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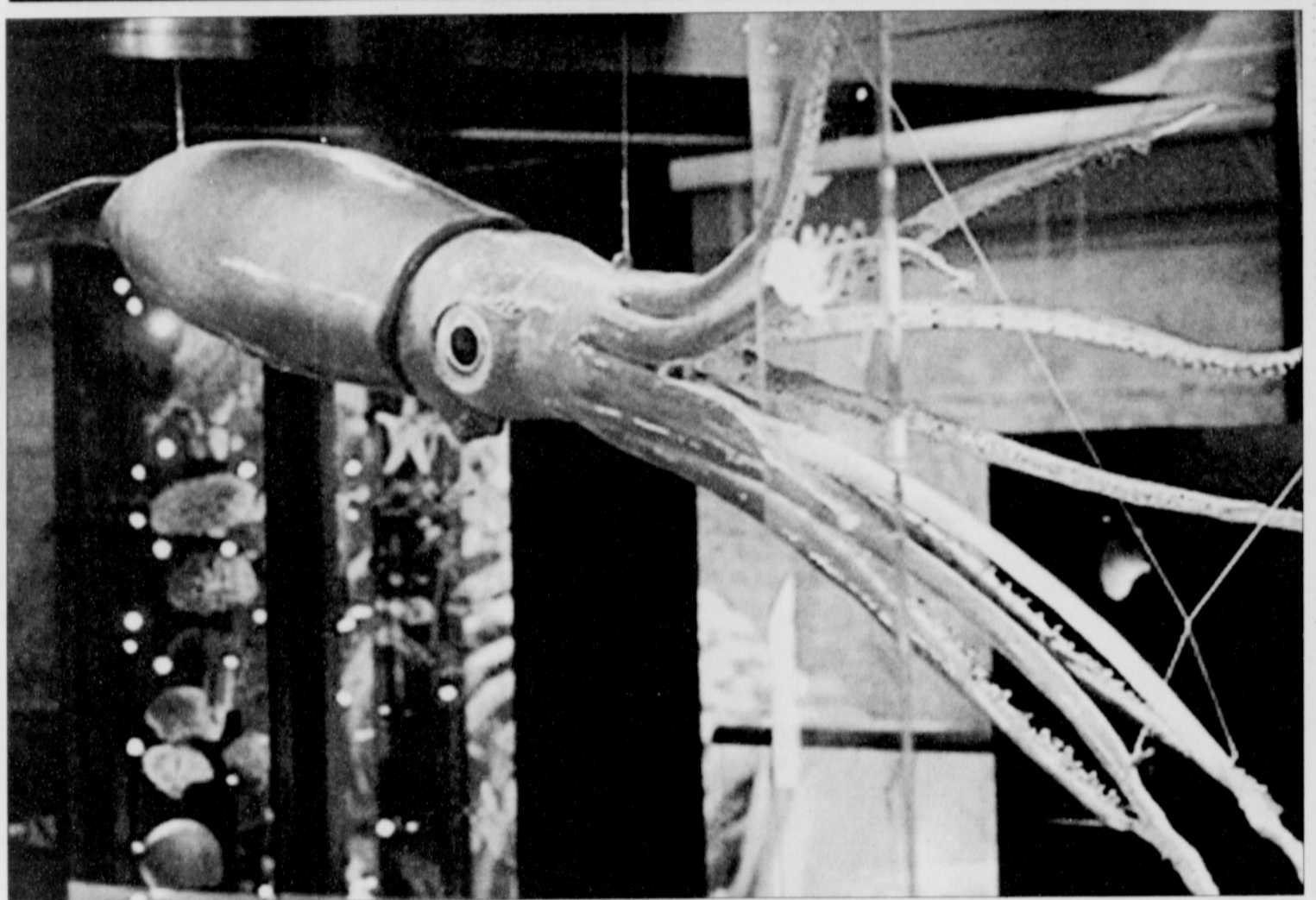
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HEALTH



A giant squid, like this one on show at Paris Natural history museum, may provide keys for medical discovery.

From Poison to Progress

Squids may have medical answers

(AP)—The razor-sharp beaks that giant squids use to attack whales — and maybe even Captain Nemo's submarine — might one day lead to improved artificial limbs for people.

That deadly beak may be a surprise to many people, and has long posed a puzzle for scientists. They wonder how a creature without any bones can operate it without hurting itself.

Now, researchers at the University of California, Santa Bar-

bara, report that they have an explanation

The beak, made of hard chitin and other materials, changes density gradually from the hard tip to a softer, more flexible base where it attaches to the muscle around the squid's mouth, the researchers found.

That means the tough beak can chomp away at fish for dinner, but the hard material doesn't press or rub directly against the squid's softer tissues.

