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COMMENTARY

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EDITORIAL

Police chief, Eugene make a good match

The Emerald Editorial Board had the opportunity last Friday to meet with Eugene's greenhorn police chief, Robert Lehner. Lehner, in the middle of a weeklong, whirlwind tour of the city's community institutions, talked with the board about why he took Eugene's top cop position, his philosophy and what his plans are for Eugene.

Previously of Tucson, Ariz., where he served in the city's assistant position, Lehner decided he wanted to try his hand at chiefing. After comparing lists of cities that suited his professional intentions and family's needs, he found his way to Eugene.

After visiting the town and meeting with City Manager Dennis Taylor, Lehner was eventually hired, in what he lauds as "a wonderful opportunity."

Lehner's arrival seems to be good news for the community on several fronts. For one, he fills a gap in the municipal hierarchy: Thanks in part to a misfire when hiring a candidate during the original selection process, Eugene has been without a permanent police chief for several years (Thad Buchanan, who has since returned to his position as captain, served as interim chief most recently.)

Moreover, Lehner and Eugene seem to be a good match for each other. Eugene and Tucson are "actually quite similar," he noted, adding that major universities have an incredible impact on the communities around them. (Tucson is home to the University of Arizona.)

Lehner said that one of Eugene's strengths is its well-developed neighborhood-association structure, which factored significantly in his job search. And, promisingly, maintaining an open, active dialogue with community organizations seems to be the central theme. While he mentioned no specific policy changes, he emphasized that any policy changes would be guided by the community's priorities.

Lehner recalled from meetings with community leaders that, "What they're telling me is that they want a voice; they don't feel like they have (one)."

He seems to be very interested in the University's place in Eugene, too. Particularly, he responded to questions about the recently embattled expansion of powers for commissioned Department of Public Safety officers.

"(In a meeting with University officials), I did express concern about something in between a police officer and a guard or security officer," he explained. He adding that, "It's not that I'm opposed to it. It's that I don't know enough about it yet."

Regardless of the details, it's a positive sign that the new chief is paying attention to an issue — although it now largely seems a fait accompli — that affects students but was decided without due student input.

"Unless the roles are critically defined, it has the potential to be a problem," Lehner said. "So yeah, I'm uncomfortable. I think that's fair."

Specific issues notwithstanding, Lehner promises that his tenure as chief will be centered around the Eugene community.

"I am just the driver of the bus," he said. "I don't determine where the bus goes."

EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters @dailymerald.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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Taking a chance

When someone tells you he or she is going to be a parent, generally the first thing you say is "Congratulations!" Not so very long ago, the next thing you'd say would be "Are you hoping for a boy or a girl?" In recent years, we've begun to ask "Do you know if it's a boy or a girl?" Not so very long from now, we may be asking "What did you choose, a boy or a girl?"

If you've got \$15,000 to \$20,000 and are willing to undergo In Vitro Fertilization, the gender of your future children may no longer be a crapshoot.

Always one for progress, this is one of the few times I am struck by the need to question whether this new advancement in our technology is something that we, as a society, ought to be embracing.

Where there is a medical need for gender selection, my qualms are few. But, when the motivation behind gender selection is a parent who says "I've always wanted a girl" or "My life won't be complete until I've had a son," I begin to worry.

Remember the good old days when most soon-to-be parents disclaimed a gender preference and told you that all they wanted was a healthy baby?

When parents say that they have a

preference, I can't help but wonder why. What is it that they feel makes one gender more desirable than another? What is it they feel they can do with one that they



Jessica Cole-Hodgkinson
 Huh? What? Really.

can't do with the other?

There are those who prefer sons. Sometimes it's out of a desire to see the family name perpetuated. Sometimes it's a sports thing ("I want to play catch with my boy in the backyard"). Maybe it's just a lingering remnant of the laws of primogeniture — they want someone to leave their worldly goods to.

Then there are those who want girls. I've heard a few people say that they want a girl so they'll have someone to take care of

them when they're old. Others — usually women — want a girl so they can do the whole mother-of-the-bride thing someday.

I am puzzled by all of these people.

In today's world, there is no law that says that you can't play catch with your daughter. And, even if you can pick your child's gender, there's no guarantee that your child will ever marry, which counters the notion of perpetuating the name and the white-tulle wedding. And, if you want someone to take care of you when you're in your golden years, it would seem far more sensible to take the money you'd spend to guarantee yourself a female child and pop it into a sound retirement fund.

Life as a child is difficult. So difficult, in fact, that we spend most of our adult lives trying to recover. How much more difficult will it be if we create a situation where science caters to parents who don't want a child, but rather want a particular kind of child?

