

## WOULD EUGENE COPS PEPPER SPRAY PROTESTERS?

In Seattle police doused an 84-year-old woman in the face with pepper spray. In California UC-Davis police showered a dozen passive protesters with the chemical weapon sending two to the hospital. In Portland, police in riot gear blasted a shouting woman directly in the face with the burning weapon.

As images of police violence using the chemical weapon on nonviolent Occupy protesters in other cities go viral, the question arises, could this happen in Eugene?

Maybe. On June 1st, 1997, Eugene police used dozens of canisters of pepper spray to inflict burning pain on nonviolent tree-sitters downtown. They even cut the pants away of one protester hanging in a tree to spray his genitals and anus, a state police investigation found.

No Eugene police were ever punished for the violence using a weapon the ACLU has linked to more than 100 deaths. The department did, however, somewhat change its vague official policy on the use of the chemical weapon, but the police left themselves lots of wiggle room.

The EPD policy (POM 901.3) now states that pepper spray “should not be used as a means to disperse crowds, although it may be used when reasonably necessary to defend persons or to assist in effecting an arrest.” That “assist in effecting an arrest” clause could apparently allow mass spraying passive demonstrators sitting on the ground and refusing orders to leave.

The EPD police states that pepper “spray should not be used against persons engaged only in passive resistance. For purposes of this policy, ‘passive resistance’ means non-compliance with an officer’s orders unaccompanied by any active or physical resistance. (An example of passive resistance would be a person who was limp on the ground, and who was not grasping onto an object or making other efforts to resist being taken into custody).” That “example” could apparently allow Eugene police to pepper spray the Davis demonstrators who had locked arms while sitting down, or to spray someone holding onto a tree.

What about 84-year-old women? The vague EPD policy doesn’t have any age limit. Police should “consider any information you know about a person’s pre-existing medical or physical conditions which might exacerbate the effect,” the policy states.

But the EPD policy does not explicitly prohibit using the chemical weapon on pregnant women, children, people with asthma or pacemakers or anyone else. The policy does state that chemical “spray should not be used in the vicinity of infants unless absolutely necessary.”

— Alan Pittman

## GATHERING EXAMINES OCCUPY EUGENE

A community conversation about Occupy Eugene sponsored by City Club of Eugene and the Downtown Neighborhood Association is planned for 6 to 8 pm Monday, Nov. 28, at Cozmic Pizza downtown.

The gathering will begin with six brief presentations, three from Occupiers (Lauren Regan, Jamil Jonna and Silver Mogart), and three from others with knowledge and experience with related issues (Ed Whitelaw, Jean Tate and Rick Karr).

The format for the evening will be similar to a Samoan circle, according to organizers in a memo being circulated. After the initial comments, the audience will break into small groups for table talk discussion, followed by a structured conversation on stage and a reconvening of the whole group at the end. Dan Bryant will be the moderator.

No food or drink will be provided by the organizers, though both are available for purchase as Cozmic Pizza. The event will be videotaped and edited down to 60 minutes for later broadcast on KLCC.

## MAYORS TAKE STAND AGAINST TAR SANDS

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy was one of the first of more than 100 mayors from 28 states and representing 8.5 million people who called upon the Obama administration to deny the permit for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline project. The pipeline “would bring very high-carbon tar sands oil from Canada to the Gulf refineries,” Piercy says.

In response to pressure from communities and environmental organizations and in view of the pipeline’s possible effects on sensitive wetlands and water, President Obama decided to conduct a new environmental review of the pipeline, a decision Piercy says she supports.

Piercy was also one of 25 mayors who sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in late March expressing concern over the Keystone pipeline and asking the State Department to look at how the expansion of high-carbon tar

sands imports can undermine municipal clean energy initiatives.

According to Piercy, “Tar sands have three times the greenhouse gas emissions in production as conventional oil.”

At least two tar sands related pipelines have spilled into U.S. rivers. The EPA recently released the information that the July 2010 Enbridge oil spill into Michigan’s Kalamazoo River released 300,000 more gallons of oil into the river than previously thought. More than 1.1 million gallons of tar sands oil has been recovered from the spill site, according to the EPA. This summer’s Exxon Silvertip pipeline spill into Montana’s Yellowstone River is currently estimated at 1,000 barrels.

The pipeline might be far away, but it can still affect Eugene. Piercy says, citing the letter: “For communities like ours we worry that ‘expansion of high carbon fuels such as tar sands undermines the hard work by local communities everywhere to fight climate change, reduce dependence on oil and create a clean energy future.’”

Michael O’Leary of Tar-Free Future, working on the tar sands issue in Oregon says, “10 percent of Oregon’s fuel is tar-sourced.”

Piercy says, “Mayors working together all across the country can have an influence on national decisions and help build understanding of how these federal decisions affect everyday Americans. We know the kind of future all our families want for their kids and that motivates us to join together to speak for our communities.”

— Camilla Mortensen

## Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

### EZRA TISHMAN

Raised by an abusive single mom in Pittsburgh, Ezra Tishman moved to a foster home in high school, got a vocational rehabilitation scholarship to Hofstra University on Long Island, then transferred to Godard College in Vermont. “I started a men’s group,” he notes. “My thesis was on ‘the Myth of Masculinity.’” After graduation, he spent years as a mail carrier in Vermont, Alaska and Oregon, and also worked as a farm hand, a fisherman, and an adjunct professor at the University of Vermont. “I was always writing poetry, reading like crazy, and keeping journals,” says Tishman, who moved to Eugene in 1995, after a year in Moscow, Idaho. In Idaho he started an online business, Aardvark Book Search, specializing in rare and collectible books, which has become his full-time work (find him at [www.ezrabook.com](http://www.ezrabook.com)). Tishman married UO English associate professor Lisa Freinkel in 2001. In 2004, the couple saw an ad for a used bookmobile. “I love putting good books in people’s hands,” says Tishman, who bought and refurbished the vehicle, known as Gertie. “We set her up in Whiteaker on the last Friday of the month.” Supporters of Gertie’s mission to provide free and low-cost books to underserved areas are invited to a benefit concert for Tishman’s nonprofit, Books to the People, at 5 pm Sunday, Dec. 4, at Cozmic Pizza, featuring Mood Area 52.