Herbert Waite, a professor in the university's department of

molecular, cellular & developmental biology, said such graduated materials could have broad applications in biomedical materials.

"Lots of useful information could come out of this for implant materials, for example. Interfaces between soft and hard materials occur everywhere," he said.

Frank Zok, professor and associate chair of the department of materials, said he had always been skeptical of whether there is any real advantage to materials that change their properties gradually from one part to another, "but the squid beak turned me into a

believer."

"If we could reproduce the property gradients that we find in squid beak, it would open new possibilities for joining materials," Zok said.

The researchers are learning lessons that can be applied to medical materials in the future, said Phillip B. Messersmith of the department of biomedical engineering at Northwestern University.

Messersmith, who was not part of the research team, noted that hard medical implants made of metal or ceramic are often imbedded in soft tissues.



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Oregon Kids' Mixed Bag

Youth smoking down, drinking up

Cigarette and marijuana smoking are down among Oregon middle-school students, but alcohol use has increased 28 percent for eighth graders, according to the Oregon Department of Human Services.

One in five young adults age 18-25, 9 percent of youth age 12-17 and 7 percent of adults 26 or older abuse or are dependent on alcohol or other drugs, and many require treatment to kick the habit. More than 40 percent of children taken into protective custody each year come from families with alcohol or drug abuse problems.

"We cannot allow ourselves to become complacent about sub-

stance abuse and addictions," said Bob Nikkel, DHS assistant director for addictions and mental health. "These epidemiological profiles show some disturbing patterns of substance abuse in Oregon, and we know that the consequences of continued use mean years of poor health or early death."

Surveys of adults indicate that 22 percent of men and 8 percent of women are binge drinkers, and approximately 6 percent of both sexes are heavy drinkers. Each year there are more than 1,000 alcohol-related deaths in Oregon. One-third of all motor vehicle fatalities involve alcohol.

Alcohol use starts young. In survey results, 32 percent of Oregon's eighth graders and 44

percent of 11th graders drank alcohol within the past month. Young people who drink heavily, even occasionally, risk damaging their still-developing brains. Oregon has a goal of reducing eighth-grade alcohol use to less than 17 percent by 2010, but no county has yet to reach this mark.

Communities across Oregon are sponsoring town halls throughout the month of April to learn more about the issue and to reverse the trend.

Among the some 34 town halls around the state are several in the Portland area, including:

Tigard Turns The Tide Coalition Town Hall, 7 p.m. on April 3 at Tigard High School, and Beaverton Together Town Hall, 4 p.m. on April 15 at Sunset High School.

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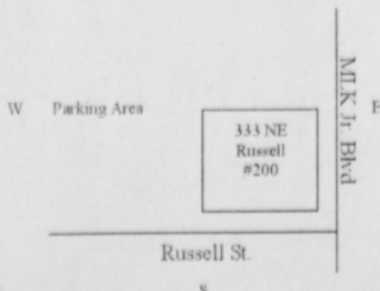
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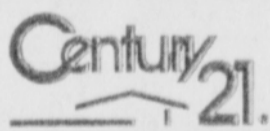
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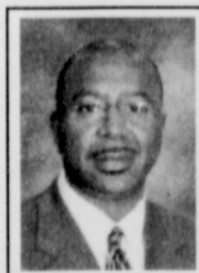
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Director Named at LifeWorks NW



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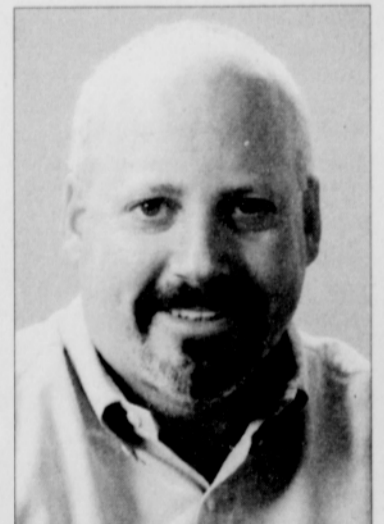
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LifeWorks NW has announced the appointment of Mark Lewinsohn, PhD, to the position of clinical director for the organization. He has over 20 years of experience in working with children and families.

Lewinsohn has been with LifeWorks NW since 1993 and has held a variety of roles and responsibilities. Starting off as a family therapist in the adolescent day-treatment program, he progressively moved into positions as a clinical supervisor, program director and service director within child and family services. He has also been involved in conducting research and published articles on anxiety and depression amongst adolescents and a cross-cultural study on modernization and Chinese marital relations.

Prior to coming to LifeWorks



Mark Lewinsohn

NW he worked with school-based programs, within the juvenile-justice system, as an outpatient therapist, and conducting psychological evaluations through a variety of nonprofit community mental health agencies and children's hospitals.