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Perspectives

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Paying the CONSEQUENCES

After the physical and emotional harm he inflicted upon our community, Kipland Kinkei owes an explanation for his violent behavior

May 21, 1998, is a date that none of us in the Eugene-Springfield community will soon forget. That day, our innocence and community were shattered when gun-wielding 15-year-old Kipland P. Kinkel walked into Thurston High School and started a shooting spree.

And while nothing can repair the harm the tragedy caused, Kinkel should serve a long enough sentence that should let some of those affected feel some, if even a little, closure.

The community was spared having to relive the painful memories a trial would bring up when Kinkel, 17, pleaded guilty to four counts of murder and 26 counts of attempted murder on Sept. 24. He will now serve four concurrent 25-year sentences for the four murder pleas and also faces a mandatory 90-month sentence for each attempted murder count.

His sentencing trial will begin on Nov. 2, when Lane County Circuit Judge Jack Mattison will sentence Kinkel anywhere from 25 to 220 years in prison by determining if the murder and attempted murder sentences will be served at the same time or after one another.

The only just sentence would be for Kinkel to serve each attempted murder count consecutively, which would total 220 years in prison. That way, he would be serving time for each specific victim, and maybe his victims and their families can have some satisfaction.

Perhaps Kinkel could be rehabilitated and successfully released back into society. But he shouldn't be let out of prison at age 42, when most of his victims and their parents will still be around to see him set free. While it's almost saddening to think of a 17-year-old spending the rest of his life in prison, it's even more saddening to think that his victims and their families would have to relive the tragic events if they were to ever see him in our community.

In a time where school shootings don't seem to surprise anyone anymore, Kinkel must serve as the example that a person cannot open fire in a crowded high school cafeteria and then only face 25 years in prison as punishment.

Maybe the only real closure would come from an explanation from



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Kinkel to the community of why he opened fire in his school's hallways and cafeteria, injuring 25 students and killing two, after he killed his parents the previous night. Maybe his answer would give the community some reassurance that it wasn't some random act of violence, and we could feel assured that we and our families are safe in school and

don't have to fear being victims of random violence.

But the sad reality is that Kinkel himself probably doesn't know why he did it. There probably is no explanation that would satisfy anyone for such senseless violence.

No amount of time that Kinkel spends in prison will ever heal the victims' wounds or bring back

those who died, but it may at least bring some closure to those who were so severely impacted by Kinkel's selfish shooting rampage. And while none of us will be able to wipe the memories away from that tragic day, knowing that Kinkel will never again see the community he tore apart will allow us to heal together.

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To Hucking the Fuskies

As the Ducks take on the University of Washington this weekend, we are already celebrating the win we know they'll get in Seattle.

To ASUO accountability

The ASUO Executive fired Brandon Smith as the director of the Designated Driver Shuttle for his alleged misuse of student fees to run the program. This is just the type of leadership we expect from the ASUO.



To poor food at a poor price

University Housing has increased prices for both a larger meal plan and the point value of Grab and Go — leaving students angry, hungry and confused.

To financial aid cuts

An 18 percent cut of the federal Pell Grant is proposed. We hope Congress will vote it down, so future students and the 3.7 million students who currently depend on the money can be guaranteed an education.

CORRECTION

In the graph accompanying the story "Student Senate adds new ASUO position," (ODE Sept.30) Ombudsman nominees should have been identified as Autumn DePoe and Eric Pfeiffer. The Emerald regrets this error.