

PERSPECTIVES

Excessive expenditures



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

The Peter DeFazio Bike Bridge is unnecessary and construction actually hurts local businesses

Everybody has the right to earn a living. And as long as one's source of income is legal, one's job should have little interference from the government. After all, this is a capitalist super-power we live in. Tell that to Ora Baird.

Baird owns the Oakway BP service station on Coburg Road.

Thanks to the Eugene government's decision to build the Peter DeFazio Bike Bridge, Baird has seen his profits cut in half during the past eight months.

Traffic jams caused by lane closures, combined with heavy machinery and noise, have made the Ferry Street Bridge and Coburg Road area a nightmare for drivers and pedestrians. These annoyances have prompted the local news media and city to basically designate the Coburg Road area a disaster site.

Signs on local highways warn drivers to avoid the bridge and road, and the television and radio media are sending a similar message.

Meanwhile, Baird watches as his usual winter business has been drastically reduced. He usually pumps 3,500 gallons of unleaded fuel during the winter months. This winter, he will be lucky to pump 1,800. To make matters

worse, the project is expected to last another year.

Once the bicycle suspension bridge is complete, construction on a left-hand turn lane leading to Highway 105 will be added to the Ferry Street Bridge. Additionally, the city plans to add four new traffic signals in the area.

Does anyone else see a problem with this logic?

Here we are in Eugene — a city that has some of the best bicycle access in the state, if not the nation. There are trails, paved paths and yes, two other bicycle bridges located not more than two miles to the west and the east of the new suspension bridge.

There is also an attitude in Eugene, especially in the campus area, that is extremely accepting of bicycle commuters. We don't honk or yell obscenities, even when the bicyclists ride right in the middle of the road at whatever speed they want.

Personally, I can't stand it when I am at an intersection in a hurry and there is a biker stopped in the middle of the road waiting for a chance to get across the street. I wonder what the harm would be in them simply riding on the side of the road, because obviously my car is going to travel faster than their bike.

I figure there are two scenarios. One, this person can't afford a car and is forced to ride a bike to and from their daily activities. If that is the case, I sincerely offer my apologies.

The other scenario is what I call the "holier-than-thou" syndrome. It is quite prevalent in environmental circles, and appears to have seeped into the bicycle community as well. This scenario calls for the bikers to ride in the middle of my lane at

their slow speed because they are better than me. I am a sellout who pollutes the air with my car and even has the gall to side with a gas station owner.

Personal feelings aside, the fact remains that there are thousands of motorists in the Eugene/Springfield area who are forced to commute to and from work via the Ferry Street

Bridge. And until a new bridge is constructed, they deserve both a safer and less-congested driving route.

The Peter DeFazio bicycle suspension bridge will certainly become one of Eugene's landmarks. There is little doubt of the beauty and enjoyment it will provide

this community. It might even be worth the estimated \$30 million it figures to cost the tax-paying public.

But the logic is absolutely backwards. I realize the funding for the bridge was a federal gift designated for alternative transportation. But first things first. Adding this bridge in a bike-friendly city like Eugene is excessive to say the least. It would be like the athletic department building two indoor training facilities like the Ed Moshofsky Center, but failing to do the necessary renovations to Mac Court that took place two seasons ago.

The construction of the Peter DeFazio Bike Bridge teaches a valuable lesson about the politics of Eugene: No excess is too great in the name of the government.

Aaron Artman is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

Opinion



Aaron Artman

Letters to the Editor

Special election

After reading that the Elections Board took it upon itself to extend the deadline for ballot measure submissions, I was appalled. The Constitution Court was pretty clear in its rejection of the ballot measure from ASUO/OSPIRG. In its decision, the Constitution Court stated that ASUO/OSPIRG had ample opportunity to submit their ballot measure well before the deadline just in case it would be rejected so that they could re-submit it. Instead the backers of OSPIRG decided to wait until the 11th hour to keep any opposing parties from having ample time to plan a campaign against them. When this backfired the ASUO clearly exerted their influence on the Elections Board to circumvent the rules and the process.

The fact that the Elections Board shares an office with the ASUO, and that the ASUO president is a former OSPIRG board member who submitted the ballot measure on its behalf and that the elections board is now pandering to OS-

PIRG is not a coincidence. Can we say abuse of power?

Hopefully students will see this for the corruption that it is and keep that in mind when casting their ballots on Feb. 17 and Feb. 18.

Jenna Wasson

Psychology and Women's Studies

Appreciate University

How ironic that Ashley Bach and the Emerald would be the forum to deliver Friday's bashing of the University (ODE, Jan. 29). Bach and the Emerald have been delivering lowbrow, moronic commentary for years, so their latest effort comes as no surprise. In his quixotic effort to make the University seem as bad as possible, Bach frequently makes vast generalizations, and his column is curiously lacking in factual details.

What exactly is the evidence in the following statement: "In how many college rankings ... is the University hardly mentioned at all? I venture to say it's quite a few." Later, we encounter the following, equally nebulous nugget:

"no one I've talked to has ever been truly inspired by a professor or course, although I'm sure such rare cases exist." These kinds of statements don't really serve any purpose except to show that Bach has a vague feeling of dissatisfaction that he can't really explain. Perhaps therapy, rather than improved faculty retention, is the answer.

Actually, if Bach wants to talk about anecdotal evidence, I've probably accumulated more of it than almost anyone else on campus, having worked for the better part of two years at the University's Annual Giving Program talking to alumni about their University experience. Out of thousands of alumni I've contacted, the response has been overwhelmingly positive: Alumni look back on their University days with fondness, nostalgia and gratitude. They recognize the role the University played in their careers and value the time they spent here. Strangely, many of them even speak well of the Oregon Daily Emerald, but perhaps they're remembering a time

when the paper was more supportive of the school and not reflective of its worst qualities.

Colby Phillips
English

Church vs. State

Right-wing Republican Lane Shetterly's Oregon House flag-salute bill (HB 2384) is patently unconstitutional because it would require that public schools induce impressionable children to learn and recite the "under God" phrase that was added to the Pledge of Allegiance during the infamous Joe McCarthy era.

Clearly, humanist students should not be baited by the state into invoking the name of a deity or affirming the existence of a supernatural being in whom the kids were not taught to believe by their non-theistic parents.

As with the Bible-thumping Good News Clubs, Shetterly's bill is yet another thinly veiled attempt by reactionary church-state unionists to indoctrinate and brainwash the youngsters in Oregon's suppos-

edly secular public schools. Feel-good House Democrats have allowed themselves to be suckered into voting for a GOP-sponsored, creationism-teaching violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Ron Black
Junction City

CORRECTION

The Feb. 9 brief "Annual University food drive hopes to raise 10,000 pounds of food" should have said: the University food drive hopes to raise 100,000 pounds of food. Also, peanut butter is an acceptable contribution, and the drive began Feb. 8.

CLARIFICATION

The Feb. 8 article "Wrestler alleges improper dismissal," should have said that Oregon associate athletic director Gary Gray made the first effort to meet with Dusty Roberts after winter break. Before the break, Gray asked Roberts to meet with him in January, but Roberts did not contact him. Gray made a second attempt to set up a meeting that was also unsuccessful.