

TASER VICTIM SENTENCED

Circuit Court Judge Jack Billings punished Taser victim Ian Van Ornum last week, sentencing him to 80 hours of community service, 18 months of probation and \$500 in attorney fees, plus court costs.

A jury found Van Ornum guilty April 16 of the misdemeanor crimes of slowing traffic (disorderly conduct) and resisting arrest at an anti-pesticide protest last May. Many witnesses have accused the police of brutality in the arrest.

Police video in the case shows that Van Ornum was Tasered twice in the back while he lay face down on the ground with his arms pinned under his side or held behind his back. Van Ornum's doctor testified that he suffered a concussion.

Van Ornum's attorney Laura Fine said an appeal of the verdict will be filed but declined further comment.

Still pending are reviews by the Eugene Police Department Internal Affairs unit, the independent Eugene police auditor and Civilian Review Board, and a likely civil lawsuit.

"Today is not in all likelihood the end of this case," Judge Billings said of the coming investigations.

Billings cited incriminating testimony for the prosecution by passersby as significant in the criminal case. Billings did not mention testimony for the defense from passersby that Van Ornum had done nothing illegal. "The jurors found you were lying," Billings told Van Ornum.

Fine unsuccessfully argued that Van Ornum should not get a stiffer sentence than other protesters at the incident who pled guilty to more serious crimes. Last year two protesters convicted of attempted assault of the police officer who Tasered Van Ornum were sentenced to 40 hours of community service.

This month three UO basketball players who plead guilty to shooting an air gun at ducks in Alton Baker Park were sentenced to 30 hours of community service.

Fine said that Van Ornum had taken time off from the UO because he "struggled with issues of concentration and memory" after the concussion last year. She argued against court fees, saying he was working at Sundance Natural Foods and was "absolutely without resources."

In assessing the court appointed attorney fees, Billings said that if Van Ornum and his family could pay UO tuition last year, "he can figure out how to get that paid."

—Alan Pittman

EPD GIVES AWARD TO TASER COP

The Eugene Police Department has given its "Officer of the Year" award to the police officer who police video showed shocked a teenaged pesticide protester in the back twice with a Taser while the protester lay face down with his arms pinned or behind his back.

The EPD gave officer Judd Warden the prize at an Awards Ceremony April 16. Numerous witnesses have alleged police brutality in the violent May 30, 2008 arrest of anti-pesticide protester Ian Van Ornum. Police officers allegedly pulled Van Ornum's hair, twisted his arms and threw him to the pavement. Van Ornum suffered a concussion, according to his doctors.

The police Internal Affairs unit and independent police auditor and Civilian Review Board are investigating the incident. Van Ornum was convicted of the misdemeanors of resisting arrest and slowing traffic on April 16 and sentenced to probation and community service. A criminal appeal and a civil lawsuit against the city appear likely.

EPD gives the annual "Officer of the Year" award for "performance during a 12-month period that demonstrates a quality of work clearly and significantly exceeding the requirements of his/her position," police spokeswoman Melinda Kletzok wrote in an email.

Warden was "nominated by employees based on the criteria," Kletzok wrote. "There is a selection process with an employee committee and final approval by executive staff."

The Eugene Police Union gave Warden its "congratulations" on its website.

This isn't the first time a Eugene officer involved in a controversial use of force has won an award from fellow police officers.

In 2007 the Oregon Peace Officers Association gave its "Medal of Valor" to the EPD officer who shot and killed Ryan Salisbury, a suicidal, mentally ill 19-year-old holding a kitchen knife. Community members called for better police training, but police ruled shooting the teen four times with an assault rifle was justified self defense.

—Alan Pittman

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

• **Seneca Jones Timber Co.** is eradicating, again this year, scotch broom in all its holdings in west Lane Forestry District, using Forestry Garlon (triclopyr) Milestone VM (aminopyralid) and Methylated Seed Oil (surfactant), applied by backpack and spray truck. Units include locations near Twin Oaks and Lorane schools, and Lake Creek Fish Passage, starting May 15. Questions? Call Mike Emmons at Seneca Jones (541) 461-6245 or Paul Clements at ODF (541) 935-2283 (notification 50212).

