

EDITORIAL

ODE reflects on good, bad of year

Throughout the year, loyal *Emerald* readers will note that this newspaper takes a stand on major issues daily. From campus to around the world, the *Emerald* has commended and condemned just about everything under the sun.

At the close of the year, the *Emerald* takes a few moments to reflect on our favorite and not-so-favorite editorial topics.

The good:

- Oregon Public Employee Union members deserve kudos for standing up for themselves and demanding a pay raise. While it took months of talking and a week of striking, a tentative agreement was reached. The raise, the first since 1993, is well deserved by all.

- Demolition of Amazon Family Housing finally got underway spring term after legal maneuvering by residents of the crumbling complex. While University Housing officials deserve praise for continually pursuing destruction of the complex, it appears that the current complex will just fade away, as every time the University is able to knock down one of the buildings, Amazon residents find another way to hold up the process. It's better to get some of the complex destroyed than nothing.

- After a heated battle, a contentious hearing and a number of press conferences, OSPIRG finally was funded by the Programs Finance Committee and the Student Senate. While some introduced (and repeated) concerns about the ways that organizations are funded with incidental fee dollars, those issues should be looked at separately from the funding of any particular group. OSPIRG was justified in receiving its annual appropriation.

The bad:

- Oregon voters top the bad list. As much as we love to hate the government, its policies and proposals, the fact is that voters put them there. While the optimist might think that outspoken legislators like Reps. Kevin Mannix and Bob Tiernan might be thrown out of office some day, the short memories of Oregonians will most likely ensure them life terms at the Capitol.

- No matter how asinine Oregon voters are, the Oregon Legislature comes in a close second. Whether it's proposing higher education budgets that would require tax increases or pandering to Oregonians by proposing to send everyone tax refund checks, legislators have made it abundantly clear that it's time for this session to end. Once out of the Capitol, perhaps they can try living in the real world.

- ASUO election season is rarely fun, but this year's attempt at an election was a joke. From mudslinging to questionable advertising to costly ballot measures, this election had a little something for everyone — or at least something for everyone to wretch at.

There are many other issues that the *Emerald* might tackle in upcoming weeks. From duck feet on sidewalks to budget woes in the Legislature, editorials help to inform and provoke discussion in the community.

Have a great summer.



■ OPINION

New Hyundai plant will hurt Eugene



ANNE MOSER-KORNFELD

I've only lived in Eugene three years, but in that short time, I've seen the sheep pasture across from the K-Mart on Goodpasture Island Road paved over to become a housing development and I've seen growth that's gone beyond what a town this size can properly handle.

Ten years ago, during my first stay in Oregon, I lived in Dorena, outside of Cottage Grove. Cottage Grove has exploded in a commercial truck-stop. The downtown is basically dead and WalMart is moving in anytime for the final kill.

Eugene is becoming overrun by outside interests in the same way. The ease people have in coming and going, working with each other on projects where people give of themselves freely and trusting outsiders is disappearing.

Last winter, I went to a planning commission meeting in Coburg and learned that Eugene's growth has been anticipated and planned for over the course of the last 20 years.

I felt a bit more assured that the neighbors down the street from my house, officially known as Home Base and Future Shop, have been expected for years, but the traffic back-up still gets to me.

When Hyundai announced its plans to build a \$1.3 billion plant last week, I lost all composure toward corporate growth in this area.

In regard to traffic congestion, I love this. Eugene is proposing to build a West Eugene Parkway to relieve congestion on West 11th Avenue once the Hyundai plant is built. This town can't even approve a measure to build a new Ferry Street bridge when the government offered \$38 mil-

lion for the project.

Can we expect anything better from voters in regard to West 11th? Knowing the history of this area, Eugene drivers will just have to deal with traffic.

Hyundai plans to produce a high-capacity memory chip at a local plant. The plant will be as large as four or five Costco warehouses and will employ 1,000 workers.

In a recent article published in *The Register-Guard*, Jerry Rust, a member of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, said about Hyundai, "Most of us old-time Oregonians who have moss growing off our backs have some nervous twitches about the impact of growth on livability, traffic congestion and a whole range of things."

The whole range of things Rust refers to isn't simply limited to long-time Oregonians. Once I graduate, I don't plan to stay around Eugene and see the area become overdeveloped, the wetlands drained, the pollution increase, or my friends and family lose sight of one another.

I don't need to stick around here and slowly see the quality of life diminish day after day. I at least have a choice about whether I want to stay and see things go from bad to worse.

Eugene's future doesn't look very bright from where I'm standing. With Hyundai moving in as a quick fix to the failing timber industry, likely to offer wages matching those of the other corporate giants preying on this area (namely Sony and RV manufacturers in Junction City) the quality of life Eugene is so proud of is more than likely to deteriorate in a much shorter time than it takes to grow a small fir tree.

Now if that sounds like an idea straight out of left field with no connection to business or big money interests, think for a minute about the various things Eugene takes pride in.

Eugene values itself as a recreational tourist attraction with beautiful, natural landmarks. The trees, near-by lakes, the

ocean 90 minutes away, and hikes up Skinner's Butte all symbolize what makes this area special.

New residents move here to get away from the bustle of large cities and many escape from that dastardly place referred to as "back east."

Those residents who came here for a better life, good schools for their children, peace of mind and a temperate environment better think again about what Hyundai's tax breaks mean for them.

It's really apparent that Hyundai's move into the Eugene area went quickly and smoothly without opposition because the people who will be the most affected have not been informed about what's going on.

Hyundai officials said they chose Eugene because the company intends to grow. How much larger can Hyundai get and for what?

Inside of me there is an environmentalist fighting to get out. I don't know about this progress thing. I don't know if Hyundai can be trusted, whether the company is really going to do all right by the people living here.

The rush of publicity working to convince residents that Hyundai is worth cashing our chips in for leaves many questions unanswered by the deal made last week. Sadly, my concern is that we won't know all the answers until it's too late and no one is able to reverse the damage already done.

In Hyundai's case, it really looks like progress is progressing too fast. I never thought I'd jump on the bandwagon to defend small town values.

Eugene is not truly a small town. It is in fact a city but it has its own special quality that needs to be preserved.

Call me an old stick-in-the-mud. If we're lucky, the payoff will be worth the cost, but I don't buy it for a second.

Anne Moser-Kornfeld is a columnist for the Emerald.

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