

PERSPECTIVES

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford
 Managing Editor: Jessica Blanchard
 Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

EDITORIAL EDITOR: MICHAEL J. KLECKNER opededitor@journalist.com

UO, Eugene need to invest in future of neighborhoods

At last week's state-of-the-city address, Mayor Jim Torrey spoke of a joint effort between the City of Eugene and the University in order to help bring more jobs to the city and revitalize the downtown. We think this sounds like a good idea.

The University has vast resources at its disposal and a strong student base for prospective employers to hire, if students could be tempted to stay in the area after graduation. In the spirit of revitalization, we offer a couple of quick suggestions for ways the two entities could work together to build a more thriving Eugene:

- Our city has many features that appeal to the demographic working in the high-tech software and applications industry. Eugene is close to the coast, the mountains and Portland, yet still offers a relaxed way of life. There are also plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities directly in and around the city. The computer science department can work to train students for the jobs of tomorrow, and the city can work to lure Internet companies and Web developers, to the benefit of Eugene and Oregon. Utah is setting up special tax incentives to lure Silicon Valley companies, and with some effort, Eugene could do the same thing.

- The unfair depiction of Eugene as a haven for anarchists and crusty hippies needs to stop. Working with the University's sociology department and journalism school, the city could fight the national image of Eugene and more accurately reflect the colorful culture that exists in our neighborhoods. The sociology department could work on demographic studies of neighborhoods to show the real bohemian Eugene and the journalism school could be enlisted for a national public relations campaign to end the misnomer that Eugene is a training ground for disgruntled, brick-wielding, hard-left extremists.

City officials could also help the situation by stopping the demonization of neighborhoods, such as the Whiteaker — often portrayed as a nest of black-clad Starbucks-haters when it's really a compassionate network of lower-income individuals — and instead work on intense revitalization of every neighborhood. Rather than just focusing on tying together the pockets of successful businesses in the downtown area, why not encourage more successful local businesses in every area of the city, through tax incentives and small-business assistance programs?

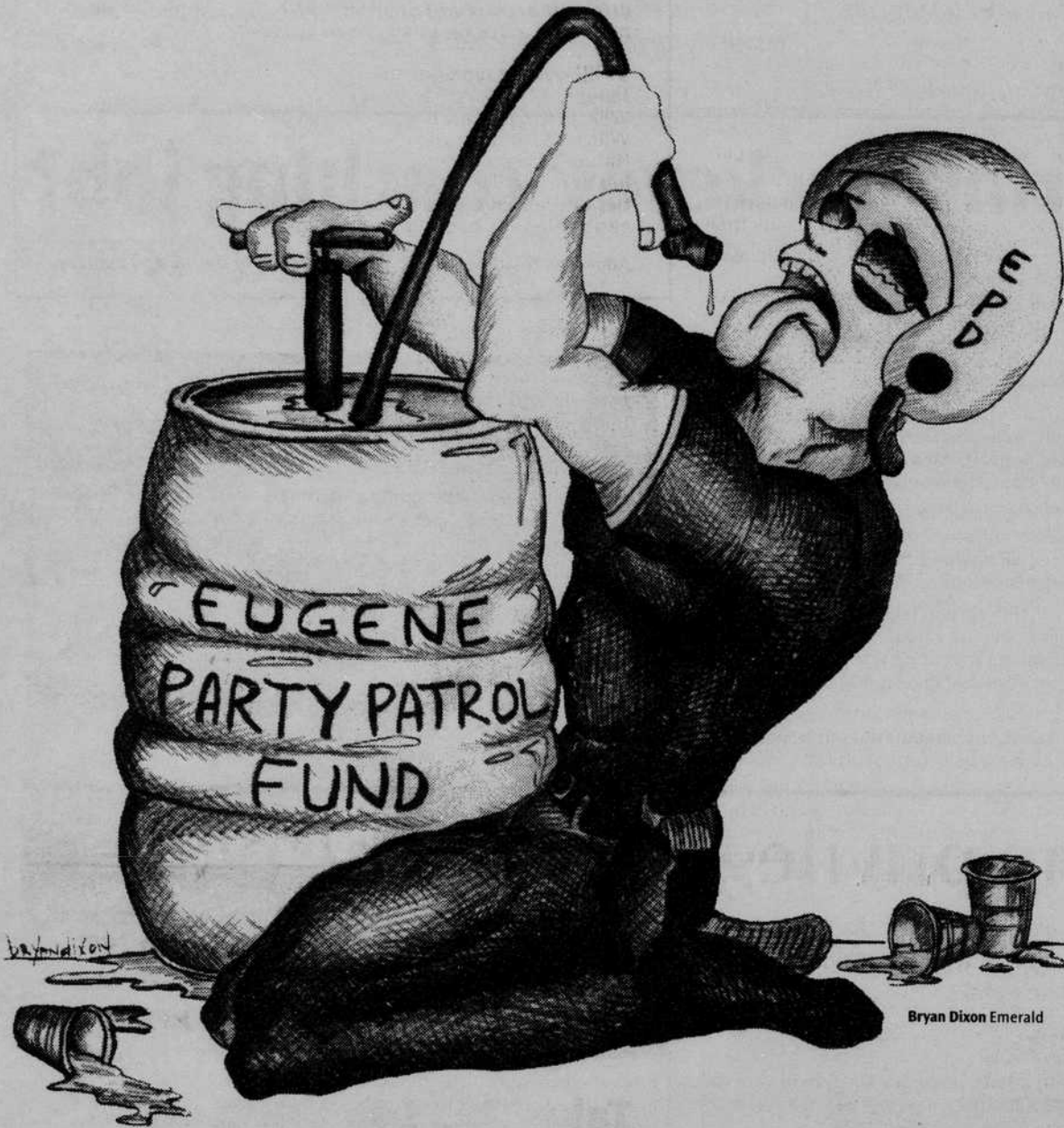
- Focusing on the recreational opportunities Eugene offers and investing in Eugene's unique culture to make it flourish would both help our final suggestion: making a serious effort to boost tourism in the city. The University has many departments that could assist in such an effort, from marketing and public relations to small-business expertise and public planning.

