

Lee resigns early, Bettman steps right in

■ Many consider City Councilor Bobby Lee as an outspoken advocate for young people, himself the youngest councilor in Eugene

By Rebecca Newell
Oregon Daily Emerald

The University lost an invaluable voice in city politics on Sept. 10 when Ward 3 City Councilor Bobby Lee officially resigned from his position. Lee, 31, cut short his second two-year city council career by four months, opting for a career move and change of scenery.

"Students have been very good to me," Lee said. "I like the energy they bring into our community. I'll miss being part of the university culture." Lee, Eugene's youngest council

member, left Eugene to fill the position of director of youth services and governmental affairs at Worksystems Inc., another step in his continuing efforts to improve the lives of Oregon youth.

"I've always felt bad for the staff," Lee said, "because it's hard to have someone my age telling them what to do."

Though his own youth was a factor in his council position, he was able to dive right into city business.

"I came to this community 12 years ago and this community welcomed and embraced me," Lee said. "Four years ago this community gave me the ultimate gift, a chance to make a difference."

When asked what decision during his time on council stands out in his mind the most, Lee replied, "When we passed the camping ban ordinance that prevented people from sleeping anywhere in the city. We changed that law to allow church parking lots to be used for camping and provided porti-pots. Also, we changed the law so people could offer their property as shelter for homeless."

Despite such achievements, there is still a great deal to be done in Eugene, according to Lee.

"The financial health part of the city is a big concern for me," Lee said. "Over the last four years, we have bandaged the problem. We are too dependent on property taxes."

Even while important city business will be left to his successor, Bonnie Bettman, Lee will be remembered by his colleagues and constituents alike as a dedicated civil servant who found popularity during his two terms. In fact, when Mayor Jim Torrey discussed with his staff "who are the people who could run for mayor who would be the toughest to beat", he concluded "at the top of the list is Bobby Lee."

While many are remembering Lee's service to the community, Bettman is focused on her upcoming role as city councilwoman.

"I think I've been preparing for this role for the past 10 years," Bettman said. "I've done a lot of volunteering on city committees and work in the community."

Bettman is continuing a tradition Lee established, while he carries on

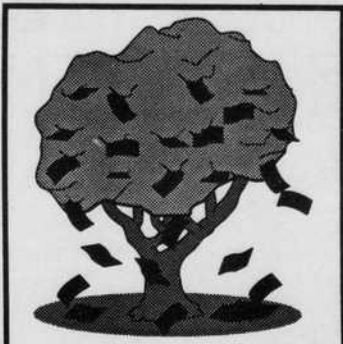
his work in Portland.

"I will be working with at-risk and homeless youth helping them develop skills to get jobs," Lee said of his position at the work force agency for Portland and Multnomah, Washington and Tillamook counties. "I'll also be working with governmental affairs working on states education reform."

"It is amazing, his energy level," said State Sen. Susan Castillo. "It is our loss and Portland's great gain."

While Lee has no current aspirations to seek elected office in Portland, he says there is always the opportunity.

"I'm still getting to know the Portland community," he said. "Maybe years from now, if I felt there was something out there I felt strongly enough about, I would run for office."



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Fired deputy accused of more abuse

SEATTLE (AP) — A King County sheriff's deputy fired for using unnecessary force during last year's World Trade Organization riots has been accused by fellow officers of three other incidents involving questionable use of pepper spray during the disturbances.

John Vanderwalker, a sheriff's patrol officer for 19 years, was fired in April by Sheriff Dave Reichert.

At the time, Reichert said that during a protest on Seattle's Capitol Hill last Dec. 1, Vanderwalker used pepper spray on three people in a car, and earlier had kicked a first-aid worker wearing a red-and-white cross.

Two of the people in the car, Melissa Benton and Shauna Pulaski, videotaped the incident and the tape was widely played on local television. They have sued Vanderwalker and King County in federal court, with trial set for December.

In court documents filed this week in the lawsuit, two deputies say they saw Vanderwalker involved in other questionable incidents Dec. 1.

One deputy said he saw Vanderwalker pepper-spray a young man who was on his hands and knees. The incident seemed to be punitive, rather than for law-enforcement purpose, the deputy said.

Another deputy said he saw Vanderwalker pepper-spray a woman carrying a bag of groceries, and with other officers, spray several people standing on an apartment balcony.

Vanderwalker's attorney, Bob Christie, called those allegations "innuendo and rumor" and said no other citizens had stepped forward to complain. He said Vanderwalker was not out of control with his pepper spray and was only following the orders to clear the streets.

Christie also disputed Benton and Pulaski's accounts, saying the two had disobeyed police orders and that Vanderwalker saw their car as a threat.

Vanderwalker has challenged his dismissal from the sheriff's office.

The WTO meetings last year were marked by widespread demonstrations and rioting, which led to the shutdown of Seattle's downtown business district and millions of dollars in damages.

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