notion. A genetic link has been discovered but apparently cannot explain the entire increase. A genetically determined predisposition to other triggers may be involved, however.

In its winter 2008 newsletter, the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) reports on a new study that shows a link between autism and maternal exposure to organochlorine pesticides during the critical first weeks of pregnancy. The researchers identified children diagnosed with autism and matched their mothers' addresses to application records for the pesticides difocol and endosulfan in California's Central Valley.

According to the study in the Oct. 2007 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*, children were six times more likely to have been diagnosed with autism if their mothers lived within 500 meters of fields with the highest levels of pesticide use.

The finding is particularly interesting in light of a previous study which found elevated rates of autism correlated with distribution of air pollution by heavy metals (including mercury) and organochlorines (chlorinated solvents). Diagnoses of autism in California increased by about 10 between 1993 and 2004, close to average for the U.S. as a whole. In some states (including Oregon), autism has increased more than 100 fold in the same period.

— Rachel Foster



sects sea lions, but they are not listed as a threatened species. States can get permission to kill identifiable sea lions or seals that have "a significant negative impact" on endangered salmon and steelhead. Oregon, Washington and Idaho made the request to kill the animals in 2006.

There are four possible alternatives, including "no action" and nonlethal deterrence, but NOAA recommended lethal action.

Opponents to the plan say the real problem is not the sea lions but problems with the habitat and the dam itself, which blocks the fishes' migratory routes. The dam's fish ladders, which are intended to help salmon get through the dam, concentrate the salmon in a small area, making them easier for the sea lions to prey upon them.

It is unclear if killing the sea lions will fix the problem. Some think that the killing of problematic animals will scare off other sea lions, and others say more sea lions will come and replace the ones killed. For more information or to comment on the plan, go to [www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov) and click on "what's new." — Camilla Mortensen

## SLAYING SEA LIONS FOR SALMON?

The public has until Feb. 19 to comment on a federal plan to shoot sea lions at the Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service has recommended that up to 85 sea lions a year be shot in order to protect wild salmon. The California sea lions are intelligent and are often used as entertainment in marine parks or trained by the Navy for military operations. California sea lions are native to the Pacific Coast from as far north as British Columbia and as far south as the Galápagos Islands.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act pro-

## COUGARS GO TO COURT

A lawsuit to stop the hunting of 2,000 cougars in Oregon by federal officials has been filed by local and state wildlife advocates in conjunction with Goat Ranchers of Oregon and Ranchers for Rural Responsibility.

The suit charges officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services with violating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by not examining all the environmental impacts of their decision to kill cougars on behalf of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Plaintiffs include Big Wildlife, Cascadia Wildlands Project, Center for Biological Diversity, Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center, Mountain Lion Foundation and

• **Closing Willamette Street to cars** for monthly "Walk and Bike the Gut and Lose Your Gut" events on Sunday mornings this summer sounds like a great idea that everyone should get behind. The idea from this year's Walking and Biking Summit (see news brief) would promote a healthy community and environment and is just the fun prescription Eugene needs to fight against obesity and global warming.

• First, it was "Love's a faggot." Then it changed to "Love's a pussy" – among other things. And there were signs. At Jan. 24's **UCLA vs. Oregon men's basketball game**, things were ugly everywhere except on the court, where UCLA freshman Kevin Love (whose father Stan played for the Ducks back in the day), his teammates and the Oregon team didn't respond to the Pit Crew's nasty taunting. What would make the students think these chants were appropriate? University officials didn't take control of the situation though Athletic Director Pat Kilkenny later told the *R-G* he should have told the students to stop. But the crux of the issue remains unaddressed: The fans didn't use those words to "question Love's sexual orientation" (as newspapers and ESPN have put it) or, as *R-G* columnist George Schroeder wrote, to "call him soft in an especially demeaning way." No, what they did was use sexual orientation and gender as insults, as if it were inferior to be gay or female. Dear Pit Crew: What's your problem with gay people? And you think it's demeaning to have female genitalia? Hm. We wonder: If heterosexual, male leaders at the UO would do a bit more to show they're against sexism and homophobia – like supporting women's sports in the same manner as men's sports, for instance – would the young fans follow suit?

• Given the choice between a **McKenzie-Willamette hospital site** on the far sprawling edge of Eugene or a centrally located Glenwood or Springfield site, we'd choose the latter. The Eugene-at-any-cost school of hospital siting argues that Eugene shouldn't give up the estimated \$3 million a year in property taxes the hospital might provide. But the costs of extending roads, sewers, water and other services to a sprawl site for such a massive development would far exceed any likely tax revenue. That's exactly why the Delta site on the edge of town was such a dumb idea and eventually collapsed. The hospital shouldn't repeat the error. There are plenty of centrally located redevelopment sites in Eugene and Springfield that would work far better and on balance save taxpayers millions while saving lives with a close, full-service emergency room.

• One central hospital site that would be a huge mistake is the **UO Riverfront Research Park's land** north of the railroad tracks. Siting a big building and parking lots in a green, natural area along the river would result in an explosion of opposition from local environmentalists and the UO community. A majority of the UO and Eugene community has long wanted to preserve the area as a park.

• **Eastside Alternative Elementary School** must move. But the choice of the old Willard elementary site for Eastside makes little sense in terms of the district's stated goal of increasing diversity in alternative schools. Willard is on the shoulder of one of the wealthiest, most educated neighborhoods in Eugene, College Hill, and centrally located in white, well-off south Eugene. If the district is serious about integration, a better choice would be to set up the popular Eastside as a magnet school in a more diverse neighborhood. Moving Eastside to Willard will also displace the slightly larger and far more diverse Village School. Why did the district choose to prioritize the Eastside kids over the Village School kids? Eastside has about 4 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch while the Village School has about 40 percent. So moving the Village School looks bad.

• We, like many in Eugene, were appalled by the **Police Union's Jan. 17 guest viewpoint** in *The R-G* savaging Mayor Kitty Piercy, library funding, sustainability, believers in global warming, young people, diversity and progressives, a list that makes up a majority of the people in Eugene. Thoughts of banana republic military juntas come to mind. Why do we continue to pay enormous sums to employ and heavily arm a bunch of people who hate us? Maybe they don't all hate us. But as usual, we've seen no cracks in the blue wall. Unless they want to be tarnished by the same brush, individual police officers need to write letters to the editor separating their personal views from the bile of their elected leadership.

# HAPPENIN' Biz

**David Doucet Violins** "I grew up working with wood," says David Doucet. "My dad was a great carpenter." Doucet also grew up with music, beginning with accordion at age six, then rock guitar in his teens (he played the club circuit in LA) and eventually the violin as a music major at UCSD. "I never went back," says Doucet, who continued to play violin in small ensembles while he worked at remodeling and bike repair along the "hippie circuit" north to Santa Cruz, to Nevada City and to Eugene in 1976. After two years learning violin repair as an apprentice in Seattle in the late '80s, he had a violin shop inside the Pacific Winds music store through the '90s. "There's no substitute for working next to talented people," says Doucet, who went back to Seattle for six years in the violin shop of Rafael Carraba. But tiring of big-city life ("I love the outdoors"), he returned to Eugene in '05. In October of '07, he opened David Doucet Violins at 21 E 28th (also at [www.doucetviolins.com](http://www.doucetviolins.com)). "I'm into it because of love of music," he says. "I like to work with people who make music. My latest passion is Celtic music on the violin."

