

Monday, February 23 2004

## EDITORIAL

### EPD 'undercover' policy is absurd

The Eugene Police Department took aberration to a new level during Valentine's Day weekend, opting to use undercover officers to prevent rioting. This is perhaps the most nauseating use of tax dollars and services by EPD in some years, and it goes without saying that any future use of covert cops for the purposes of party busting should be on its way out, in the same fashion as the one-too-many tequila shot.

EPD's new policy — which, unfortunately, is legal — is so nonsensical that it must stem from a bout of late-night drinking itself, for it seems irrational any sober person or persons could arrive at such a procedure.

Here goes: Undercover officers may now be used to investigate parties where alcohol sales are suspected. But how is one supposed to determine when and where alcohol-related sales occur? Suppose someone has bought 10 cases of beer and plans to sell each can for a dollar or two. How is EPD going to know?

OK, so maybe that's a bit of a stretch. Maybe plain-clothes officers will instead go to residences where kegs are registered.

But how does possession of a keg lead to the supposition that one intends to charge others for alcohol? How does possession of a keg lead to the supposition that alcohol will be sold? Does the registration of a keg clearly imply that one intends to charge others for alcohol? The possibility is there, sure. But it does not mean that sales will occur, and surely does not justify intrusion into one's home.

Next, undercover officers could be used to investigate parties where minors are suspected of drinking. OK. So, a couple of clandestine cops come to a party; are they going to ask for people's IDs? No! Their ever-so-important cover would be blown. So, then, an undercover officer could enter your house with an assumption of underage drinking, leave with nothing more than that same assumption, and then call for the calvary. How is that an efficient allocation of time? That's creating twice as much work, and officers are still working without sufficient evidence.

These very same cloak-and-dagger officers could also be used to infiltrate residences that receive complaints. Say a party receives a complaint for noise or people in the streets. If such is the case, then wouldn't it be blatantly obvious to officers when they arrive on the scene? If not, then what justification would undercover officers have to enter someone's house? How could a neighbor complain of activities or noise that isn't audible or evident to the average observer?

Despite all the questions that arise from this fantastic plan, there must be a point. And here it is: "The whole idea is to prevent riots," EPD Sgt. Terry Fitzpatrick said.

So, a party with 50 people will start a riot? Fitzpatrick said one-third to one-half of the people in attendance at the Feb. 14 party were minors. Under Fitzpatrick's estimates, with 17 minors cited — the entire underage-party total, surely, because underage drinking is such an epidemic that they must have all been breaking the law — that means only 51 people were in attendance.

Well, despite size, this was one of the parties where rioting was a possibility. So how, then, does sending in undercover officers do any good? If it is fact that minors are drinking, that alcohol is being sold and that complaints have been lodged, then why doesn't the entire department show up with pen and alcohol-related-citation after citation in hand, prepared to "protect and serve"?

Most absurd is not EPD, however. Mark Jaehnig, an investigator for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, said the agency seized up to \$15,000 worth of band and computer equipment. The justification: The items were "alcohol-related."

Enough is enough. EPD seriously has its priorities out of line if it has nothing better to do than expend energy — twice that of normal — to seek out parties where trivial offenses may or may not occur. What about the property crimes EPD Chief Robert Lehner speaks so worriedly about?

Well, here's a little something for both agencies, which seem ever-so-eager to fine students, invade privacy and confiscate property: The Emerald is going to have a party this year, but the date has yet to be determined. There will be cups, perhaps filled with alcohol. A staff member will play us songs on his bongos. And the editor will do a striptease to the fine tune of "Ten Rounds With Jose Cuervo."

EPD, come on in. And bring OLCC, too. Confiscate the cups, bongos and the editor's clothing (alcohol-related, of course).

Notwithstanding a common-sense hangover, it's important that this you two pillars of the community live up to the absurdity set forth.



Eric Layton Illustration

## KWVA has strong fiscal record

Back in 1989 students had a vision. They worked very hard to gather support and find funding. They stuck by their vision as it materialized, and they brought forth a product for all to enjoy.

