

Thursday, January 8, 2004

## EDITORIAL

### Chief brings his philosophy of 'community policing' to EPD

The recent announcement that the city finally hired a permanent chief to run the Eugene Police Department is uplifting news for the city and campus communities alike. And while city officials were clearly thorough in their hiring process — and despite suffering a setback when the selected candidate pulled out in an earlier round of application — one thing should be said of the two-year hiatus between permanent police chiefs: It's about time.

The new hire — Robert M. Lehner, formerly of Tucson, Ariz. — appears to be a good choice for Eugene, although like any newcomer to a public position, Lehner will have to prove himself in the Eugene environment before anything can be said for sure. Given his self-described philosophy of "community policing," however, Lehner is off to a good start.

Specifically, the Editorial Board likes two of Lehner's goals for his new position that he described in Tuesday's Emerald article: His desire to work closely with University groups, and his intent to form partnerships with all neighborhood groups in Eugene, as opposed to running a police force that ignores the concerns of the public it serves.

Although Lehner doesn't have any direct experience working within a campus framework, he told the Emerald that he worked "fairly close" with students and administrators at the University of Arizona to go over issues important to them. This is especially important in the University area, where out-of-control parties often leads to riots. On the other hand, we hope Lehner will stick to his conviction that thin police resources should not be used to harass legitimate parties in the campus area. Parties are, after all, just another aspect of college life.

Lehner summed up his philosophy toward campus policing when he told the Emerald, "I know that students want a safe environment. Certainly their parents who send them here want a safe environment, and it's something that we will work on together to ensure that you'll have a safe educational experience while you're here."

As for policing in the Eugene community, we hope Lehner can restore some of the confidence that seems to be lacking among Eugene citizenry, particularly in light of EPD's understaffing problem and sexual misconduct charges against two former officers. Also, Eugene has a strong activist community, and clear communication among those groups and EPD will ensure that future protests do not get out of hand either via protester violence or excessive use of force by police.

All in all, Lehner's goals and qualifications clearly show that he is willing and able to change the face of EPD for the better and strengthen the relationship between police and the Eugene community. We certainly hope this is the case, and we wish Lehner good luck as he begins his work.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents 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. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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## Kucinich Redux

During fall term I furthered several controversial opinions; for example, I argued that felons should be allowed to vote, that President Bush should shut the fuck up and that anti-war poets should do the same. I also took every opportunity I could to fire cheap shots at easy-target conservatives like Tom DeLay, Pat Robertson and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Judging from the number of responses, I figured no more than a handful of people outside of my family and the Emerald editorial staff was actually reading my columns in their entirety.

But then I made a wise crack about Dennis Kucinich and I realized just how wrong I was. Suddenly, angry e-letters came pouring into my inbox from across cyberspace.

"Either you have been the victim of media manipulation and corporate snowballing or you are just one very bad guy," wrote a disgruntled Kucinich fanatic. "Please, if you have one iota of journalistic integrity, go to <http://www.kucinich.us>, get a clue, and then do what is right by your readers and all the people of the world and write another article apologizing (sic) for your ignorant and derogatory statements about Dennis Kucinich."

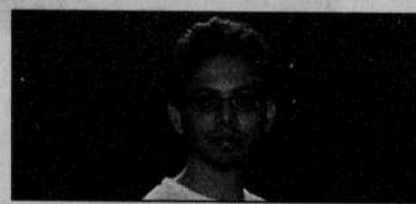
I don't think my statements were ignorant or derogatory. I simply pointed out how embarrassing it must have been for Kucinich, as a white man, to receive fewer votes for president in a national poll than a black woman. I'm not apologizing for that!

Nevertheless, I decided that, though I am one very bad guy without one iota of journalistic integrity, if it meant doing right by the people of the world, then I would check out Kucinich's web site. After all, every angry e-mail message mentioned it. I figured it must be one hell of a site.

I didn't learn anything from Kucinich's Web site that I didn't already know: I like where he stands on the issues. I have

from day one. He is by far the most progressively minded Democratic candidate. And at times he has shown real courage in Congress by standing up against the Bush administration when others wouldn't. He hasn't received the credit he deserves for his accomplishments.

What I find interesting is that the Kucinich fanatics in all of their angry e-mails never mentioned the other things in my column. They never congratulated me for exposing the two-faced conservatism of the New Democrats or for finally



**David Jagernauth**  
 Critical mass

ly giving Carol Moseley Braun the recognition that her career deserves.

No. They only cared that I had made a lame joke about their troll-like candidate and for that sin I must be dubbed one very bad guy.

It's the perfect illustration of what is wrong with the white progressive movement: They don't know who their friends are.

The Kucinich fanatics preach inclusiveness and yet rail against every difference. They cannot see the forest for the trees. They slowly exclude everyone till they've carved out tiny homogeneous niches that lack real political power and then hold on desperately to the illusion of power created by their sense of moral purity and intellectual superiority. They are the worst kind of idealist. They are the type of dreamers that Oregonians shouldn't love.

Republicans, on the other hand, have

mastered the technique of exploiting commonalities. They are slowly winning over a section of the Jewish community by focusing on their strong support of Israel. Hispanics are being brought into the Republican fold in greater numbers by hammering home Christian family values.

Many of the e-mails I received blamed people like me in the media for Kucinich's lack of popularity in national polls. I've got news for you: It isn't a "media conspiracy" that is marginalizing your boy; the leaders within the Democratic Party itself have marginalized him. The media is simply reporting on reality.

But accepting reality has never been the progressive movement's strongest trait.

"Don't count DK out," wrote one Kucinich fan. "He has a rabid following of people who will get out and vote. ... We will surprise you. ... Don't give up! Fight the good fight!"

I wonder, when their fantasy world comes crashing down around them and their party nominates, let's say, Howard Dean, what are the Kucinich fanatics going to do? Will they abandon the ideals that Kucinich stands for in the name of supporting the lesser to Bush's greater evil? Or will they have the courage to fight the good fight and vote their conscience? Will they vote Green or are they too yellow?

I suspect the majority will stay with the Democrats. And their rhetoric will amount to nothing in the end. At best a moderately conservative Democrat will be elected president, the Green Party will once again fail to achieve its potential and this country will continue its downward slide, just a little bit slower than before.

Regrettably, I think America needs a second Bush presidency. The progressives just haven't learned their lesson yet.

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