

AUDITOR, POLICE CLASH ON VIOLENT PARTY ARRESTS

The Eugene police auditor recommended that Eugene police discipline officers for unlawful arrest and excessive force for violently breaking up a loud, post-college age party last year.

But acting Police Chief Pete Kerns ignored the recommendation and found only that one officer was guilty of discourtesy for cursing at the citizens.

The case involving the incident with professional adults aged from the mid 20s to 70s at about 2 am last Aug. 31 was reviewed by two members of the Citizen Review Board (CRB) last week. One agreed with the chief, one with the auditor.

Deputy Auditor Dawn Reynolds summarized the case. Police officers responded to a noise complaint and told a resident she needed to stop the noise. The woman turned down the music and asked guests to come inside. About 10 minutes later, an officer allegedly put his foot in the door, used profanity and pushed a partygoer by the neck, according to Reynolds. The woman fell or was pushed off the porch and suffered bruises. The officers arrested three people for alleged interfering or excessive noise and took them to jail.

Arresting the woman for interfering for verbally questioning the police arrest of another resident was an unconstitutional violation of free speech, Reynolds said. "Her interference was purely verbal saying, 'Why, why, why did you do this,'" she said. "That's exactly what the [Oregon] Supreme Court has overruled."

New Police Auditor Mark Gissiner, at his first CRB meeting after starting his job two weeks ago, also questioned the police action. "We had an officer who seemed to escalate the situation with his or her language," he said. Gissiner noted the officer described the profanity as a "tool in his toolbox" for policing.

Gissiner also questioned whether police should have taken a more problem-solving, community policing approach to actually quieting the party by talking more to the residents.

CRB member Tim Laue, a critic of the CRB and advocate for more police spending, said he agreed with the police chief. Laue said the CRB should look at complaints "from the view of another police professional." But Laue said he had concerns about whether police allowed enough time for residents to end the party and whether the police should review how they use interfering charges.

CRB member Rick Brissenden, a municipal court judge in Florence and Cottage Grove, agreed with the auditor. Brissenden said officers should have waited longer for residents to finish quieting the party, shouldn't have arrested someone for free speech and shouldn't have pushed the woman by the side of the neck on a crowded porch. "I think we had a young officer that sort of lost control," the judge said.

But EPD Capt. Steve Swenson said the neck push was appropriate. Even a "hair hold would be very appropriate under these circumstances," he said. "Sometimes being the nice guy and trying to give them a break doesn't really work with drunk people." — Alan Pittman

BRINGING IT ALL HOME

Since 1971 BRING Recycling, which according to its website is one of the nation's oldest nonprofit recyclers, has been telling Lane County about the benefits of recycling and sustainability. Sometimes, however, showing can be more effective than telling. With that in mind the volunteers at BRING are sponsoring the 2009



BRING it Home green home and garden tour.

BRING it Home takes place on Sunday, July 26, and is a self-guided tour of 21 sites in and around Eugene, Springfield and Cottage Grove that incorporate innovative and creative green designs. Included in the tour are eight gardens, a collection of homes and the Child's Way Charter School just outside of Cottage Grove.

"When people see examples of houses using used materials, they get ideas," BRING Volunteer Coordinator Michele Piastro said. "It's helping people see how the stuff they use shape the world they live in."

Tickets for the tour are \$8 in advance and \$12 at the door, and children 12 and under are free. The tickets, along with free guidebooks and maps detailing each site on the tour, can be purchased at the BRING central office and at many other businesses. For a complete list of places to purchase tickets or any other information about BRING and its projects, visit bringrecycling.org or contact Michele Piastro at michelep@bringrecycling.org or 606-9093. — Topher Vollmer

news Briefs

WOPR GOES DOWN HARD

"Ding Dong the WOPR's Dead!" was the phrase on the emails, Facebook pages and Twitter posts of Eugene's environmentalists last week. Like Dorothy's house crushing the Wicked Witch of the West (just to draw out the allusion a little more), the Obama administration squashed the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) on July 16, when the Department of Interior (DOI) announced the WOPR was, in the words of Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, "legally indefensible and must be withdrawn."

The Bush administration's WOPR would have increased logging in Oregon by 700 percent. It was a revision of the Clinton administration's Northwest Forest Plan, and it removed protections for native old-growth forests and fish-bearing streams in forests across western Oregon.

The WOPR was partly based on the USFWS 2008 revision of the critical habitat for the spotted owl. The DOI's press release says that "the federal government will ask the District Court to vacate the Fish and Wildlife Service's 2008 revision of the critical habitat for the spotted owl, because Interior's Inspector General determined that the decision-making process for the owl's recovery plan was potentially jeopardized by improper political influence."

An investigation found that Julie McDonald, deputy assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks under Bush had interfered with more than a dozen endangered species decisions; the spotted owl was one of them.

Salazar said, "We have carefully reviewed the lawsuits filed against the WOPR and it is clear that as a result of the previous Administration's late actions, the plan cannot stand up in court and, if defended, could lead to years of fruitless litigation and inaction."

Locally, Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild, which was the lead plaintiff in a suit challenging the WOPR, said the group was "pleased that the Obama administration seeks to embrace sound science and move beyond the divisive proposals of the Bush administration."

He added, "It's time to take mature and old-growth forests and roadless areas off the table and focus our efforts on watershed restoration and thinning dense young stands." These efforts, according to Heiken, will not only restore the forest but also create jobs and maintain a wood products supply.

Heiken cautions that the WOPR's death doesn't mean the end of bad logging projects. He said some of the projects the DOI said they were ready to move forward on post-WOPR were good, such as thinning projects in young stands, but others were clearcuts in mature forests that could harm



spotted owl populations. "The Obama administration still needs to learn the difference between controversial and non-controversial forestry," he said.

— Camilla Mortensen

WALL-E, KIDS AND NATIVE PLANTS

It will be a summer evening of animated film and real environment issues when the Camas Educational Network brings the film *WALL-E* and a slide show on their community stewardship and school restoration programs to the Amazon Community Center on July 28 for an outdoor cinema night.

Jason Blazar of CEN says that *WALL-E*'s upbeat environmental message ties in with the group's goals. In their community stewardship program Camas Educational Network teaches students and community members about their ecological footprint, Blazar says, and "the different ways different cultures occupy and use natural resources in the landscape."

"We don't just go there and talk to the kids about all the things the we do that are messing up the world; we talk to them about what we can do to fix them."

Blazar, who is president of the board of directors, says that for the past 10 years, CEN has been behind the scenes working with just a few schools, but this year is a coming out of sorts. CEN has been working with Churchill and Oak Hill High in Eugene and Northwest Youth Corps' OutDoor High as well as Cottage Grove and Creswell Schools and a new program at Thurston High in Springfield. Blazar says CEN's programs reach from the Cascade crest to the valley floor and from Cottage Grove to Corvallis.

Blazar says that in addition to their educational mission, schools also provide com-



Students from Thurston Middle School plant native trees and shrubs