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Jury participation gives citizens insider's view of judicial system

By Lisa Kosse
 Of the Emerald

Many people never see the inside of a courtroom, but serving jury duty is one way citizens can become involved in the judicial system.

Jury duty is not as time-consuming as many people believe, said Tina Andresen, Municipal Court jury clerk. "People don't understand that we're not going to keep them for months at a time," she said.

New jurors are required to attend a one-hour orientation session on the first day of each month. After this, jurors are placed "on call" for about one month. They have to call after 4 p.m. and before 8 a.m. every day to see if their juror number is listed for the next day's trial.

"Ninety-nine percent of the time" the trials last only one day, Andresen said. "Jurors won't serve two days in a row unless the trial goes over, which is extremely rare."

Eugene Municipal Court selects jurors from a random cross-section of the county. An-

dresen said. Every year about 25,000 county residents are chosen as prospective jurors, she said, and only about 100 are excused completely.

"All have their reasons such as health, employment reasons, religious beliefs" or student conflicts, Andresen said.

In order to be excused from duty, prospective jurors must file an excusal form. A judge reviews the form and rules on it. If the excuse on the form is too vague or inadequate, the judge may overrule it, Andresen said. The prospective juror is notified by mail.

Twelve jurors are selected for each Municipal Court trial, but only six are actually used. The attorneys in the case grill the prospective jurors and select six based on their answers, Andresen said.

The Municipal Court deals with major traffic offenses, such as drunk driving and hit-and-run accidents, and city ordinance violations, such as shoplifting. District and circuit courts deal with cases of a larger magnitude.

Luci Michaud, jury clerk of Lane County District and Circuit Courts, hears "all the time" that the possibility of serving jury duty discourages voter registration.

However, a new statute allows jury selection to be determined through means other than voter registration lists.

Alternatives include motor vehicle registration lists and hunting permit lists, Michaud said.

On rare occasions, an entire jury has had to be dismissed due to a mistake in the proceedings, such as mentioning a piece of evidence that was not supposed to be used, Michaud said. In this case a mistrial is declared, and a new jury is selected.

District Court cases range from traffic misdemeanors to civil cases for \$10,000 and less. Circuit Court handles felony cases, which can result in jail sentences, and civil cases over \$10,000.

City Prosecutor Dan Barkovic looks for jurors that will be sympathetic to his side of the case, as do most attorneys, he said.

"They (the jurors) have to be able to evaluate credibility of the witnesses," he said. He likes to make sure that jurors will hear all the facts and arguments before they make up their minds, he said.

Prospective jurors are required to fill out a questionnaire with some background information. The attorneys at a jury trial work off of these to determine questioning. "It depends on the case," Barkovic said.

Barkovic believes jury trials require more persuasive skills on the part of the attorney, he said. "It is easier to convince a judge than a jury," he said.

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Those continuing Dean's Scholars include **Joanna Compton**, a junior history major; **Bart Schaefer**, a junior marketing major; **Kevin Vandehey** and **Ruben Zamora**, a sophomore pre-administration major.

Also included as continuing Dean's Scholars are **Andrene Hyatt**, a senior biology major; **Jennifer Acker**, a junior pre-

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Laura Mannen, a sophomore international studies major; **Lori Dedobelaere**, a senior psychology major; **Adrienne Hill**, a junior College of Arts and Sciences pre-major; **Laurie Bauer**, a sophomore College of Arts and Sciences pre-major; **Karen Engels**, a sophomore pre-journalism major; and **Brenda Munroe**, a senior psychology major, are all continuing Dean's Scholars.

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