

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Neighboring cities should make peace

Eugene and Springfield exist in a strange sort of brotherhood. On the one hand, the two cities, their economies and social lives, are intricately intertwined. Residents of each town work in the other; many friends and relatives straddle the natural river boundary.

On the other hand, a somewhat unfriendly sibling rivalry has always been a part of the relationship. The battle over which city would get the new federal courthouse was not particularly amicable, at least in the media and conversations around town. And this rivalry extends to social practices, lifestyles and customs.

But times change. And it's about time that the rancor of the sibling rivalry also become extinct.

Let's face it; the inter-city rivalry isn't always pleasant. Visit a local bar or coffee shop, and one can overhear nasty jokes aimed at Springfielders — always focused on the notion that they are rednecks, or that they're drug users, or some other crass, over-generalized nonsense. In Springfield, comments and jokes about the general elitism and smugness of Eugeneans is common. But one can also overhear sexist or racist or homophobic jokes in bars; that doesn't mean they're acceptable.

Last week, the Emerald editorial board wrote about the stereotypes and attitudes relating to Springfield. We did not say they were true — we simply pointed out that these ideas are often associated with Springfield. We did so in the context of a discussion about a different issue, and we paid the stereotypes little attention.

We were remiss, however, in pointing out that such generalizations not only aren't true — they're unfair and rude. People of every stripe live in both cities; people are generally accepted, despite their differences, in both cities. This is an important part of the livability of the region, and it should be celebrated.

It's time for the sibling rivalry to end. Both towns have grown into adults, and at a certain point in adulthood, it's wise to make peace with one's relatives and move on. Eugeneans and Springfielders should fulfill the values that make both communities such great places to live, and respect each other's strengths and weaknesses. Let's let it continue from here.

Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.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.

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Steve Baggs Emerald

AVOIDING DEBT: Mission Possible

Sunday night, I was at the bank, cursing the ATM machine for running out of paper. I'm not an anal person who keeps an alphabetized file of every financial transaction, but I wanted to make sure that the bartending tips I just deposited left me with enough funds to cover the rent check I wrote two days before.

Normally, my wages and tips are more than adequate to cover my basic bills. However, the start of school three weeks ago signaled an onslaught of expenses in the form of tuition and books, leaving my checking account in the low double digits.

Since I don't fall into the fortunate group of star athletes, future Einsteins or aspiring concert pianists who are basically paid to go to school, I have something in common with the other 98 percent of the student body: finding the winning combination of cash from part-time jobs, loans, parental assistance and beer bottle refunds to pay for my education.

I could opt for the well-used option of taking out loans. For people like me, who

have a fear of debt and signing my financial future on the dotted line, scrubbing gum off benches sounds more desirable than owing the government large sums of money. It'll be great to get out of undergraduate school debt-free, knowing I accomplished that myself. And that sense of accomplishment will last about five minutes, as I plan on attending law school and have no hopes of an unknown relative leaving me a large inheritance.

The other popular alternative for cash, if parents aren't part of the equation, is the job. We all have one of these at some time or another, or, in some cases, several at the same time. Making the decision to work during school may seem easy enough, but there are more variables than initially meet the eye. In my case, having to work wasn't even a decision; it was a given.

But in actuality, how heroic am I for paying for my education? Sure, it may make me feel like I have a character-building jump start on all the little Ducklets whose parents still foot the bill. I'd like to think it's worth it for the freedom that comes with providing for myself.

Students whose parents pay their bills may not have to worry about making sure the rent is in on time, but those of us who work can pretty much spend our money on whatever we want. I don't have to justify — or even tell my parents — if I decide to spend \$300 to fly to Vegas for the weekend because it's my money. If I decide to opt for a Ritta's burrito for lunch instead of brown-bagging it, I don't have to feel guilty that Mom intended for me to use that \$5 on toilet paper and mechanical pencils.

At the same time that I proclaim the bittersweet freedom that comes from pulling my own weight, I'm a hypocrite. If my parents offered to pay my bills, I'd say, "Hell, yeah" in a New York minute. You may still find me working behind the bar, concocting some great Martinis and Long Island Ice Teas, but it would only be to continue to accumulate great stories to someday write about — not for a winter break trip to Bali.

Rebecca Newell is a columnist for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. She can be reached at rebeccanewell@dailyemerald.com.

Letters to the editor

Ending war on drugs would reduce terrorism

Now, perhaps more than ever, there is an even stronger case for changing our government's positioning in the War on Drugs. In addition to disenfranchising hundreds of thousands of non-violent citizens, wasting our tax dollars on programs that get larger and deliver fewer results each year, and helping the spread of corruption among our police officers, prohibition of marijuana and

other substances creates a black market, which is an easy source of funding for terrorists.

Yes, that's right. Terrorists profit directly from America's War on Drugs. They grow crops and sell them at the black market's outrageously inflated prices.

That's exactly what the Taliban was doing until this year, when George Dubbya handed over 40 million dollars to coax them to stop. They destroyed the crops, but how much do you want to bet they will start right up after Bush pulls any future funding?

Ending the War on Drugs would remove the threat of prison from people who don't belong there, generate tax dollars that aren't there now and pull money right out of the terrorists' pockets.

Christopher Palkow
Norfolk, Virginia

Airdrops are appeasement

Resources spent on humanitarian airdrops are resources diverted for self-defense. It shows our leaders putting the lives of Americans below those of citizens in enemy countries. It is also appeasement. Some

fear Muslims will think we're warring against Islam. The airdrops are an attempt to show this isn't true. If we fear these people will turn against us, best we not help them?

We've been appeasing by trying to form a coalition with Communists, in refraining from attacking other terrorist countries, in failing to declare war and now in these airdrops. Fifty years of appeasement led to Sept. 11th.

More will mean worse.

Christopher J Grace
Aurora, Colo.