

# Crowd blocks train again

By Shannon Kelley

Of the Emerald

VANCOUVER, WASH. — Forty-nine people, including 10 juveniles and one Eugenean, were arrested Friday for blocking the White Train, which they claim carries nuclear warheads.

About 200 people gathered to protest the train which traveled from the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, to the Trident submarine base in Bangor, Wash. The train gets its nickname from its white coat of paint, designed to deflect heat.

About 40 protesters came from Eugene. Seven Eugeneans committed civil disobedience but only one, Guy Burton of Citizen Action for Lasting Security, was arrested. The protesters were arraigned Monday.

The protesters' goal was not to get arrested or even to stop the train, said Leslie Hunter of Eugene. Instead, they wanted to draw attention to the train and its cargo.

The train has been running for 20 years and has been stopped only twice before — in Montana last week and in Portland in February. Officials of the U.S. Department of Energy, which operates the train, would not disclose the train's contents.

The protesters said they wished to emulate Mahatma Ghandi's non-violent principles.

"We want to change peoples' hearts about nuclear weapons," Hunter told about 30 protesters who gathered at the Eugene Growers' Market at 4:30 a.m. Friday.

The protesters met later in a park a few blocks from the railroad tracks, where they held hands and sang while waiting for the train. Members of the Vancouver police department, Clark County sheriff's deputies and Burlington Northern security officers were ready and waiting.

Lt. Rex Woodard of the Vancouver police department told the protesters that the police would do whatever was necessary to see that the train went through peacefully. "People who want to express themselves will be able to do so," he said.

Woodard would not give his opinion of the action. "If I was here in civilian clothing, I would be able to tell you," he said.

When the train arrived at 11:30 a.m., several protesters linked arms and planted themselves on the tracks while the police watched. People cheered, cried, sang and hugged each other as the train stopped. It backed off, then came again.

This time the police began arresting protesters, but there was no violence between the protesters and the police.

"Hold fast, hold tight, everything is going to be all right," the protesters chanted as the police carried them to waiting buses.

"If I can touch somebody's heart who is trying to move me (from the tracks), I feel like I'm being totally effective," said Jane Waite, a Eugene

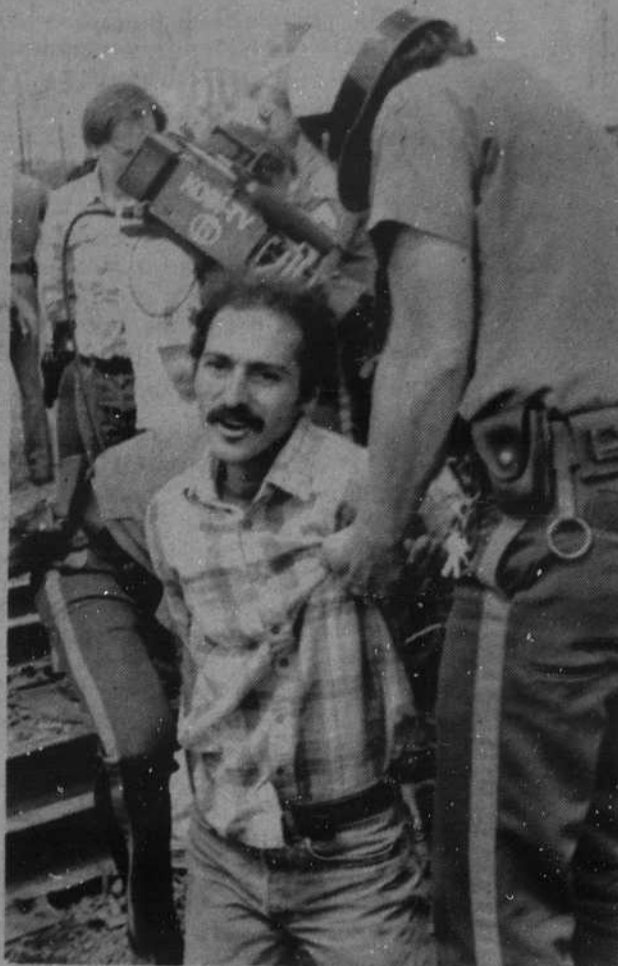


Photo by Shannon Kelley

Eugenean Guy Burton was arrested Friday as he protested passage of the White Train.

protester. "I'm not trying to get arrested; I'm trying to be effective."

"The White Train is a symbol of what is building up in the world," said University student Heather Platc, who sat on the tracks but was not arrested. "I can feel a train that is more powerful than me I can't stop alone, but as a group we can. I think that symbolically that says we can stop the arms race."

"I don't want them to make the nuclear bomb and stuff and blow up the world," said 12-year-old Collin Surbert of Vancouver.

Hunter believes that through non-violence, the protesters achieved their goals.

"I walked the length of the train and just cried," she said. "I tried to communicate with the people in the guard car. Some people waved and flashed peace signs."

"It was a nice atmosphere of non-violence. I was impressed to see the gentleness shown by the police. Next time I expect them to be on the tracks with us," she added.

common theme at the rally, mentioned by each of the speakers as an interpretation taken too literally from the Bible.

"How can we adapt this to mean capital punishment is right?" asked Reverend Donald Sevetsion of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

"The Bible also mentions theft and it mentions greed. Will we impose the death penalty for these crimes as well?" Sevetsion said.

Most of the speakers also claimed that the death penalty has been applied unevenly in the past, with many more minority, uneducated and poor people being executed than those who are rich or white.

"Death Row is made up of black people, not white — of those too poor to afford counsel, not those lucky enough to have money," Bell said. "It is made up of those who have always been discriminated against."

Bell then quoted Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield: "Capital punishment is never used for those with capital."

Several speakers also cited the recent mass slaying in San

Ysidro, Calif., and the car driven into a crowd at the Los Angeles Olympics, comparing these killings to use of the death penalty. All murders are alike in the eyes of God, they said.

"We recoil with horror at the murder at McDonald's. We recoil with horror at the car driven in Los Angeles," Burton said. "Yet we feel no guilt at being the ones to tie the rope or inject the poison."

The rally was subdued in tone, with moments set aside for prayer and music by a local church choir. The rally ended with a march past the state penitentiary to the steps of the Oregon state highway building 1½ miles away. The walk was timed to coincide with a minute of silence by the inmates of the penitentiary across the street.

"Those inside the walls understand our cause as no others can," Sevetsion said after the march. "We walk to show others the the significance of our cause, and this is only the first step in our long journey."

Similar rallies will be held throughout the state between now and November, but no times have been set yet, he said.

# Protesters fire at death penalty

By Jacquie Long

Of the Emerald

Oregon ballot measures moving to reinstate the death penalty came under fire Sunday as more than 200 people gathered for an anti-death penalty rally in Salem's Willson Park.

November Ballot Measures 6 and 7 will determine whether or not the death penalty is to be reinstated in Oregon.

Measure 6, if passed, will exempt the death penalty from constitutional stipulations against cruel and vindictive punishment. Measure 7 specifies what crimes are to be punished by death and makes the death penalty a jury decision.

"These measures should be a major concern of all morally conscious Oregonians," said Claudia Burton, a Willamette University law professor. "We must defeat them."

University law school Dean Derrick Bell, Calvin Henry, president of the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs and local religious leaders also spoke at the rally.

The phrase "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" was a

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