



Mike Weber If you don't like what they're saying, don't blame me. This group is your community. As a whole, when you put these comments in a bowl, you're looking at what a majority of people thinks. This is what you're up against.

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people that comment, they'd just like the homeless and drug addicts to go away. People are just saying 'kill the homeless.' Ridiculous," he says.

"The whole thing, all of it, just fascinates me," Weber says. "It's as addictive as any drug. You will watch the same group of people say some real vile things, and then stick up for a family that something bad's happened to. They'll all come together."

"If there's one thing this group is all about, it's law and order," he explains.

HELPING THE MAN

Certainly, *Lane County Mugshots Uncensored* has had an impact on local law enforcement. Melinda McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the Eugene Police Department, says that *LCMU* members have directed the cops to postings or provided tips that aid in ongoing investigations. "We know we have had information come in that was helpful," she

says. "Sometimes issues have popped up on the mugshots page and then, when it gets brought to our attention, it allows us the chance to address it."

She says *LCMU* has also shown a willingness to share EPD social media posts, "which is helpful in getting the news and alerts in front of more people."

Understandably, McLaughlin is tight-lipped about any specifics regarding particular cases *LCMU* might have influenced, though it's easy to imagine that every cop on the force keeps a continuous eye on the page, if only out of the same morbid curiosity that drives us all. After all, *LCMU* is to crime junkies what *ESPN* is to sports fanatics: a never-ending flow of the good stuff.

McLaughlin suggests that *LCMU* users remember that a phone call to the police department about an incident of concern is far more effective than sending a link to a Facebook page — a suggestion that might imply people are so busy trolling online, they forget the basics. If someone is about to get hit by a car, texting them "Watch out!" might

not be the most effective lifesaver.

"It is difficult for an officer or detective to follow up on a tip coming from a closed group on Facebook," McLaughlin explains, "and much easier if we have a phone number or email to speak with people directly."

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Todd Milbourn, an investigative reporter and University of Oregon professor in the School of Journalism, says sites like *Lane County Mugshots Uncensored* harken back the police blotters from newspapers of yore, where cops-and-robbers battled it out in print, *Dragnet*-style. "There is certainly some of that feel," he says. "Let's face it: People are hungry to understand the challenges of public safety in their communities."

Perhaps surprisingly, considering his status as an established journalist, Milbourn has a generally positive view about renegade sites like *LCMU*. Unlike more



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