

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Eugene healing needs to begin

When PeaceHealth announced its decision to move its main urgent care facility from the heart of Eugene to the blossoming outskirts of Springfield in early September, Eugonians reacted with dismay and an overwhelming sense of unabashed anger.

Local opinion pages have been filled to the brim with whining columns and searing letters, blaming either the city of Eugene for not doing enough to keep the hospital in town or accusing PeaceHealth of planning the move all along. Unfortunately, no amount of bellyaching on either side of the argument will make the hospital change its mind, and the city of Eugene must now come out of denial and accept the implications of the decision.

Many Eugene residents may believe Springfield is not exactly a mecca for free-thinkers or upper-crust professionals. When Eugonians think of their closest neighbor, Kip Kinkel, pick-up trucks with monster wheels and a mall whose flagship store is Target come to mind. Of course there is resistance to the beloved Sacred Heart Medical Center moving to such a place.

Now we will all have to come to terms with the fact that future generations of newborns will bear the shame of having "Springfield, Oregon," printed on their birth certificates. Students and residents with medical emergencies will have to wait for a longer response times from ambulances fighting through I-5 traffic. Eugene has lost its lifeline to downtown health care, and the reasons why are buried in inside politics.

After the hospital's announcement to move, there was a lot of speculation on whether the hospital had deceived the city of Eugene by making large monetary and zoning demands while scouting the Springfield site. The city was unable to supply the demands, which included six additional downtown blocks for construction and \$35 million. The county's largest private employer needed to expand and had a site near Crescent Avenue and Coburg Road in mind, but the city council kept setting up roadblocks to keep PeaceHealth from moving out of downtown.

Ultimately the council and the hospital could not reach an agreement. The damage has been done, and now it is time for the community to refocus and create some solutions to the impending implications of the move. Depending on community support, perhaps Eugene can encourage another private hospital to take root in the city. The most urgent problem is that of the forthcoming lack of emergency care to a city which claims more than 130,000 residents, including more than 18,000 University students. Perhaps the University Health Center can be funded to handle more urgent care cases. Maybe Sacred Heart could still offer some urgent care services, even if scaled back. Whatever the case, we need to look for solutions now.

Springfield may not be the utopian glen that is Eugene, but it is PeaceHealth's choice. Eugene is experiencing the seven stages of grief, and after all the drama of the summer, we must now accept the decision and try to find a way to cope.

Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. The editorial board members are editor in chief Jessica Blanchard, managing editor Michael J. Kleckner, editorial editor Julie Lauderbaugh, assistant editorial editor Jacquelyn Lewis, community representative Gabe Shaughnessy and community representative Jessica Southwick. Responses can be sent to editor@dailymerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.



Peter Utsey Emerald

the GREATER evil

As I was shuffling up the steps of Allen Hall the other day, I noticed the September 20th edition of Eugene Weekly, slathered in hues of green, instructing me to "Give Peace a Chance." I was in a tolerant mood, so I picked up a copy to see what the extreme left has to say about the attacks.

The article mentioned a recent demonstration in Portland where more than 1,200 people gathered to voice their desire for a peaceful solution to our nation's current crisis. I first heard about this demonstration the day after it happened while visiting my pre-college home in deep East Texas. My mother is in the habit of keeping a radio in the bathroom, tuned to her favorite local country station. I was in the habit of tuning out said station while getting ready in the morning, but I heard the words "Portland, Oregon," and, because my new home might as well be a different country to most Texans, I turned off my electric razor to get a better listen.

A middle-aged man with a thick accent coating his words like old suede, his voice ravaged by Marlboros and Jim Beam, was giving an editorial of sorts. I could almost see him, leaning back in

his chair, his boots propped up haphazardly on an expensive piece of radio equipment, slouched down low to keep his enormous belt buckle, emblazoned with a lone star, from slicing into his stomach. My memory is a bit foggy in the a.m., but the following is more or less what was said:

"We have something to say to all those pansies up in Portland, Orah-gone: The only 'peace' we want is a piece of ol' Oh-sama flapping from a flag pole." Right underneath Old Glory.

The play on words and the reference to a flagpole are just as I heard them. The rest is paraphrased.

Crude, ignorant and shortsighted? Perhaps. Disturbing? Definitely. Still, the statement contains a certain wisdom in its offensiveness, even if the speaker isn't aware of it. This is the opinion of the working class, the salt of the earth. "You know, morons," as Gene Wilder so eloquently puts it in "Blazing Saddles."

Yes, this is the closed-minded opinion of a closed-minded man, but a closed mind is a relative thing. Just take a look at the Taliban. These are the kind of religious zealots that make Arthur Dimsdale look like a Unitarian.

The international community do-

nated a soccer stadium to the Afghan people, in hopes that entertainment would mask the horror of their everyday lives. The Taliban used the stadium for public executions. Seriously, I saw a tape of it on CNN the other day — the crowd seemed to like it.

My point is this: Even the most venomous, hateful anti-Islamic American is only a small fraction as closed-minded as an Islamic extremist. The man on the radio wants to inflict pain on the people who inflicted pain on us. The people who inflicted pain on us only wanted to inflict pain. They are evil, plain and simple.

All Oregonians who claim to fight for human rights, all Oregonians who claim to advocate for an open mind, should rejoice at the prospect of our involvement in Afghanistan. Put down your protest signs for just a moment and satisfy the hunger of your already-bloated social consciences with the knowledge that, for once, we are not the bad guys. They are. We did not start this. They did. And now it's time we finish it. Peace has had its chance.

Aaron Rorick is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached at aaronrorick@dailymerald.com.

Letter to the editor

Samson and Delilah redux

Since no explanation came forth for our recent tragedy, we might assume the perpetrators thought it self-evident. There is a well known parallel in the story of Samson and Delilah, Judges 16. Samson became vulnerable to the Philistines when Delilah cut his hair. Iraq became vulnerable to by invading Kuwait. The United States defeated Iraq in the Gulf War, and the Philistines captured Samson. We imposed economic sanctions against

Iraq, and the Philistines put out Samson's eyes.

We praised our technology, and the Philistines praised their god Dagon for the victory. Then the Philistines decided to make sport of Samson, and Clinton thought it a good distraction from his domestic problems to bomb Kosovo. Ah, but Samson's hair was beginning to grow back, and we were now interfering with the internal problems of another nation.

You know the rest. Samson pushed apart the two main pillars of the house, killing the Philistines in it, to the tune of more than 3,000, himself perishing

in the act. The terrorists knocked down the twin towers in New York, killing more than 5000, including themselves. Samson was avenged for his eyes, and the terrorists were avenged for the economic sanctions.

Look, I'm as appalled as the next guy by what happened, but for those of us who count the Old Testament as worthy reading, we have a previous example and one that should cause us to ask if we do not slip into idolatry when we trust in technology more than in God.

Earl Gosnell
 Eugene