

ASSAULT ON TRAVELERS LEAVES QUESTIONS

Local homeless people and homeless advocates have long complained of difficulties when they seek justice for those who have been assaulted or harassed. Two travelers and a Eugene resident allege that a local food vendor isn't being charged with an assault that left the Eugenean with a fractured face. Social justice advocate Carol Berg-Caldwell says the vendor has a history of violence and one Eugene bias crime conviction for a 2007 assault on a black man.

Eugene resident Alex Kellis says his friends who witnessed the incident are confident that they could pick his assailant out of a lineup, but the Eugene Police Department has refused to provide them the opportunity. Kellis, 21, says he's worried that his medical bills won't be paid if the correct person isn't charged.

As *EW* went to press, Kellis and two others say that EPD likely charged the wrong man in the assault on Kellis. In a court appearance the man charged, Ryan Jeremy Bennett, said that he couldn't recall the night clearly because he'd been drinking. Other accounts say there were three assailants.

In *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, a short film by local filmmaker Tim Lewis (<http://wkly.ws/1co>), Berg-Caldwell says that multiple sources have told her of an improper relationship between the food cart vendor and EPD, who "like the way he treats the homeless." Armeli and Seaux have filed a complaint with the police auditor. The investigation is still open. The video names the vendor, though he has not been charged.

Eric Armeli and Timothy Seaux, childhood friends from Texas, travel the U.S. together. The two had been in Oregon for a few days, busking and spanging (asking for

spare change), when around midnight on Aug. 16 they say that they and a passer-by were assaulted by two men at the corner of Broadway and Olive.

Armeli and Seaux say that the first man, a food cart vendor, screamed at them for being homeless and spangers, they retreated around the corner, and the vendor returned about 15 minutes later to throw hot dogs at them. They say that the man announced he was calling the police to report that the group of homeless kids was beating him up, made a phone call and returned and began pummeling Armeli. Berg-Caldwell says she hasn't been able to find a record of a 911 call.

They say that in the process, the vendor's friend and employee emerged from John Henry's and the two beat up Armeli and Seaux, cutting open Armeli's chin and showering his dog, Cheeseburger, with blood. At some point during the confrontation, Alex Kellis, who works at Big City Gamin', walked by and attempted to stop the situation.

"It seemed kind of unfair to me how everything was going down," Kellis says, and immediately after he spoke, the man "got up in my face." Kellis' girlfriend tried to pull him away, and the vendor grabbed her, Kellis says. Kellis began yelling at him, and that's the last thing Kellis remembers before he woke up with his girlfriend standing over him. A punch that Kellis' girlfriend says came from the vendor knocked him out and fractured his maxilla.

Armeli says he doesn't think the incident is being taken seriously because he is homeless. "If I would have fought back or my friend would have fought back, we would have gotten felony assault charges," Armeli says. "I feel like the cops treat us unfairly because of the way we live."

— Shannon Finnell

biz beat

Everyday People Yoga is a new donation-based studio offering "yoga, pure and simple." It opened Sept. 11 at 352 W. 12th Ave. in Eugene. Three levels of classes are offered, including for those with physical limitations. Classes are mornings or evenings. Owner is Phoenix Desmond and website is everydaypeopleyoga.com

Merry Jane Clothier is a resale boutique "dedicated to curvy women" that recently moved from Mohawk Plaza in Springfield to 1670 Willamette St. in Eugene. Owner is Jane Donahue and hours are 11 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday and 11 am to 5 pm Saturdays. Call 746-7796.

Advanced Energy Systems of Eugene recently installed a 236-panel solar system for the Stollar Family Estate's new tasting room and facilities that opened Sept. 9 in Dayton, Ore. The hardware was made in the U.S. by SunPower. AES, a major Oregon solar company, has its offices at 65 Centennial Loop, website is aesrenew.com

Tamarack Pool at 35th and Donald is open again after two weeks of annual maintenance. We hear a lot of volunteers showed up to help in addition to the usual crew, including Ministry Contracting, Oregon Auto Repair, Paul Messer Custom Millwork, Boresha Coffee, Forrest Paint, Emerald Pool, Dick's Bicycles and Ashley's Upholstery. See tamarackwellness.com

The **Washburne Café** at 326 Main St. in Springfield is celebrating its first year of business in September by giving back to the community. "We are partnering with three great organizations to raise money and awareness for their missions," says Marilou Heriot, owner and manager. A percentage of September sales will go to Head Start, FOOD for Lane County and the Springfield School Foundation. Call 746-7999 for details.

LCC will begin its nine-month **nonprofit business management** programs in October, offering basic and advanced afternoon classes in Springfield. Visit lanesbdc.com or email armstrongt@lanecc.edu or call 463-5255.

Oct. 12-14 has been set for the 30th annual Lane County **Home Improvement Show** at the Fairgrounds. The fall show expects to have about 250 exhibits. See eugenehideshow.com for vendor information. A list of exhibitors will be up in September.

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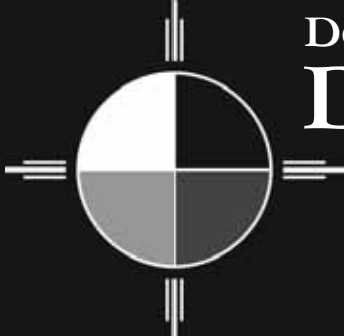
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