

Memorial debate so very Eugene

The Eugene City Council voted Wednesday to approve the placement of a war memorial in Skinner Butte Park. The proposed 5-foot-high granite wall will list the names of all Lane County residents who have lost their lives in wars since 1914. The entire cost of the memorial will be paid by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Willamette Post 293 and the Post 293 Auxiliary through donations and volunteer labor.

Only in Eugene would this be controversial.

Council members Barbara Keller and Kevin Hornbuckle voted against the donation and have opposed the memorial on the basis that it celebrates "people who were killed killing people."

The major flaw with that argument is that not all of the people killed in wars abroad killed anyone. The memorial includes the names of military medics and other service personnel who died helping the wounded.

Clearly, the purpose of the memorial is not to glorify war. We have movies, television and music videos for that. War memorials do, in fact, achieve the opposite effect. They serve as painful reminders of the senseless loss involved with all war, and as a motivation to question any future decision to send American sons and daughters to the firing line.

The Vietnam memorial in Washington, D.C., has become a mecca for the survivors of the men and women killed in that controversial war. When it was first erected, the initial controversy from Congress centered around its decidedly uncelebratory stance of American military action. Opponents described it as "ominous" and "unpatriotic." It has since become a major landmark for citizens of this country, and last year more tourists visited "The Wall" than any other landmark in the nation's capital.

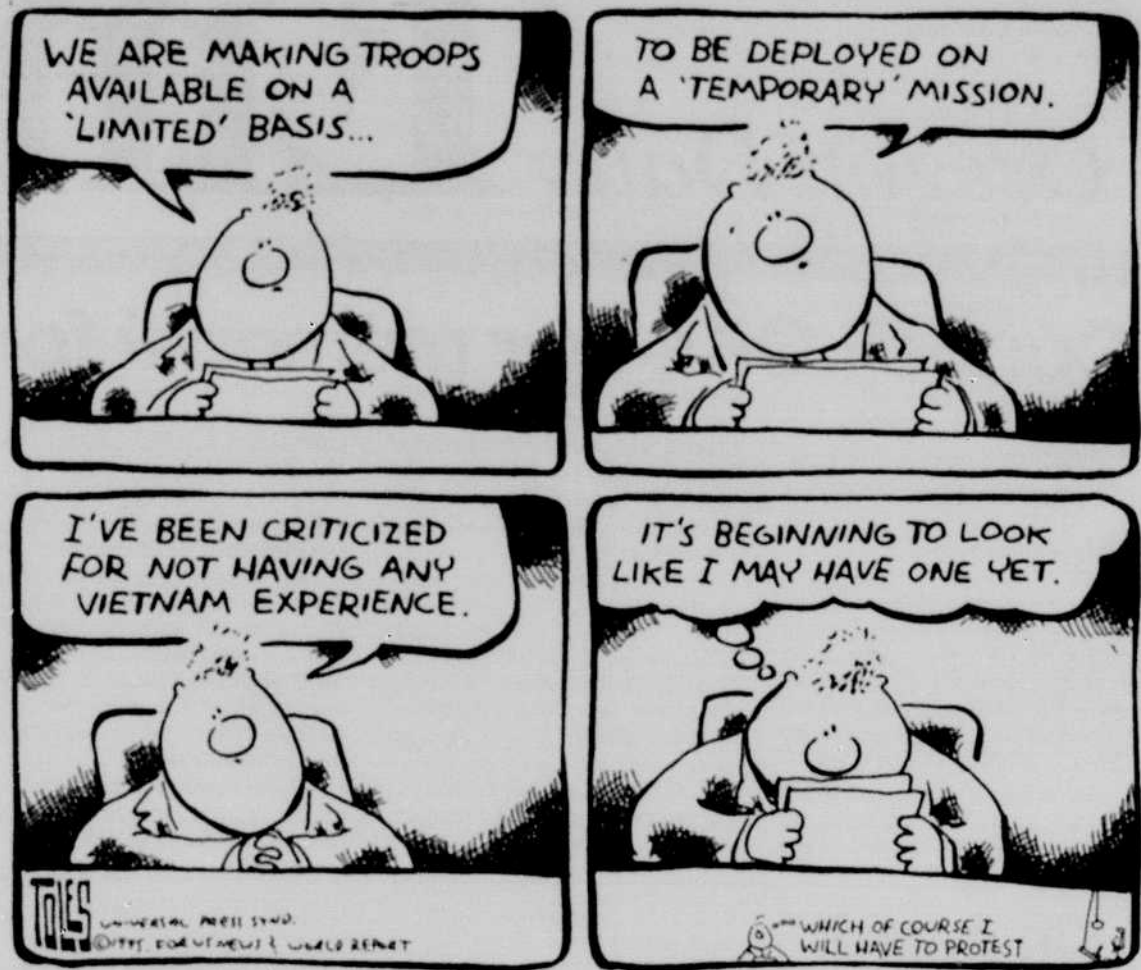
Now, this same basic design has come under attack in this city for placing a positive spin on international violence. Do Keller and Hornbuckle think it's possible to view the names of thousands of dead servicemen and -women engraved in granite and think, "Cool! I want to be a dead hero, too!"?

