

Oregon Daily
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Perspectives

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Do YOU Care?

With November's elections coming up, it becomes important for student's make their voices heard. Following City Councilor Bobby Lee's lead may be a good way to make sure we get something back.

Jonathan
Gruber

"**I**mporta un pepino!" Such were the words I found taped to my bedroom door Friday. One of my roommates has a one-useful-Spanish-phrase-a-day calendar, and the one for Oct. 8 happened to translate to "I couldn't care less!" (Lit.: "I care a cucumber!")

Care more than a cucumber. Postmark your voter registration TODAY! (It's the last day to do so for next month's election.)

Sometimes it seems like many students won't even admit that they live here. "I live in Eugene," gets replaced by, "I'm in college but I'm from [wherever]."

Face it, we are all Eugonians for a few years. We all make contributions to Eugene that we may not even realize. Can you say, "A large chunk of the local economy?"

Who's making sure we get something back? City Councilor Bobby Lee said that's the job of local government.

Had I asked you to get involved with the city of Eugene a few years ago, I'd hold up Lee's picture now and say, "Yeah. Do what this guy did." His case is extreme, but there is no better example of a (former) student now heavily involved in local politics.

As an undergraduate, Lee involved himself in campus politics, eventually becoming ASUO president for 1992-1993. Then the time for graduate school came, and Lee stayed at the University.

In 1996, Lee successfully ran for City Council, and he started his position in 1997. That is getting yourself involved.

I bribed this public official with a bottle of apple juice to give me his take on students and their position as transitory Eugonians. Lee said he doesn't feel that students are necessarily aware of all the ways Eugene is working to help them out.

Nevertheless, "I think part of government's role is to ensure that you're getting a good deal," he said.

For myself, some of the influences that city government has on my life were a surprise. For instance, a significant portion of my family moved to Salt Lake City the week before I became a Duck. The other portion is on the East Coast. That is to say, I have to fly a lot.

Lee cited the example of city government's role in the dynamics of the costs and competition at Eugene's airport. What else? Police, roads and Lane Transit District are just a few examples of the services provided to us by the "host community" of Eugene.

There are two issues that Lee specifically mentioned as needing student involvement. The first is the census. Despite what the Republicans in the U.S. Congress may think, we all know it is going to happen next year. Lee said Oregon was 14th on the list of states with the highest undercounting in the last census.

"That means less federal funds, all our workforce development money, all our infrastructure related money, scholarships, financial aid — they're all based on the U.S. census," Lee said. "What I'm trying to do is make sure that we have a complete count."

That includes ALL of you. Even international students should get counted.

Before my conversation with Lee, I didn't even think students were counted at all. I thought we were nomads. But I've been wrong about stuff like that before. Like voting! If you are a U.S. citizen and are a student at the University, you can vote as if you were a Eugene resident (just don't vote in your folk's district too!). Did I mention that the deadline for registering to vote in November's election is TODAY?

The other item Lee mentioned is the West University Neighborhood Park. That one caught me off guard. "Huh?" you may be thinking. It turns out that there is a park on East 14th Avenue, on the south side between Patterson and Hilyard.

"It was designed and built by students," Lee said.