Compiled by Jan Wroncy, Forestland Dwellers: 342-8332, forestlanddwellers.org

news Briefs

U.N. EVENT AT THE UO IS A FIRST

For the first time in its history, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will hold the UNESCO Chairs Conference on U.S. soil.

From May 8-12 the UO's Center for Intercultural Dialogue, which was created last fall by university professor and UNESCO Chair Steven Shankman, will host representatives from Austria, France, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Russia, Romania, Tajikistan, the U.K. and Uzbekistan. The leaders will be meeting to discuss and give presentations on their individual research in the area of "inter-religious dialogue for intercultural understanding."

The Chairs Program is a product of UNESCO's University Twinning program (UNITWIN). UNITWIN and the Chairs Program were created by UNESCO in 1992, "as a way to advance research, training and program development in higher education by building university networks and encouraging inter-university cooperation through transfer of knowledge across borders," according to the UNESCO website.

Along with the meeting of the UNESCO chairs, which will take place on Monday, May 11, the Center for Intercultural Dialogue will host a symposium called "Ethics, Religion and the Environment." The symposium, which is mostly free and open to the public, includes research presentations from the international representatives and addressers by academics from across the nation.

The public presentations by the UNESCO chairs run from 10:30 am to 5 pm Friday, May 8. Mary Evelyn Tucker, a professor from Yale, will deliver the symposium's keynote address, titled "The Emerging Alliance of Religion and Ecology," at 7:30 pm Saturday, May 9.

"There has been so much interest in having this connection to UNESCO that it has been overwhelming," says conference director Kelley Totten.

For a complete schedule of the weekend's events, along with the locations of specific presentations and other general information about the event and the presenters visit the Center for Intercultural Dialogue at unesco.uoregon.edu and go to the 2009 UNESCO Chairs Conference link. Anyone interested in volunteering at the event is encouraged to contact Totten at ktotten@uoregon.edu or 346-4150.

—Topher Vollmer

PREDATOR MEDIA FRENZY?

Cougars, wolves and swine fever are sweeping across the land, leaving destruction in their wake, according to media reports. Local predator advocate Brooks Fahy says the media is not only blowing issues like the wolf pack in eastern Oregon out of proportion, but missing the real story as well.

Fahy says the real story behind the pack of wolves that allegedly killed 23 lambs, is not that lambs were killed, but that "Wow! We've got wolves!"

Wolves have only recently returned to Oregon after being extirpated (wiped out) here in the 1940s. Summer 2008 marked the first signs that a wolf pack, including adults and pups existed in the state. Biologists confirmed their existence through a "howling survey" in which the biologists howl like wolves, and the wolves howl back, according the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The video that was released earlier this month of the wolf pack near Baker City shows a pack of wolves, adults and pups, eating lambs. This is the first visual documentation of a pack

returning to Oregon. That according the Fahy, is the story: Wolves are back in Oregon. "We know that wolves create biodiversity," he says, "that's a scientific fact; there's no disputing that."

Fahy says, "Sheep and cattle make the environment less diverse." He points out that the sheep the wolves ate would have been killed for their meat or wool in the long run anyway. The Defenders of Wildlife has offered to compensate the rancher monetarily for his loss. Grey wolves are currently protected federally and on the state level in Oregon from being hunted or killed.

Fahy says the media need to lose "the entrenched philosophy of good animal/bad animal" when it comes to predators and prey. The same issue applies to the cougar that has been spotted in a neighborhood in Corvallis. ODFW says it is "moving aggressively" to control the animal which they describe as a "human safety concern." State guidelines call for problem animals to be killed if an accredited zoo or sanctuary can't be found.

Fahy says it isn't necessary to kill the animal if people are informed on how to deal with it and other predators that exist in the interface between wildlife and urban areas. He says he dislikes the media's tendency to make a cougar spotted in daylight sound like a huge danger, "These animals transect these areas all the time." He says that "informing and educating," is what the media should be doing.

—Camilla Mortensen

ACTIVIST ALERT

• Oregon residents, businesses and health organizations will join the **Tobacco Free**