Contact the columnist at
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 Her opinions do not necessarily
 represent those of the Emerald.

Feds should not regulate marriage

Jarrett White is obviously not the "biggest states'-rights guy on campus" (ODE, Jan. 23).

GUEST COMMENTARY He might be for federalism when it suits him, but considering marriage a federal issue is certainly one of the most anti-federalist positions one can currently take.

Not to disparage White, he and I agree on some issues and I would, in general, consider him an ally on campus; but on this issue he is exactly wrong. Marriage has never been, and should not become, a federal issue. Furthermore, the Constitution is not the appropriate place to turn to on social policy. A Federal Marriage Amendment would undermine the right that states have always had to enforce and define the marriage contract.

The FMA is, in addition to being a very quick way to undermine federalism permanently, supported based often on false assumptions. The main one, of course, is that the full-faith and credit clause of the Constitution would require all states to

recognize a gay marriage from any state of the union. This is simply not true. States do not have to recognize each others' marriages between heterosexual couples, Supreme Court decisions and the Defense of Marriage Act have made sure of that.

Further, to assume that gay marriage would somehow undermine "traditional marriage" is ridiculous. Certainly the sorts of serial marriages we see in Hollywood, or even among friends and neighbors, do more harm to the institution than allowing two people of the same sex and/or gender to marry ever could.

By leaving the issue up to the states, government remains closer to the people, and each state can have a marriage law with which its majority is comfortable. If we must allow morality to be legislated, we can at least have the good sense to let the laws be specific to every region. The purpose of our system of government is making sure that governance is done locally, and at a level near the electorate.

Sadly, many on both the right and the left have lost sight of this. Our founding document is not the place that this issue should be hashed out. The debate over

marriage should rage in state legislatures, not in Congress.

It is unfortunate, in my view, that same-sex marriage is not a very popular movement in America today. However, it is also my feeling that this will change in time. If by some horrible circumstance the FMA passes, it will be nearly impossible to undo. Whereas state constitutions are relatively easy to change via voter initiative, amendments to the U.S. Constitution are, by design, incredibly difficult to pass. And, only once has an amendment been repealed.

The federal government has never been in the marriage business, and should certainly not start now. The consequences of allowing such an abhorrent amendment to pass into the Constitution are too great, and we must not pass the FMA. The fears of the moral right are severely overstated, and based on misunderstanding the law. White and company may call themselves federalists, but their position on the FMA belies a desire for moral legislation. Fortunately, the Constitution is not so easily tainted.

Timothy Dreier, a senior majoring in economics, is the editor in chief of the Oregon Commentator.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Athletics should use money for benefit of public

A University football player is accused of assaulting a woman while intoxicated. Campus alcohol citations are rising noticeably. Alcohol rehabilitation needs are showing no signs of lessening in our area. As treatment and prevention dollars are even less likely to exist in the future, sources of alcohol promotion and acceptance in our community are important to identify.

The University's Athletics Department

signed an exclusive contract with an alcohol company. The terms of these contracts are kept secret from the public and students at the request of the beer company. The result of the contracts is the constant promotion of alcohol use on radio and television by the University. The University also fails to require the Athletics Department to spend any of the secret alcohol sponsorship revenues on positive, sober, community-building messages. Eugene has many events and potential activities that the Athletics Department will not invest any of its advertising revenues into promoting.

As a student, I asked the Athletics Department to invest a few hundred of its many millions of dollars of sponsorship revenues on positive community activities without success. A token gesture is essential to address the message that the University is 100 percent supportive of pro-alcohol advertising. Ninety-nine percent would be a vast improvement, as making one-percent of the messages positive begins an effective strategy of supporting what's good in our community.

Mike Meyer
 senior
 Family and Human Services program

ONLINE POLL

Each week, the Emerald publishes the results of the previous poll and the coming week's poll question.

Visit <http://www.dailymerald.com> to vote.

Last question: What's your vote on Measure 30?

Results: Seventy-two votes.

- Yes — I value the state services that are at risk: 51.4 percent or 37 votes.
- No — The state should be able to manage the budget as it stands: 23.6 percent or 17 votes.
- Yes — I don't want my tuition to go up: 11.1 percent or eight votes.
- I didn't vote: 8.3 percent or six votes.

- No — I don't want to pay more in taxes: 5.6 percent or four votes.

This week: Should Genesis Juice be forced to pasteurize its juice to stay open?

Choices: Yes — It's the law; Yes — It's safer for you; No — It hasn't had problems in 30 years of business; No — It tastes better unpasteurized.