

Green represents his constituencies

During his long, often tough, and ultimately successful campaign for the Eugene mayor's job, Jeff Miller received some harsh criticism from his then-fellow Eugene city councilor and opponent in the mayoral race, Emily Schue.

He was accused of insensitivity to the minority community, a charge we believe was unfair, but one that nonetheless was perceived as accurate by some local people of color. Schue's supporters here on campus also cited their candidate's visibility to University students, while reportedly Miller was invisible.

Now that Miller has taken to wearing the mayor's shoes, his replacement on the Eugene City Council will no doubt play a large part in ending perceptions of the council's insensitivity to minorities and invisibility to students.

Newly appointed city councilman Bobby Green is both a person of color and a University student.

We welcome Green's appointment for the obvious appropriateness and timeliness of his being the first black city councilor in recent history: We hope Green can do his part to enlighten members of the city council to areas in which they no doubt believe themselves openminded.

More important to a larger constituency, however, is Green's longtime association with the University — as both student and athlete — and the city that ties him to our most common commitment as students: our survival in a community that both welcomes our economic presence and strains from our weight.

Green, 34, not only understands the meaning and depth of our situation, he appreciates the viewpoints of the town's longstanding citizenry. Green has lived in Eugene since he moved here from New Orleans 17 years ago to attend classes; but more important to the citizens of Eugene, he has raised a family here. He has operated a small business here.

He brings to the city council strengths in two of the most predominately wanting areas of the Eugene agenda — the relationship between city government and University students and the sad state of the Eugene small business community. He has a foothold in two of the voting blocks with the least sincere representation, that of the black community and the University community.

But overlooked in the self-congratulatory atmosphere promoted by the city council and the media after Green's appointment has been Ward 6, the Bethel-Danebo area that Green is to represent.

We hope the members of the Ward 6 community appreciate the significance of Green's being a black and a University student, but we also hope they understand he was not chosen for either of those reasons.

Our zeal, and the minority community's zeal should not be construed as a call on Green to serve as our representative in city government. He was not chosen for those reasons, and we have every reason to believe he has his political priorities in order.

Green was chosen because the city council believed him the best person for the job, as the best representative for the Ward 6 community. Green claims his first commitment is to the area he was selected to represent.

Green has a standing commitment to children's programs in his community proven by his 10-year involvement with the Kid Sports program and sports programs at Marist High School. As a father of three, he understands the difficulties facing families in his community.

As a manager of a store at Valley River Center, Green no doubt learned some of the woes of small business operation in Eugene. He has a stated commitment to job development.

But Green himself best stated his case: "I don't feel any pressure as a minority candidate ... I am able to communicate to people. Period. That is the important thing."

Perhaps some believe we have overemphasized the ethnic issues confronting our community. We find it shameful that the minority community had to wait for Green's appointment before expressions of hope could emerge.

In his inaugural message in January, Mayor Miller expressed his conviction to minority issues, partly because of recent crimes and indignities conducted against minorities, but also because of the criticism he received during his campaign. If anyone still has doubts, we are certain Miller's conviction is sincere.

However, the minority community probably found little satisfaction in Miller's words. Regardless of the new councilor's race, minority issues should be examined, and should have been looked at a long time ago. We welcome Bobby Green because he fits the bill for all concerned, not just for people of color, not just for University students, not just for the people of Ward 6. And the city council of Eugene should shape up and look sharp: The responsibility cannot be shuttled off to your newest member. It still rests with all of city government, with the entire community, exactly where it has been all along.



Letters

Dirty hand

Visualize a woman grasping the dirty hand of her unwanted child. I do not picture the child having a nurturing family, a safe, healthy environment, the opportunity for a higher education, or the hope for a bright, happy future.

Robert Weigel ("Change of Heart," ODE, Feb. 3) is unrealistic about the abortion issue and the possible consequences of overturning Roe v. Wade. He states that "a law serves as a reminder of what is right," therefore, a person who makes a just, but unenforced law is "better" than a person who makes a "compromising" law.

Robert needs to shift his focus from the consciences of America's legislators to, instead, the victims of these "just" laws: women and unwanted children. I dare him to try to explain this lawmaker's moral superiority to a group of impoverished, single mothers on a street.

It is very easy for you to sit back, praise the righteous, and completely ignore reality when you will personally never have to face an unwanted pregnancy. You have a very comfortable distance from this private, personal issue.

But try to remember that, while right and wrong are important, certain complex cultural, medical, and socio-economic elements must also be considered in the making of a federal law.

Heather Piper
Political science

Outraged

I write in response to Merritt Borden's letter of Feb. 2. I am assuming the masculinity of Merritt because of the constant use of "he" in referring to the student-athlete, totally disregarding the existence of female athletes.

To put it bluntly, I think Mr. Borden is the "damn fool." It seems obvious to me that he is

not an athlete. The athlete does not compete in sports for the pursuit of money. Any person so motivated should do something else with whatever talents she or he has. The athlete performs because of the love of the sport; for any other reason, it just isn't worth the effort.

I think Mr. Borden's plea for the safety of the athlete and for the time spent on sports is totally absurd. Danger goes along with sport; it's an accepted fact. Anyone who is afraid of pain shouldn't be an athlete.

Another foolish comment that Mr. Borden makes is that athletes are "only" given their room and board, tuition and books. Perhaps he fails to recognize the existence of all the other students on campus who struggle, and sometimes fail to pay these same fees. These people are here for the joy of learning, or out to get a degree. Why should an accomplished athlete be given precedence over a brilliant mind? Because she or he makes the school money? No. Besides, the academic standards for excellent athletes are so low as to be totally absurd.

To sum up, I think it is pretty clear that I am outraged by this letter, and I think any other person not totally motivated by greed would be too.

Jack Q.W. Cantwell
Freshman

Twist of faith

Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.

In Old Testament times, the Israelites exacted the death penalty upon homosexuals. This, I suppose, was a deterrent much the same as today someone with gay tendencies may think twice before practicing it for fear of AIDS.

The New Testament brought the Messiah, announced by John the Baptist, who told people to repent. By and large they did, with the exception of the Pharisees who felt in themselves they were all right.

Jesus called them hypocrites, meaning play actors. They

played church and pretended to be normal Jews while perverting God's commands. He compared them to a gravesite, a row of tombstones covering up dead men's bones. Thus they may appear to others to be in line, but if one penetrates the surface, he will discover something very rotten. But their whole concern was to promote a positive image of themselves to gain men's approval. They did not observe Pharisee Pride Week, but they observed the Sabbath to the same purpose.

Upon these people Jesus pronounced woe, the woe of going to the bad place.

Far be it for me to judge anyone or twist the scripture into knots, but if the shoe fits, wear it.

Earl Gosnell
Eugene

Equalizer

We finally have a good reason for allowing the sale of semi-automatic weapons here — so that the citizens of Eugene can protect themselves against University students when they decide to throw a riot instead of a kegger.

You may have scared the police off in last week's snowball fight, but some of the rest of us don't scare so easily. We can and will defend our right to use the streets.

An AK-47 modified for fully-automatic operation is a great equalizer against a mob of University students.

H.G. Campbell
Eugene

Huh?

In response to Jason Keuter's most recent letter (ODE, Feb. 9): Huh?

P. Herring
Student