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Perspectives

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Hard shoes to fill

The University found out it will soon lose a powerful ally and advocate when City Councilor Bobby Lee announced last week that he would not seek re-election. Lee is the representative for the West University neighborhood, and while that district is not exclusive to University students, there was nevertheless a symbolic partnership.

Lee is the youngest member of the Eugene City Council and the only ethnic member. He was also the first Asian ASUO president, elected in 1992. Among his accomplishments as president, he helped build the Multicultural Center.

Lee was connected with the University in so many ways, acting as an advocate for students even after he graduated. He lived in the West University neighborhood and wanted to bring its specific concerns to the forefront. Crime in the neighborhood was a big part of Lee's platform. And his focus on that seems to have aided in a drop in crime. Between 1990 and 1995, the number of crime cases in the neighborhood increased about 65 per-

cent, from 1,513 to 2,490 incidents. But in 1998, the number dropped to 1,930 reported incidents. The importance of making that neighborhood a good place to live cannot be overemphasized: It is the life blood of the University.

But he also addressed concerns in the whole community, such as homelessness. Lee actually spent three days on the streets to discover homelessness for himself, and under his leadership the city expanded its homeless shelter and mental services to try to get more children off the street. The city also hired outreach workers to talk to the children directly on the streets instead of waiting for the children to come to them.

"I'll truly miss him," Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey said (ODE Jan. 21). And so will we.

Lee's term will end in January 2001, and Lee says that he needs to leave the unpaid councilor position in part because he needs to repay his student loans and make a statement in the private arena. This leaves the door open for someone new to run for this seat and be a student advocate to the whole city. The election may be next year, but the race to find a replacement really starts today: We have a year to discern who will best serve our needs.

That someone does not necessarily have to follow directly in Lee's footsteps specifically. But the spirit of cooperation and the passion to bring University students' needs to the attention are key.

One certainly significant issue is that of renter's rights. The city is still without a housing code. While many groups, including the ASUO this year and in years past, have advocated for this crucial need, the city still lacks one. This affects University students disproportionately, as we are often stuck in deplorable housing conditions with pretty much no leverage against a possibly restrictive or unkind landlord. Part of the renters' rights campaign needs to focus on why landlords should take student renters more seriously, not just that students should fight back against abuses. Diversity in Eugene, growth, construction and crime are just a few other areas of concern that could headline next year's elections.

Other issues are out there as well, we just have to discover them.

Or, we have to have someone bring them to our attention. Like a good candidate for 2001.

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



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Collective history is key to a collective future

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc.
 When describing the effect of the past on the present, there's no better way to sum it up than that one little Latin line: after it, therefore because of it. And that is what I shall say to self-important history scholars.

A friend from Harvard recently relayed an upcoming history of western civilization final he would have to face. One possible question on the exam struck me as having more merit for those who wish to demonstrate their ability to spew forth an endless stream of facts in pretentious prose rather than demonstrating a student's ability to engage in a thoughtful discussion. The students, you see, were asked to

pick an age of western civilization that was the turning point of history. They were given the expected options, the Renaissance, Medieval times (never call them the Dark Ages to a scholar of the era lest you unleash a torrent of repressed rage) and modern times to name a few.

What a load of bunk.

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc.

The ramifications of that little Latin line is that all of what exists now is the product of every moment in the past. To pick a singular era may be a vehicle to demonstrate one's condescending attitude through their pet research era, but it also ignores the fact that we are indeed the sum of our collective past. To say otherwise is foolish.

Sure, there are plenty of important singular moments that shaped the present.



Bret Jacobson

Gutenberg's printing press comes to mind. But then so does the invention of the atomic bomb. And who could forget the bombing of Pearl Harbor? And those are just the most popularly remembered moments. Any fan of the History Channel loves a little segment called Timelab 2000 where lit-

tle McGuyver-esque moments in history were decided by some unknown men with a match, three balls of pocket lint and a Tic Tac.

Little tidbits of history are easier to grasp, of course, in this ever-increasing world of worthless communication noise. But it is incumbent upon us as citizens to fight through the malaise of easy history lessons to remember all the aspects of our collective past if we are to build a society worth sustaining and ignore pretentious historians.

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THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To good news for the elderly

A new study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association finds that people older than 85 are living healthier and have fewer disabilities than in the past.

To a boon for diversity

The Multicultural Center's new budget was approved by the Programs Finance Committee Tuesday, and it included money for a new position: an MCC director. Echoing the words of diversity intern Jay Breslow: "This is a historic thing."



To the toxic-waste school

The Los Angeles unified school board voted to abandon a \$170 million high school construction projects that had already begun, after learning that the site used to be an oil field.

To the new Ken Starr

The Arizona Daily Wildcat reported that Arizona Rep. Jean McGrath, R-Glendale, has submitted a proposal to prohibit guests of the opposite sex from visiting a person's dorm room (other than family) during certain times of the day. Originally, her bill proposed to restrict visitation during all times of the day. She cites co-ed dorms at bastions of immoral behavior. Looking for immoral places? Try the White House, lady.