

ACTIVIST ALERT

- **No Coal Eugene** meets at 5 pm Thursday, Dec. 19, at Growers Market, 454 Willamette St. The group meets most Thursdays. See nocoaleugene.org.

- A **benefit for Womenspace** in honor of Casey Wright, a recent victim of domestic violence, will be from 6 to 9 pm Thursday, Dec. 19, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. Grrrlz Rock is hosting the event with a theme of "Sing Through the Blues." Suggestion donation \$10-\$15.

- **City Club of Eugene's** annual "Gifts to the City" program will be at noon Friday, Dec. 20, at the Hilton, lobby level. Speakers include Mayor Kitty Piercy, Yvette Alex-Assensoh, Ib Hamid, Greg McLauchlan, Marilyn Milne, Edith Gomez, George Rode, Alley Valkyrie, Rick Dancer and others. \$5 for non-members. The next program will not be until Jan. 10.

- The **Helios Resource Network** Winter Solstice Party will be from 6 to 10 pm Friday, Dec. 20, at the New Zone Gallery, 164 W. Broadway. Suggested donation of \$5-\$10, but no one will be turned away. See heliosnetwork.org.

- A **Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network** fundraiser and "dance party" will be from 1 to 6 pm Saturday, Dec. 21, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. By donation.

- Public hearings on **Eugene city budget options** have been scheduled for 5:30 pm Tuesday, Jan. 21, at Harris Hall and 5:30 pm Wednesday, Jan. 29, at the Eugene Public Library. Community members will be asked to respond to a list of Budget Committee options or suggest their own. Five of the six current options being put forward present different combinations of service reductions, while the sixth option calls for a citywide across-the-board reduction of 2 percent for all departments. See eugene-or.gov/budget.

- Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg is kicking off a campaign to raise money for the construction of an additional three **Conestoga huts in Springfield**. The campaign is in collaboration with the Springfield Shelter Rights Alliance, St. Vincent de Paul's overnight parking program and local churches. Each Conestoga hut costs about \$1,200 to build. Donations can be mailed to CALC at 458 Blair Blvd., Eugene 97402, and designated "SSRA Conestoga Huts." Donations can also be made at calclane.org.

POLLUTION UPDATE

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent Springfield-based **Mid Valley Metal Recycling** a letter on Dec. 9 for failing to submit stormwater monitoring results for 2012-13 for its facility on South A Street in Springfield, which has a DEQ-issued Clean Water Act permit to discharge pollution to the Springfield Millrace. DEQ also sent a letter to **David L. Penegor** on Dec. 11 for solid waste, waste tire, used oil and spill violations at a site on Brabham Road in Pleasant Hill near Highway 58.

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project

lighten up

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

Rush Limbaugh's calling Pope Francis a Marxist for criticizing capitalism is no big deal. That's just Rush getting bent out of shape when he feels someone has attacked his religion.

NEWS

WHOVILLE CAMPERS FEAR OCCUPY-STYLE CLOSURE

Whoville campers are worried that history will repeat itself. Before the Eugene City Council's winter break in 2011, the council and EPD had no plans to close the Occupy Eugene camp at Washington-Jefferson Park during winter break. By Christmas, it was closed. Now that the council has said the same thing about Whoville, some campers say that some of the same tactics used to justify Occupy's closure are threatening Whoville.

Councilor Betty Taylor called for an emergency council meeting to ensure that Whoville isn't shut down, but a meeting was not scheduled at press time.

Tzedakah Bat Eliyah, a Whoville camper who goes by her spiritual name, says that while Whoville campers have a very positive relationship with most EPD officers, one officer has been dropping off disruptive, disturbed people at the camp, intending to make the camp unsustainable. EPD refutes the drop-off claim.

On Dec. 9, Mayor Kitty Piercy assured activists at the City Council's public forum that neither council nor EPD planned to shut down Whoville during the break. "Immediately that night, we had three persons dropped off into our camp who were specifically told to come here," Eliyah says. "One of them was even provided a tent by an officer in EPD who said, 'Well, they can't tell you not to be there.'"

She says one of the people an officer dropped off was the person later visited by Robert Eugene Wright, who police originally reported had stabbed a camper with a screwdriver Dec. 13 after an argument about Wright's swastika face tattoo. Whovillians say Wright had a 6-inch switchblade, not a screwdriver, and describe the "stabbing" as a cut grazing a camper's hand

as he restrained Wright. Another person the police dropped off, Eliyah says, is known to have a recorded history of violent outbursts.

"I feel the whole thing was a setup of an excuse for EPD to surveil us, be closer and use any excuse to drive us off," Eliyah says, stressing that she thinks most EPD officers have interacted helpfully with campers.

EPD's spokesperson says in an email, "No, EPD officers are not dropping off people at the camp. We are aware that CAHOOTS dropped off a person at their request." She adds that EPD doesn't have immediate plans to change the way they approach Whoville. "The knife incident prompted EPD to take a closer look at conditions in and around the area," she writes. "It is an evaluation. We don't know yet what we will learn from that assessment."

Eliyah says she feels safe in the camp, especially after the camp peacekeepers were able to restrain Wright without any extreme violence. "We have a couple of people here who we feel are trying to thwart the process, and they're the ones calling EPD and exaggerating," she says, adding that people asked to leave Whoville are also complaining. "Those are the complaints of the evicted."

Jean Stacey of SLEEPS says if the City Council approves the rest stops, it will make things safer by making it easier for the campers and EPD to work together using trespass laws to keep out people who can't or won't be peaceful. "Because the council refused to legalize [the camp], that means everyone is equally illegal there, so EPD cannot remove people for any reason except that they have committed a violent crime already." — *Shannon Finnell*



PHOTO: TODD COOPER