Before his dissenting vote, Hornbuckle proposed an amendment to include a "peace memorial" in the same park, presumably to balance the "pro-war" memorial. But a symbol of honor for war dead inherently projects a pro-peace message. By erecting a memorial, the citizens of Eugene are constantly reminded of what they have lost, regardless of whether the war was "won."

Other citizens have argued that America (and Eugene) has yet to honor the veterans who lived, and the pacifists who went to prison rather than war. While this position has merit, it fails to acknowledge that the names on the wall are not for the dead soldiers, but for their living family and friends.

As such, the memorial is not an exclusion of the living who have sacrificed, but is an invitation to them — a summons for peaceful reflection and reconciliation.

Eugene's war memorial does not ask its visitors to agree with American involvement in any war; it simply asks them to remember. It seems a small request for the many who have made the ultimate sacrifice.



COMMENTARY

Don't dismantle child care act

By Edward Zigler

Child care, even lousy child care, carries a big price tag. Middle-class families feel more than a pinch when they pay average day-care center fees of almost \$5,000 a year for one child. But for those at the lower end of the income scale, who may earn just minimum wage, child care is a necessity priced out of reach.

Yet child care is more than a problem to be solved, or a bill to be paid before mothers and fathers can go to work. It is most appropriately viewed as an environment in which children spend most of their waking hours during early, formative years. The quality of this environment is an important factor in determining a child's overall development.

The House of Representatives showed little awareness of child care — either as a work-related necessity or as a major influence on children — when it passed welfare reform legislation in March.

The House bill requires mothers on welfare to take a job within two years, but actually cuts back total child-care funding to the states for all purposes, including subsidies for families just off welfare and low-income working families. It also eliminates the requirement for minimum quality standards. How will poor mothers go to work or keep their jobs without child care? What will happen to the children?

Lack of reliable child care is already causing poor women to

cycle on and off the current welfare system. A 1991 study commissioned by the Illinois Department of Public Aid found that 42 percent of welfare mothers were prevented from working full-time, and 20 percent of those who were working went back on welfare because of difficulties obtaining and keeping child care.

The Senate should give more thought to child care when it votes on its version of welfare reform. In terms of sheer quantity, the country will need more subsidized child care, not less. Even more important, children need good quality child care: daily care that meets their emotional needs, stimulates them and helps them grow. Substandard child care only perpetuates the cycle of poverty and welfare.

To our discredit, very few children in America are receiving decent child care. A recent study of 400 child-care centers in four states found that fewer than two centers in 10 gave good quality care. Most were found to be mediocre — not harmful, but not conducive to emotional growth and learning. For infants and toddlers, however, center care was especially bad; in four classrooms out of 10, the adults displayed no warmth, created no opportunities for learning and failed to meet basic health and safety standards.

Another national study of family day-care homes and care by relatives, where most children younger than 3 years old spend their days while parents work, found only 9 percent of providers gave good quality care; 35 per-

cent of the settings were poor enough to threaten health and safety.

Good quality child care should be a national goal for all children, regardless of income. Sens. Edward Kennedy, Christopher Dodd and others took steps toward framing a child care policy in 1990 with the passage of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

In addition to giving states money to subsidize the full cost of child care for some low-income families, this act required states to develop minimum health and safety standards, set aside money to improve the quality of care, and develop before- and after-school programs. The act lays the foundation for a flexible but sensible program — and should be built on, not dismantled.

A welfare policy that insists on work — and provides the infrastructure parents need in order to work — would be good for children. Child care is a key element. The development and future independence of poor children would be enhanced by having a working mother as a model and a child-care environment that optimizes intellectual and social growth.

As the Senate deliberates on welfare and other supports for the poor, it should recognize the important role child care must play in salvaging the next generation.

Edward Zigler is the Director of the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

LETTERS

Parking woes

Schools, like any other business, really need to treat their customers (i.e., students) well, or they may find themselves losing those customers. Case in point: I recently began my first term at the University and was given directions by a staff member (whom I just love!) on where to

park with my student-parking permit. I followed the directions, but I received a ticket anyway because I supposedly parked in a designated staff-parking-only space. I took the ticket to the Office of Public Safety to ask about it, and while I was gone received another ticket. I also received a map, which in my understanding designates the

original place I parked as student parking.

This may be one of the University's fund-raising tactics, but it is short-sighted. Businesses that don't provide parking to their customers — adequate parking — may find themselves with fewer customers in future terms.

K.C. Primbs
Journalism

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P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE OREGON 97403

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Newsroom 346-5511 Display Advertising 346-3712

Business Office 346-5512 Classified Advertising 346-4343