

# EDITORIAL

## Increase security at courthouse

When four people were shot Thursday in a Seattle courthouse, some expressed shock at the violence of the act. The sad reality is that the same violence could happen right here in Eugene.

The Lane County Courthouse has no physical security system in place. While police officials do patrol the courthouse area, no metal detectors or X-ray machines have been installed to protect the court from guns, knives, bombs or any other weapons. Someone could easily go on a shooting spree or blow the courtroom up under the current system.

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Lane County today is more dangerous than it was a few decades ago. As society changes, the needs for security change. No one questions the need for more police in Eugene as compared to a decade ago. Why not do the same for courthouse security?

By nature of their function, courthouses attract accused criminals and victims, spouses from nasty divorces and disgruntled citizens mad at the legal system. With people like this, combined with the high stress situation of going to court, the unfortunate reality is that some people will resort to violence. This violence must be fought immediately in the strongest way possible.

An easy start to increasing security at the Lane County Courthouse would be to install metal detectors at the entrance. The move is not extreme by any means. No one questions why people must pass through security checkpoints at airports worldwide. In addition, a number of courthouses throughout the nation have installed metal detectors, including one in Portland.

Metal detectors would not come without substantial cost. The county would have to pay for the machines and for staff to operate the machines for the hours when the court is open. However, one must ask what is more important — saving money that would have been spent on the detectors or helping ensure the physical security for those in court. The choice should be obvious. Lane County officials should spend the money and install the metal detectors before a violent tragedy happens in Eugene.

A committee is already investigating the need for increased security at the courthouse. It is encouraging and commendable to see that the county finds security for courthouse employees and the general public to be a priority.

It's unfortunate that circumstances today require communities to spend money on ensuring security in public areas such as courts when the money could be used elsewhere. However, times have changed and metal detectors are a concrete way to combat violence at court. Lane County should step into the present day and increase security at its courthouse.



### LETTERS

#### Low rent

Regarding Mr. Fontana's opinion piece in the *Emerald* on Feb. 8 ("Amazon . . . Outdated").

Mr. Fontana maintains that because Amazon is only for students, its demolition does not implicate community-wide housing concerns. "This complex does not benefit the homeless whom we see on 13th Avenue . . . or the non-University working poor of our community." Say again?

Amazon provides more than 100 units at the bottom end of the low cost housing market. Each student there supports a family. Many are single parents receiving food stamps and/or public assistance who will not be able to afford the \$200-400 projected increase in their monthly rent.

These individuals will be forced, with their families, to compete with "the non-University working poor" for scarce or non-existent housing. Some competitors, both students and non-students will become homeless as a result. Property owners will then be in an improved position to raise rents, raise deposits, and lower services.

Low Amazon rents allowed me to complete law school at the University. Since graduating, I've practiced tenant law in the community and on campus. I've seen the consequences of the tight rental market and what some renters are forced to tolerate.

Mr. Fontana, if you are truly concerned for the community's homeless and working poor, and not just exploiting them for rhetorical purposes, I encourage you to attend the meetings of the Homeless Action Coalition at the United Methodist Church at noon on the second Monday of any month and listen to what homeless activists have to say about Amazon's proposed destruction.

John Davidson  
ASUO Legal Services

#### Call doctor

Sacred Heart Hospital administrator Sister Monica Heeran and other hospital employees claim that one of the main reasons local physicians should turn over their clinics to the hospital is to avoid

"duplication" of medical procedures. Supposedly, such streamlining will translate into savings for the consumer (patients).

Since when has a monopoly, or near-monopoly, ever resulted in significant economic boons for consumers? Usually the exact reverse becomes the case. If Sacred Heart Hospital grabs control of more than 70 percent of local health care providers, it's anyone's guess how high fees will escalate.

Within a matter of days, the physicians at Eugene Clinic and Oregon Medical Group clinics will vote to integrate, or not, with Sacred Heart Hospital. It's essential that these physicians hear from their patients. It's vital that we share our concerns about a religious monolith having such control over our health care.

The Catholic administration dropped a cool million bucks opposing Measure 16, the death with dignity physician-assisted suicide measure that Oregon voters approved (currently held up in court on appeal). Physician-assisted suicide is just one of the medical procedures condemned by the Catholic Church. It's a scary precedent indeed to allow near-monopolistic control of our health care choices to such an institution. It's just plain unhealthy.

Quick, call your doctor.  
Carol Berg  
Eugene

#### Confusion

Some confusion has occurred regarding the orientation of the Chinese Student Association (CSA) and the Taiwanese Student Organization on campus. In this letter, we'll try to clarify the situation.

Every student has equal rights to participate or form an organization on campus. The ASUO Executive granted the Taiwanese Student Organization recognition after mediation with

the Chinese Student Association. The CSA, formed in the 1970's and the newly-established TSO's goals are to promote students' awareness and understanding about Taiwan.

The main reason of the recognition of the TSO is because the two groups have distinctly different focuses. CSA is focusing on the cultural aspect of Taiwan, while TSO is focusing on the political education about Taiwan.

We hope this clarification helps us to understand the distinctions between the two groups. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Nani Sarosa  
ASUO International  
Affairs Coordinator  
Jason Grigsby  
ASUO Program Coordinator  
Leslie Warren  
ASUO President

#### Responsibility

In response to Mr. Womack's article of Feb. 21, I would like to say that there have been some isolated incidents that could have been considered not fair. But as a whole, affirmative action has worked due to the fact that most minorities and women realize the responsibility a job entails and are willing to bend over backwards to keep that job. From what I've seen at this University, it's difficult to get students to even show up for class unless there is a test.

I saw the *Today Show* the morning of the 21st and it was stated that employers are seeking communication, attitude and experience from prospective employees. It also stated on the *Today show* that they don't care about GPA or what university you came from. It seems as though employers are experiencing a lack of responsibility from college graduates.

Theo Burnette  
Undeclared

### LETTERS POLICY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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