

Editorial

Save theater from the wrecking ball

Sacred Heart General Hospital should not demolish the 66-year-old Mayflower Theater building before completion of the Eugene Historic Review Board process.

The building's tenants have until today to vacate the building, 788 E. 11th Ave. And if the building is still standing, the Eugene Historic Review Board will hold a public hearing Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to consider the structure for official historic status.

Sacred Heart spokesman Alan Yorby said hospital officials have not decided if they will wait for the board's decision before destroying the building. The hospital previously announced plans to build a laboratory on the site. And hospital officials have not decided if they will save the building even if the board decides the theater merits historic status, Yorby said.

Sacred Heart has the right to destroy the building. It owns the property. And until the building is designated a historic landmark, which requires a minimum of 30 days following Historic Review Board approval, the hospital has no legal obligation to save it.

But Sacred Heart should not exercise its right. As a prominent member of the community, the hospital has a duty to represent not only its own interests, but the interests of the neighborhood. This includes allowing community members to register their opinions at the historic board hearing. This includes abiding by the historic board's decision.

Yorby is quick to point out the hospital is in compliance with the West University Refinement Plan. He is right. It is. The refinement plan doesn't list the Mayflower Theater building among structures with historic potential.

But the Historic Review Board believes failure to include the theater was an oversight. The building clearly merits consideration as a historic landmark — if for its age alone. Sacred Heart should not exploit a situation that clearly occurred in error.

Destroying the building would be one more in a series of callous demolitions that reflect Eugene's shameful attitude toward preservation. The number of historic buildings in Eugene has dwindled to 26 — all of them established since 1975. None has been designated since 1981.

The theater is the second oldest intact cinema in Eugene. Another site can be found for a laboratory. But once torn down, the Mayflower Theater can never be replaced.

If Sacred Heart chooses to save the building, the hospital will own a theater and some apartments rather than a laboratory building site. But it will not have spent the approximate \$250,000 it paid for the property in vain. The hospital will be able to collect revenue from the property. More importantly, it will have a long-lasting testament to its commitment to the community and to the city.

Sacred Heart has an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to work with the neighborhood it inhabits; to temper expansion with reverence for the past. And it has an opportunity to lead a revolt against a damaging trend.

Old buildings characterize a city like wrinkles characterize a face. If Eugene ignores its historical assets, its face will be smoothed into a bland wasteland.

We urge Sacred Heart to save the Mayflower Theater.



Letters

Measure value

I offer a rebuttal to the Emerald editorial (Feb. 7) backing the proposal to make OSPIRG pay rent on its office space.

I gather we begin with the same assumption: that student groups should have power, as much as possible, at least in terms of community and national outreach. Apparently, the Emerald and others on campus believe only some student groups should have it, and they detect a special threat in OSPIRG's situation.

Specifically, the editorial tries to make OSPIRG fit the evil connotations of the word "corporation." What the unnamed Emerald writer overlooks is that in the case of OSPIRG, corporate is — perish the thought — good.

Here we must look at reality instead of form. In its 15 years at the University, OSPIRG has been one thing: a student run and student controlled research group, one with a reputation for quality. Through Suite 1, students have access to a unique and powerful national organization of PIRGs, responsible for some of the most carefully constructed consumer legislation in

the country.

It is widely known that the reasons for OSPIRG's success are cooperation, efficiency and hard work, all of which are enhanced by incorporation. Students should consider what they will lose before falling prey to the political definition game that is aimed at the vitality of this storied campus resource.

Marc Albert
Honors College

Political move

A good friend of mine, Debbie Schwartz, was just terminated from her position as manager of Footnotes. Debbie worked long and hard for the students of this university and is deserving of more appreciation than this.

I believe this is purely a political maneuver. Debbie was an effective and efficient manager. When the ASUO leadership decided to start charging rent for their office in the EMU, Debbie challenged them because it would mean having to raise the price of the notes. So now they are replacing her with someone who will play ball, and we can expect the price of our education to raise that much more. It's nice to know our leadership is looking out for us.

Certainly this is not an impartial protest. Debbie is a fine person, and I'm proud to call her my friend. But I didn't know her before I worked for her, and she EARNED my respect and friendship. It is the students who will lose most; Debbie will find a better position.

Good luck to you, Debbie, in your future endeavors. I hope

you will find a place where your abilities and efforts are more appreciated. You deserve that and more.

Allan Steinberry
Fine Arts

Unfair label

Almost every day, Emerald readers are subjected to a very disheartening correlation. I am responding to advertisements, articles, etc. that are relating MEN to rape.

Granted, in every official report of rape, the victim is usually female. But what kind of man is going to be brave enough to admit HE was raped? WAIT A MINUTE! You say a man can't be raped. I've been told that rape can be unwanted touching or verbal abuse.

Some of the women I've seen and heard on this campus could be convicted of rape, too! I have good reason to believe there are women on every campus who are just as sexual, if not more sexual than men. I'm tired of being unfairly labeled as a potential rapist alone!

I believe rape is rape, whether the victim is male or female. The charge of date or acquaintance rape is just another way to "officially" cover up a guilt trip in many cases!

Here's a message to BOTH sexes: Respect each other and remember that we are responsible for our actions, both physically and mentally. I'll do my part to eliminate unwanted activities, and I hope you'll do the same.

Eric B. Patterson
TCF

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Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.