

Oregon Daily
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Perspectives

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A ge\$ture of gratitude

Providing payment to the mayor and City Council members, who currently work on a volunteer basis, would be a step toward improving the quality of Eugene

Let them eat cake. Or at least throw them a morsel. The proposed plan to pay the Eugene City Council is a good idea we should all support because the better the city is run, the better student life in Eugene will be.

As it stands now the mayor and City Council members go unpaid for their long hours of under-appreciated civic efforts. Most students probably don't know the number of council members, how many meetings they hold in a year or that in fact there are actually people devoting their time to make Eugene one of the most desirable places to live in the coming decade.

While there has been no formal proposal as to the amount of pay or where the money comes from, the idea in general is a must for a growing city for both symbolic and practical reasons.

It sends the wrong message to our citizens that the work the mayor and council members do is not worthy of a small gesture that shows their work is valued and appreciated. If entertainers and sports personalities are on TV making millions for hocking sugar water, kids will get a distorted perspective of societal importance when their city council doesn't even earn enough from their jobs to buy a Starbucks nonfat mocha.

While the city of Eugene can't change an entire social paradigm on its own, it can and should make the effort to properly stratify the members of this community, starting by recognizing and honoring elected officials who work for the public good. Having a mayor being paid less than a homeless man pandering on a street corner isn't a happy analogy, but it's alarmingly accurate.

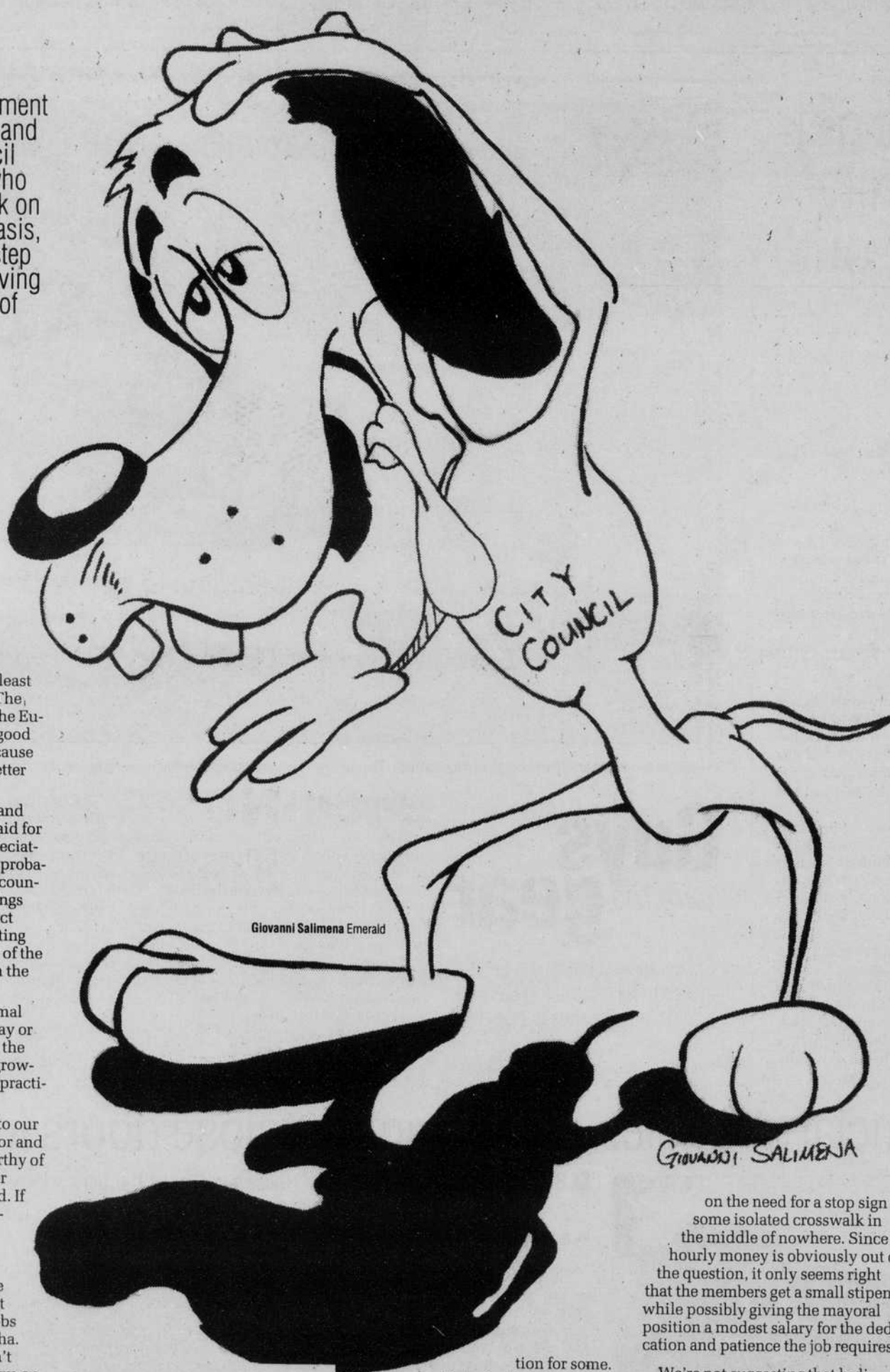
Besides the symbolic necessity for paying—and thereby respecting—the council members, there are practical

reasons for dishing out a little coin.

Paying the mayor and council members would maintain a high level of talented minds to run the city. Paid positions will attract a wider array of candidates and increase the diversity of opinions by affording council people a small amount of monetary latitude to pay for child care, travel or other logistics that may make an unpaid job out of the ques

tion for some. By including these people who may otherwise be unable to offer their experience and insight into the governmental process, the entire city will benefit from having the infusion of new perspectives.

The possible methods of payment would be a small stipend, salary or hourly wage. However, anyone who's ever watched Strom Thurmond on C-SPAN knows that paying a politician per hour is just begging for an incoherent rambling filibuster



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

on the need for a stop sign at some isolated crosswalk in the middle of nowhere. Since hourly money is obviously out of the question, it only seems right that the members get a small stipend while possibly giving the mayoral position a modest salary for the dedication and patience the job requires.

We're not suggesting that ludicrous amounts of money be dropped on the council people like a bursting piñata dropping all of its confectionery goodness on a bunch of sugar-fiending candy freaks. But throwing a small bone to a starving alley dweller is just the humane thing to do. And just maybe they can have a morsel of cake.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To keeping an eye on the future

The Department of Education allocated more than \$200,000 to help low-income families pay for child care.

To a Second Chance

The St. Vincent de Paul Society runs a renters rehabilitation program that aids people in obtaining and maintaining housing after rocky renting histories. About 100 participants pass through the Second Chance program every year.



To pouring salt on an ugly wound

Germany's offer of \$3.3 billion to Holocaust survivors was an insultingly low number for the damage the country caused in the world's darkest hour.

To Coffee People's packing up and moving out

The Coffee People on 13th Avenue is closing after four years of selling their java to caffeine-seeking customers. The last day of coffee goodness is Oct. 20.