

COMMENTARY

Thursday, November 7, 2002

Editorial

Sex-abusing priests need treatment

The Roman Catholic Church has spent the past year trying to repair its credibility and public reputation in the wake of scandals involving priests and allegations of sexual abuse of boys. Bishops, such as Cardinal Bernard Law, had been shuffling the offending priests around to other parishes to "cover up" their crimes. Now, however, 24 priests in the Boston Archdiocese itself have been removed pending resolution of their cases.

This summer, American cardinals and bishops of the Catholic Church met in Dallas to try to resolve this issue. After the protests of concerned Catholics, the Cardinals had instituted a "zero-tolerance" policy that would remove priests accused of sexual abuse immediately.

Finally, the Holy See — the office of the Pope — has weighed in. Worried that the "zero-tolerance" policy was counter to church law and that it denied accused priests due process, the church has decided to set up a special tribunal that would judge the allegations and determine whether or not a priest should be defrocked.

This step by the Vatican is worrisome. These tribunals sound like a closed-door judicial body that will not ameliorate in any way one of the major failings of the church. We have fears that if a priest is cleared by a private church tribunal, it is a continuation of the cover-up and not a true indication of his innocence.

If any priest is committing such atrocious acts as sexually abusing children, it should be a matter for the criminal, not the ecclesiastical, courts. As soon as a member of the church has received allegations of sexual abuse, he or she needs to call the police, just as would any other responsible member of society. Then the accused can have his day in court, and if found guilty, he immediately should be defrocked and excommunicated, as well as imprisoned.

Sexual offenders can be rehabilitated, however, and mere punishment can't be the end of society's efforts. Priests, or anyone, found guilty of sex abuse must also be treated for their behavior, while being segregated from society until they are no longer a threat.

In any case, the cover-up by the Roman Catholic Church of priests who have engaged in sexual abuse has gone on for far too long. If they wish to salvage the reputation of one of the world's largest religions, they are going to have to try something with more accountability than the tribunals they are suggesting now.

Editorial policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com.

Not a (parking) lot of space

It was a Wednesday afternoon. Like any college student without too much homework, I decided to venture off campus.

Could I be blamed, though? After being confined to my 9-by-15-foot residence hall room all week, one would tend to feel a little cramped. So, I sought out a friend and headed out for a trip to the store to pick up a few things.

The only problem was neither of us had a car.

After going through bus schedules and maps of the Eugene area, what could have easily been an hour-long trip to the store quickly turned into a three-hour excursion.

Like many students living in the residence halls, I don't have a parking spot to keep my car on campus. The spaces are just too limited, and I've seen the waiting lists for parking permits to prove it.

Many would suggest that public transportation is the answer, and although public transportation is a sufficient alternative, it can turn any trip into a large ordeal, often tripling the amount of time it takes to get to just about anywhere. Granted the Lane Transit District bus service is one of the best I've seen, with accessible service and friendly staff to help, but public transportation is not always for everyone.

A simple trip to Fred Meyer by bus can take nearly a half an hour to an hour from the west side of campus, depending on which route is taken, while you can get there by car within 10 minutes. Often, students with busy schedules are not able to take this much time out of a given day just to run a "quick errand."

In addition, people are no longer able to keep their own schedules, but they must follow the schedule mapped out by the LTD — and that is assuming the bus is actual-

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The solution is a long-disputed one — add more parking spots. Some may argue, though, that providing students with the means to park their vehicles will only encourage students to remain dependent on them. This, in turn, could further problems such as air pollution and could discourage environmental awareness.

I agree that this is possible; however, this awareness must be a personal decision, not something forced upon the student. Even so, some may choose to use their cars on a limited basis; as in my situation, a car would come in handy for a trip to the store on a few occasions or a trip home to visit my family.