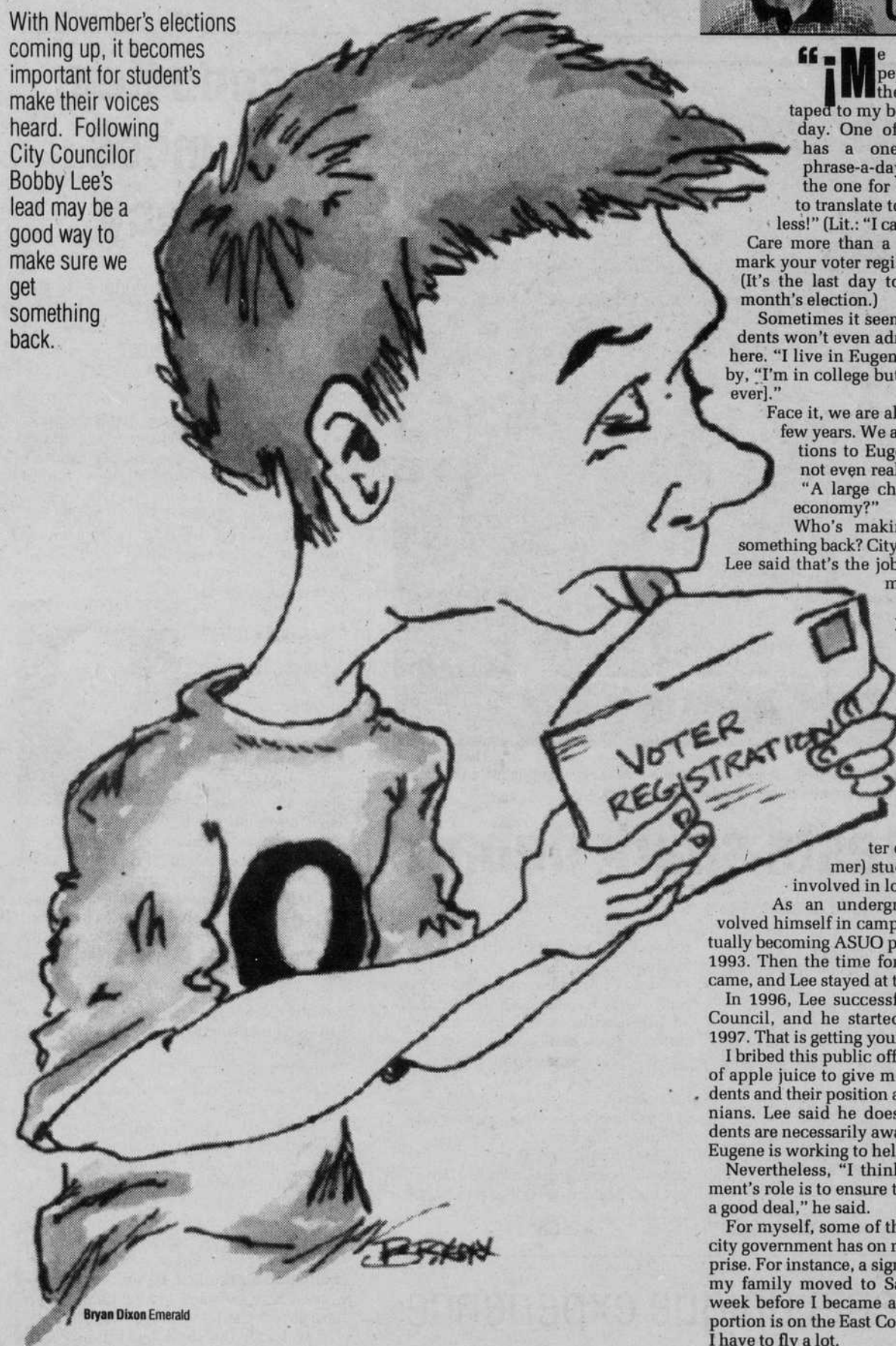
It was shut down in 1996 after it attracted drug and other criminal activity. But if students are willing to organize to take care of the park, West University will have its park back. There is certainly something to be said for having a park around. Campus is beautiful enough, but it's not exactly peaceful. The design would be ideal for small concerts, lectures and talks.

Eventually, Lee will need a successor. A voice from the students and for the students will be essential for keeping the Eugene environment Duck-friendly. Just a warning, though: Lee admits that there are some real trade-offs to a position on City Council. But if you enjoy policy development and you've got a few patches of thick skin, our current and future student populations will benefit tremendously.

Luckily, positions that require the kinds of time city council members donate aren't for everyone. If you read the papers and vote, it's a step. And getting counted in the census is perhaps the easiest way to make the lives of future students better. So I'll remind you about that again in March.

Today is the last day to register to vote. Go to the post office. Fill out the form. THANKS!

Jonathan Gruber is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper. He can be reached via e-mail at jgruber@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Letters to the editor

EMU Display Disrespectful

The Genocide Awareness Project is bringing a display to campus that is both offensive and disrespectful. Using images of the Holocaust paired with pictures of aborted fetuses, GAP is trying to evoke an emotional response from passers-by to further its political views. We strongly protest this heinous misuse of the Holocaust and the pain it causes survivors and their families.

We respect GAP's First Amendment rights but not at the expense of our ances-

tors. Using the Holocaust to promote an unrelated political cause is a violent means of expression and should not be tolerated nor invited to our campus.

Melissa Mejias
Jen Hoenigsberg
Co-Directors, Jewish Student Union

Emerald hypocritical

I must say that I was vaguely disturbed to find yet another bash of the greek system in Friday's editorial (ODE, Oct. 12) on Select 2000. In response to allegations that sororities are getting paid to go dry, I say "why not?" After all, those girls pay thou-

sands of dollars to be affiliated with their chapters. Why shouldn't they receive some of that money back for making a worthwhile effort to curb excessive drinking?

I am no longer affiliated with the greek system, but I was a member for over a year. I find it completely ironic that students who have no experience or hands-on knowledge of what greek life is really like are so quick to jump to conclusions about the motives of Greeks.

The sororities may be accepting money for their decision to go dry, but I say that if they can successfully abide by all of the regulations that fall under Select 2000 then

they deserve it. I doubt many other students could complete the same task without monetary incentive.

Drinking is a problem for many college students, greek and non-greek. Until the University student body can stop pointing fingers, then I suppose the greek system can remain a scapegoat for our campus' problems. Friday's editorial stated, "It is courageous to break the cycle of partying to drink." What I'd like to know is "where is there courage in hypocrisy?" Maybe the Emerald should write an editorial on that.

Kinley Engdahl-Johnson
Journalism and Music