Eugene is a great destination to explore Oregon's natural beauty, and with more bed-and-breakfasts and vacation services, the natural resource could be enjoyed by many, with economic benefits for the city.

In addition, the University could help by using some of its land around town to boost the tourism factor. Why not work with the city on a riverfront project? The mighty Willamette flows right past the University on its way through town, and restaurants and shops, along with revamped waterfront access, would be a beautiful way to take advantage of the city's locale. Surely, there will be environmental issues involved in developing the river, but with careful planning — the University's science department has the resources — development could happen in tune with nature. Such development would be more easily embraced than a half-empty Riverfront Research Park or another Hyundai.

Eugene and the University both stand to benefit from an economic development partnership. We hope they look for innovative ideas that enhance Eugene's unique cultural niche, rather than turn the city into just another strip of big-box stores and transnational industrial development.

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



We won't miss the Party Patrol

Some students are probably doing a celebratory dance at the news of the demise of the Eugene Police Department Party Patrol. Here at the editorial board, we're breathing a sigh of relief. According to EPD patrol captain Becky Hansen, the patrols were ended for budgetary reasons, but stopping the focused weekend patrols brings a note of sanity to the EPD's relationship with the campus community.

It was never a good idea to focus so much police energy on one area of concern. Admittedly, a few years ago there were a couple of incidents with parties-cum-rioters, but sending special teams into campus neighborhoods with the sole purpose of hunting down college students having parties was not the way to handle the situation, for a number of reasons.

First, as was made apparent by the decision to disband the patrols, it was a waste of money. The officers doing special party duty were often working overtime. Our city has some crime problems that need genuine attention, such as methamphetamine production and a recent string of armed rob-

beries, and we need police to be properly rested for duty and available to combat serious crime.

Second, it is unfair to crime victims to have officers on the street yet unavailable for serious crimes. How favorably do homeowners look at the EPD's use of resources if they have to wait for police to respond to someone breaking into their houses, simply because other officers are knocking on doors, looking for college kids tapping their kegs too early? Police will still respond to party complaints, but now those complaints will be prioritized along with every other police call. Well, geez, that makes sense. Did the police really need a budgeting problem to make this decision?

Finally, the Party Patrol was responsible for more bad feelings between students and police than a few outreach programs will ever be able to undo. The patrols cemented the image of police as having no common sense and being like unyielding moms and dads with guns and the ability to fine you a lot of money. With the passing of the purposive patrols on parties, perhaps college stu-

dents and the EPD can begin to mend the relationship and see each other as vital and vibrant parts of the community, which they both are.

Perhaps it's still a good idea to have patrols on weekends of big Duck games and for homecoming. Recent words about the situation from the ASUO made it sound as though the police have no right to bust party-goers who are breaking laws. Out-of-control policing is one thing, but for genuinely out-of-control parties the police do, in fact, need to crack down. There's certainly a fair amount of partying on home-game weekends, and we can all guess that some of those will get out of control, and there will be minors drinking at many of them. We hope students will not use the end of the regular patrols as an excuse to have parties that disturb their neighbors and send trashed minors out into the community. A little restraint on both sides will go a long way toward ensuring that the Party Patrol is never implemented again.

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