

# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

Should cigarettes be taxed 30 cents a pack to pay for low-income health care in Oregon? Let us know.

## EDITORIAL

# Banning dogs won't attract long-term renters

### CONTACT US

What do you think? Write us a letter expressing your opinion or E-mail us at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu. Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

**OUR OPINION:** If revitalization of the University area is the goal, the city's proposal has missed the point

The city of Eugene has proposed a law banning dogs and skateboarders on East 13th Avenue between Kincaid and Patterson Streets. According to city officials quoted in last Tuesday's *Emerald*, this legislation would revitalize the area by attracting home owners and long-term renters. The goal is also to ease congestion in the busy three-block area.

This proposal has several problems, and they stem from the fact that a ban on dogs and skateboards simply does not address the real issue. City officials have said that the goal is to improve living conditions in the area. In order to do that, officials say it is necessary to have renters stay in the area longer than the typical nine-months. Of the 5,500 people living in the West University district, approximately 97 percent are renters.

How is a ban on dogs and skateboarders on a three-block stretch of one street going to keep renters around longer?

The answer is: it won't.

The reason renters typically stay only nine months is because this is a university district. A lot of students only live here nine months out of the year and go home for the summer.

If the city and the University truly want to revitalize the East 13th Avenue area, they should look at other ways that will actually address the issue.

Ordinances should be established and enforced that would make landlords more accountable for the condition of their property. Additionally, the city could make a number of physical improvements to solve the congestion problem. To begin with, parking could be eliminated between Alder and Kincaid Streets, sidewalks could be made wider, more trees could be planted and more room made for bike racks. These improvements would immediately alleviate congestion for bike riders and



pedestrians.

Making these changes will make it easier to attract a wider variety of businesses to the district - something beyond the bagels and coffee that currently reign over East 13th Avenue. A first-run movie theatre and clothing stores would be a great start.

The goal should be to create a place where everyone can be comfortable. The city needs to stop being short-sighted and look for real solutions to development issues. Banning dogs and skateboarders is equivalent to putting a Band-Aid on a finger when it's the leg that is broken.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*

## HISTORICAL

# PERSPECTIVE

**March 2, 1995** the City of Eugene passed an ordinance making aggressive panhandling illegal. The ordinance was passed in response to several complaints from community members and business owners.

**August 5, 1996** the city will hold a public hearing to discuss whether or not to ban dogs and skateboarders in the West University district. A proposed ordinance seeks to improve living conditions by banning dogs and skateboarders on East 13th Avenue between Kincaid and Patterson streets.

**August 7,** the city will decide on the ordinance.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Early targets

How is banning skateboards on East 13th going to solve the problems of "falling down landscaping and other residential maintenance?" If 97 percent of the people living in the West University neighborhood are rental tenants that would seem to imply that the majority of buildings in the neighborhood are rental properties. If this is so, shouldn't landscaping and maintenance be the responsibility of the buildings owner or the landlord in charge of the building? I don't recall ever having signed a lease or rental agreement that held me responsible for landscaping or the maintenance of the exterior of the building. Tenants are generally only held responsible for maintenance to the interior of the apartment or house that they are renting.

Furthermore any interior damage that the tenant inflicts on the rental property is not visible to the general public and therefore shouldn't negatively affect the quality of life in the neighborhood.

As for Rosie Pryor's assertion that a "densely populated area makes for a shabby looking area" I would ask what alternatives she or the City Council would suggest. Perhaps they feel more University students should move to the suburbs and

commute by car. Maybe the University will split the profit it makes from selling more parking permits than there are parking places with the City Council.

I would argue that the West University neighborhood is a "shabby looking area" because landlords and rental property owners do the bare minimum in landscaping and maintenance to keep their profits as high as possible. Skaters and dog owners are easy targets for the Council but the ban will probably do little to improve the livability of the neighborhood. The true problem lies with the rental property owners, but their economic clout makes it unlikely that the City Council will challenge them.

**Scott Andrew Armstrong**  
Student, French

### Which is the justice?

Regarding your story on the Warner Creek activists (6-25), I found the comments of Patti Rogers of the U.S. Forest Service very interesting. In the article she states, "Our intent is to prosecute the people up there to [the] full extent possible for the damage that has been done and that the taxpayers will have to pay for to repair." Grammar aside, her statement is admirable. I only hope that she will be just as vigilant towards the Timber Corpora-

tions as she is with regard to the amassed citizenry which is the object of her threat. This, however, would seem unlikely.

The U.S. Forest Service has yet to make a profit on any of its salvage timber sales, when all costs are factored in. And when the government operates a program at a loss, taxpayers make up the difference. I would find it heartening if Ms. Rogers would enforce the same stringent penalties on the logging corporations that she savors directing toward the private citizens. And, if so, would this include the great financial losses from the past winter storms? Publicized studies showed over 70 percent of damaging landslides occurred below recent clearcuts, thus exacerbating the environmental destruction and causing an influx of taxpayer dollars in the form of FEMA assistance. Here, the taxpayers foot the bill for repairing damage to their own public property (roadways, etc.) caused by private corporations purchasing other public property at below market value in order to destroy it, and Ms. Rogers wants to prosecute those doing their best to prevent identical future taxpayer liability.

As Shakespeare asked, "Which is the justice, which is the thief?"

**Steven L. Baird**  
Eugene

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