This need for more parking is evident. Currently, the neighborhoods

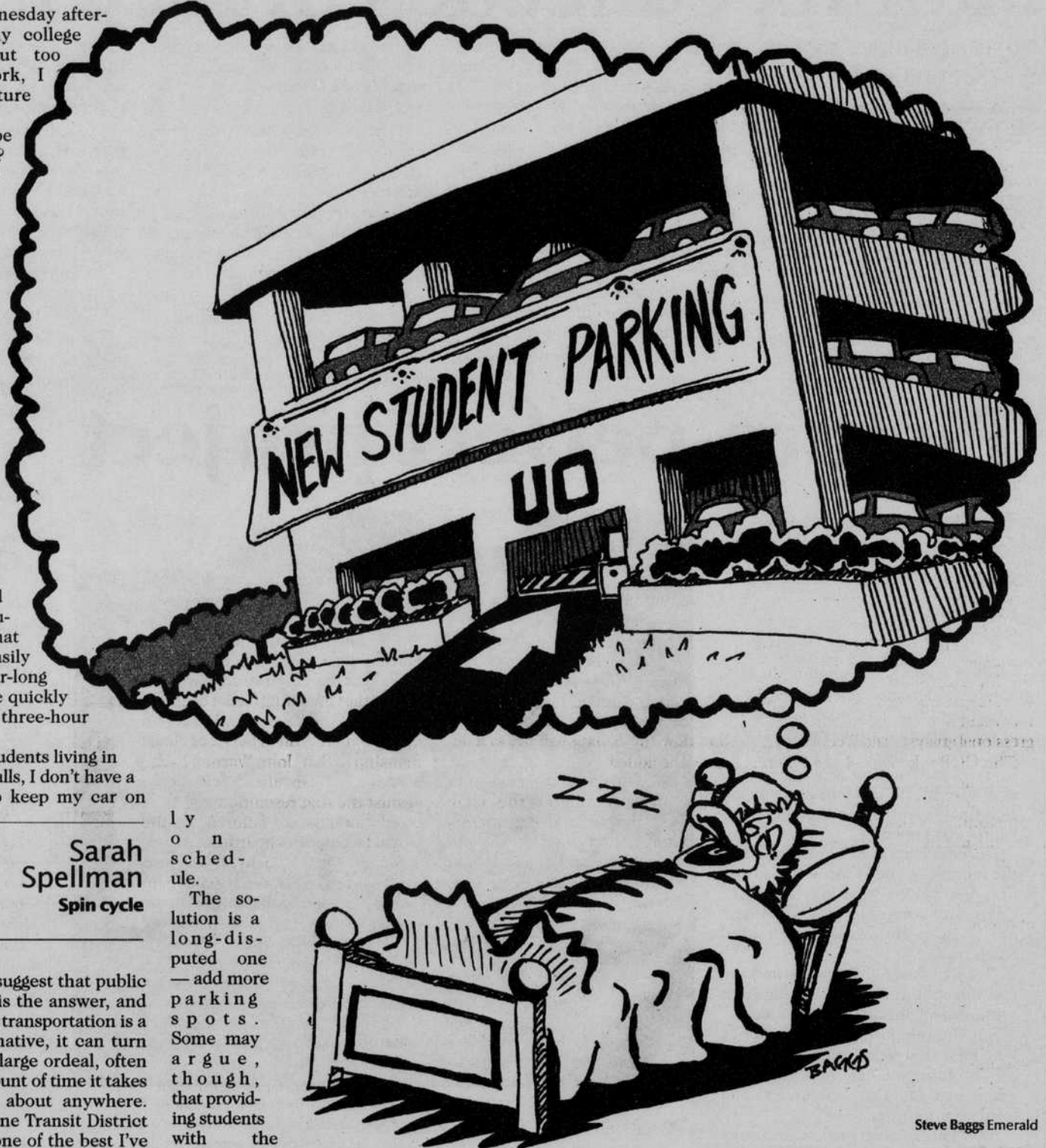
released yearly by surrounding factories and companies, a five-and-a-half-mile stretch of the river was declared a federal Superfund site, including another 22 miles that are also eligible for this.

These parts are heavily concentrated with chemicals, making them dangerous for fishing or swimming. The companies have refused to stop dumping, and the situation is getting increasingly more hazardous for the environment.

Even after chemicals stop being dumped, the current pollutants need to be removed. It's not fair for taxpayers to have to spend their money. We need to force the people who have polluted our river to not only stop adding more toxic waste, but to clean it up.

It's time for us to take a stand.

Katie Mart
freshman
undeclared



Steve Baggs Emerald

Letter to the editor

Polluters should pay to clean dirty Willamette

I am utterly disgusted and disappointed with the treatment of Oregon's Willamette River. Physically, the river only takes up 12 percent of Oregon's land, but many species make their home in or around it, including us. The river has great poten-

tial. However, because of our lack of awareness and concern, the river has progressively become the most polluted river west of the Mississippi.

Toxins such as lead, arsenic, benzene and dioxin have been found in fish living there. These are tremendously harmful to humans, with effects ranging from kidney and brain damage to cancer. Fish were also found to have skeletal deformities.

Because of the millions of pounds of industrial toxic chemicals being

along the east and south sides of campus are congested with parked cars during the school day. The University of Oregon Planning Office is currently working on a development policy for the East Campus area. One goal of this plan is to discourage parking in these areas by fulfilling parking needs and encouraging other forms of transportation.

With the growing number of students at the University, this is only becoming a bigger problem. It is time to reconsider if the means provided really are sufficient.

In a perfect world, a parking structure — or plainly, more parking space — could be provided to

satisfy the needs of students who chose to drive. And in this perfect world, students would still be charged the same amount to park here, which, after time, could only bring revenue to the college. Of course, this isn't a perfect world, and this issue will still remain a problem.

But until then, students can enjoy saving their scarce money on gas, oil, and maintenance on their cars — the only price to be paid is time.

Contact the columnist at sarahspellman@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.