

## LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DONATES SURPLUS CLOTHING TO THE UNHOUSED

Late last summer, the images captured of police responding to the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, with red, laser-sighted assault rifles and hulking armored vehicles precipitated a congressional hearing to survey the federal programs that funnel surplus military equipment from the Defense Department to law enforcement departments around the country.

But on Dec. 30, the heads of the Lane County Sheriff's Office donated clothing acquired through a military surplus program — eight heavy, army-green jackets, 77 black fleece pants and a pair of boots were given to First Christian Church to pass on to Eugene's unhoused.

### The Lane County Sheriff's Office has received everything from rifles to five armored personnel carriers.

— SERGEANT CARRIE CARVER

"They're not just weapons and vehicles and the things that I think are highlighted when people traditionally talk about the LESO [Law Enforcement Support Office] 1033 program," says Sergeant Carrie Carver, public information officer for the Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO).

The Defense Department's 1033 program, started in 1997, has distributed \$5.1-billion worth of taxpayer-funded equipment to 8,000 law enforcement agencies around the U.S. and its territories. The LCSO has participated in the program for about 10 years, during which Lane County has received 1,070 items valued at more than \$2 million, according to records acquired by *The Oregonian*. This amount is more than any other sheriff's office in the state.

According to Carver, the LCSO has received everything from rifles to five armored personnel carriers (the kind used in Ferguson), which she says are used for "high-risk, drug-related warrant services, armed suicidal subjects, armed barricaded subjects, search and rescue missions and Dunes Patrol."

*The O* says LCSO also got "78 magazine cartridges, 34 rifles, 30 laser pointers, 12 spotlights, 10 pairs of waterproof pants, an explosive ordnance robot, an armored truck and scores of infrared illuminators — small beacons used to show 'friendlies' through night-vision optics."

The clothing donated on Dec. 30, however, has a much tamer application. "These nice warm weather jackets, they were perfect to get us through a time when we didn't have the money to purchase those jackets for our deputies," Carver says. "But we see cold weather in our community and people who are in need of warm weather clothing."

Some of the clothing was given to those at the Egan Warming Center, and some was distributed to those in need through First Christian Church's Helping Hand Ministry. Richard Murray, who heads up the Helping Hand Ministry, says that much of the clothing is now in use: "We still have one box of the overalls and some jackets left that we are holding to distribute through the Helping Hand Room next time the weather gets really cold again." — *Ben Stone*



## IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

**WHITE CROWNED SPARROW  
(ZONOTRICHIA LEUCOPHRYS)  
SEEN ON THE  
ANNUAL BIRD COUNT**

**A** year ago the eastside Delta Ponds had already frozen solid. Ice was an inch thick under seven inches of snow and thawed completely by the New Year. In February another snowfall was accompanied by a freezing rain the likes of which we hadn't seen for many years. It was hard on the birdwatchers and really hard on the birds. Hummingbird feeders froze.

What will it be like this winter? The Christmas Bird Count morning was sunny and beautiful. This year, high water in the river prevented seeing many of the usual waterfowl. The Delta Ponds were so deep from riverbank overflow that almost no dabbling ducks were seen.

The swelling buds on the willows, cottonwoods and osoberrys sing a song of glee in the plant world. White alder and cultivated filberts are already shedding pollen. Low groundwater levels from last summer's dry spell are being replenished. Willamette Valley is not likely to be in drought condition anytime soon. A rapid and vigorous spring flush depends on temperatures staying mostly above freezing. Seeing Oregon grape flowers open on Christmas indicates unusual bloom events are taking place.

The neighborhood birds seem to be thriving. Our circulating flock of little birds include both lesser and American goldfinches, pine siskins, black capped chickadees, juncoes, nuthatches and a solitary downy woodpecker. It's hard to say which I enjoy more: the exquisite Townsend's warblers or the elegant varied thrush. Having feeders clean and filled, and the fountain running, keeps them coming around.

*David Wagner is a botanist and artist working in Eugene. He has created the new "Oregon Nature Calendar and Coloring Book" which can be obtained at fernzenmosses.com.*

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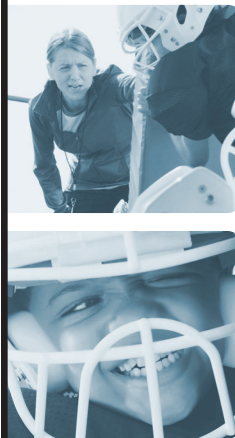
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