### GUEST COMMENTARY

Today that vision and product is still manifest in KWVA Eugene, 88.1 FM, Campus Radio — the student-owned and -operated radio station. KWVA is the only outlet on campus where students can gain real-life, first-hand broadcast experience.

Though there have been trying times in KWVA history, recent years have looked up. Particularly last May, when KWVA received a grant from the Associated Students of the University of Oregon for \$118,498 to upgrade the ancient analog technology into a digital environment. KWVA has been operating with equipment that was donated when KWVA first started broadcasting.

Though KWVA has been fortunate to be able to maintain that equipment as it

aged, repairs have become more and more difficult as the radio industry has taken a turn to digital, much like the television industry. Change for KWVA was imminent.

Well before May 2003, and the \$118,498, KWVA was looking for ways to make this digital upgrade possible. When funds were finally secured, the project got underway. KWVA worked with University administration, the business office, ASUO and other departments and individuals to ensure the equipment being purchased would serve the greatest purpose possible.

Equipment was ordered and installation began. Setbacks and unexpected expenses, such as restructuring electrical access and the need for additional cables, slowed the process down and created a financial pinch. Funds were spent according to that which was allocated, and included the unexpected, necessary expenses. KWVA has a strong fiscal record. That fiscal responsibility has shown KWVA's ability to manage funds, even under tight conditions, and was influential when KWVA requested the funds to make the upgrade.

Despite the setbacks, unexpected expenses and the many stresses, KWVA is confident that the upgrade progress, decisions and efforts have all been in good faith, for the greater development of the educational environment of the entire student body and those yet to come. Thousands of students have participated at KWVA, and there are surely thousands yet to come. KWVA involves these students and provides a learning environment, but it does much more.

Each individual who turns on 88.1 FM is impacted by the funds that were allocated. KWVA's signal reaches beyond the campus area into the community and thus serves an even greater population. KWVA appreciates all those who helped with the development and acquisition of the funds necessary to complete this project. Look for open house announcements and your chance to see the completely upgraded studios in coming months.

Charlotte Nisser

law  
 general manager, KWVA

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Fuss over Jackson hides deeper problems with U.S. media

The Super Bowl brouhaha centering on the breast seen 'round the world would be titillating if it weren't such a convenient cover-up, so to speak, for a more significant issue: the censorship of ideas in a supposedly free society.

CBS previously caved in to Republican whining by withdrawing its prime-time drama on the Reagans. They would not

accept a People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals ad "out of concern about offending viewers." And they refused to run "Child's Play," MoveOn.org's nationwide contest-winning ad critical of the \$1 trillion deficit caused by President Bush's bizarre reverse-Robin Hood economic policies. The Bush White House, by the way, promotes the FCC rule changes that would allow networks to own more local stations, increase market share, and, of course, maximize profits. Big dividends for CBS.

A flatulent horse, a groin-chomping canine and more erectile dysfunction ads

than you could shake a stick at met CBS Super Bowl guidelines. A thought-provoking ad based on fact did not.

It's obvious that extraordinarily wealthy, self-serving, greed-addicted corporate elitists work relentlessly against the public interest through sophisticated right-wing propaganda and media censorship. And it's even more obvious that anyone who still believes their outrageous claims about the dominance of "the liberal media" is a clueless, dare I say it, boob.

Jerome Garger  
 Eugene

### ONLINE POLL

Each week the Emerald publishes the results of the previous poll and the coming week's poll question.

Visit <http://www.dailyemerald.com> to vote.

Last week's question: Do you feel the University should have postponed

construction of a new sports arena?

Results: 100 votes.

- No — It's in the best interest of the campus to build a new arena: 42 percent.
- Yes — It's the fiscally responsible thing to do: 27 percent.
- Yes — The University is doing fine with

Mac Court: 26 percent.

• No — We're wasting donor allocations: 5 percent.

This week: What's your vice?

Choices: Cigars; Gambling; Gossip; Knitting; Meat; Music; My pets; Online porn; Reality TV; Shopping; Starbucks; Violence; Other.