

## Suspects plead guilty

Three suspects in the 1997 murder of Stephen Leroy Johnson pleaded guilty in court Friday

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## Ducks triumph

The men's and women's basketball teams both landed victories over Washington State Saturday

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1998

## TODAY

'River Permits Night' will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Outdoor Program room.

## WEATHER

Today

Showers  
High 47. Low 36.

Wednesday

Showers  
High 48. Low 37.

University of Oregon  
Eugene, Oregon

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## Eugene police chief confirms resignation

*Cooke said his problems with City Manager Vicki Elmer led to his decision to resign*

By Jesse Sowa  
Community Reporter

Eugene Police Chief Leonard Cooke confirmed Friday that he would resign his position within six months after it was learned earlier in the week that he had signed an agreement with City Manager Vicki Elmer to resign.

Cooke, the city's first African-

American police chief, said he was concerned about the early release of information about his resignation; however, he said the problems he had with Elmer were no different than those between other top-level city officials.

Cooke, 47, is out of town on personal business and was unavailable for comment Monday.

Cooke's resignation has stirred up questions and community protest after sources revealed to The Register-Guard that Elmer pressured him to leave. At a

news conference Friday afternoon, Elmer denied forcing Cooke to leave. Cooke did not confirm or deny reports that this was the case.

Angry community members expressed their concerns about Cooke's resignation Sunday outside the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at South Eugene High School. Protesters held a sign that read "Fire Vicki Elmer" outside the entrance to the school.

Fliers were inserted into programs for the celebration, calling

for people to voice their opinion to Mayor Jim Torrey, as well as to City Council members and other city officials, whose phone numbers and addresses were listed inside the fliers.

Also included in the fliers was a calendar of this week's events protesting Cooke's resignation. One such event was a rally held Monday morning outside City Hall. A press conference has been planned for Wednesday by those opposing the resignation. Cooke's supporters also plan to address the council at next Mon-

day's meeting.

But Cooke is not the first city official to leave during Elmer's tenure as city manager.

Three other city officials have resigned since Elmer took over her post 11 months ago: Dave Whitlow, head of Eugene's former Public Safety Department, which Elmer separated into fire and police divisions last summer; Abe Farkas, head of the Planning and Development Department; and Linda Lynch, coordinator of the city's attempt to lobby for federal funds.

## Afternoon serenade



MATT GARTON/Emerald

First-year graduate student Jennifer Cowell, senior Amanda Lawrence and senior Paula Thurmond practice Dobnanyi Serenade for String Trio Monday for Lawrence's senior recital.

## Waldo Lake debate hits murky water

*Scientists are not sure what is clouding one of clearest and most beautiful lakes in Oregon*

By Tricia Duryee  
Community Reporter

Surprisingly, there is no special plan for preserving one of the purest lakes in the world.

Waldo Lake, which is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Eugene and ranks among the clearest lakes in the world, could be in jeopardy, according to scientists who predict a decrease in the clarity of the lake.

"We don't have a specific plan. Surprisingly, Waldo itself was just part of the regular forest management," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., in a prerecorded video presentation Saturday during a conference about Waldo Lake. "We must develop a specific plan to protect beauty for generations to come."

The conference, "Science, Management and the Future," was sponsored by the University Outdoor Program and the Willamette National Forest.

"We take many trips to Waldo Lake,"

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## City extends health benefits to employees' domestic partners

*Only partners of non-union employees are eligible under the current health plan*

By Michael Burnham  
Community Editor

The city of Eugene recently agreed to grant health care benefits to the domestic partners of its non-unionized employees beginning July 1. Unionized employees, however, will have to bargain for the same benefits in contract negotiations with the city this spring.

The extension of benefits was approved by City Manager Vicki Elmer and will provide the same level of health care benefits to gay couples and unmarried heterosexual partners that the city now provides to

married employees.

Current benefits include standard medical, dental and vision coverage, said Myrmie Dat, Eugene risk-end benefits manager.

According to Dat, the city expects to extend health care benefits to an additional 3 to 5 percent of its 1,300 employees. The estimated cost of providing coverage for the exempt group of employees will total more than \$30,000 a year, but she said this figure only takes into account the added premium cost for enrolling this group.

She said this figure also does not include an assumption that the plan will have any increased costs due to adverse selection. Adverse selection is a theory stating that the only people who will en-

roll their domestic partners will have a greater need to be exempt than other employees, Dat said.

The expanded coverage places Eugene among a growing number of municipalities that have extended health care benefits to unmarried couples. Cities that have already extended benefits include Portland and Corvallis, along with other local governments and agencies such as Benton and Multnomah counties and Metro, a regional city agency in the Portland area.

But while the city determines the costs of supplying benefits to the partners of its non-unionized employees, it has yet to grant the same benefits to the domestic partners of its unionized employees.

Garry Gillespi, president of the Local

1724 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said he is happy that the city will extend benefits to non-unionized employees' partners. He also said the recent extension of benefits has made him hopeful the city will grant similar benefits to its unionized employees in the spring.

"For the first time since we've been bargaining with Eugene, it appears [the city] will offer benefits [to its unionized employees]," he said.

Gillespi said the federation and three other unions have been negotiating with the city for similar benefits for more than four years.

According to federation member Lou

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