

ently run businesses, many tucked into well-preserved historic buildings. There is a good flow of pedestrian traffic on most major streets. I saw virtually no chain restaurants or stores. It feels somewhat like an old European town. Comparing our downtown to Boise's, I felt jealous. Jane Jacobs would envy Boise.

The other, and perhaps more educational model, is Silver Spring, Md., an edge city not far from Washington, D.C. About 10 years ago, with the downtown decaying, the city hired a private development corporation to raze and rebuild about five of the downtown blocks, a proposal not unlike the KWG plan. The results were mixed. Downtown Silver Spring is now a vibrant place. It works, to an extent. The problem is that it felt very generic. There was a Borders, a Red Lobster, a Ben & Jerry's, a Starbucks, etc., the same stores found in any mall. And the downtown felt like a giant outdoor mall with private security. Comparing our downtown to Silver Spring, I was very happy not to live there.

Silver Spring might seem like a successful model. The stores are healthy, tax revenues are up, it attracts the "proper" demographic. I think this is the type of place that KWG, and perhaps Beam, and perhaps some of Eugene's leaders, would like to create. Yet these there is another model available: Boise. Before reaching any decision about downtown, all concerned should think about what they want that result to be, and only then consider how to get there.

Blake Andrews
Eugene

KWG FOR DOWNTOWN

As one of the 150 to 200 citizens packed into the standing-room-only meeting in the library on May 7 hoping to see a clear choice between the KWG and Beam proposals emerge, I came away disillusioned — but not surprised. Once again we are seemingly heading back to the drawing board to take the Eugene approach and turn it over to the populace to study to death, allowing the City Council to avoid decisive action.

In 1999 we moved out of our single-family home in the south hills into our condo at 10th & Lincoln to join the "revival" of downtown Eugene. It was exciting at first as we watched the construction of Broadway Place parking structure and apartments, the arrival of Symantec, reopening of Broadway and construction of the new library. Then Symantec opted for better digs in Springfield, and growth has since languished.

We still find many advantages to living downtown — lots of amenities within walking distance. But where are the people? The key to revival is more living units — condos, townhouses, apartments. Only then will we see a real neighborhood emerge.

The price differential between KWG and Beam may seem daunting at 10 to one, but the choice is obvious in my mind. City staff got it right. The Beam proposal seems simply a facelift and regression to early 1990s — a new "facia" on underutilized commercial space.

Let us hope that the City Council can step up to the bar — be brave; be bold — vote for KWG. We won't have a more opportune time. Our neighbors to the east are seizing the day. If Eugene does not become more decisive, the future forums will not be about redeveloping West Broadway but renaming Eugene "West Springfield."

Duane Janes
Eugene

END THIS WAR

Finally, someone throws a brick at the drug war in the *Weekly*. Jim Greig writes passionately in his opinion piece "End The War At Home" (5/3).

Those who know the state of our forests understand how beneficial hemp could be in removing the blight of harvesting trees for fiber. Hemp produces four times the fiber of trees per acre. So, if Oregonians are concerned about declining dollars, protecting salmon and trout habitat and keeping our forests vibrant and productive ... hemp is THE answer.

Medicinally, the feds have known since 1974 that cannabis has cancer-fighting potential. It's not just a palliative but has possible preventative and curative powers. In April, in a story carried only by the *Indianapolis Star*, "findings presented ... at the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Los Angeles, add to evidence that marijuana may have anti-tumor properties and its potential should be probed further, researchers said."

Anyone who has family affected by cancer should be outraged that the federal government has been blocking critical cancer research with cannabis and lying about it being useful as medicine.

The Iraq War may suck, but the drug war really is THE war, our longest war, a war demonstrably built on nothing but fabrications and lies, a war waged on all of us. And worst of all — a war on patients.

Allan Erickson
Drug Policy Forum of Oregon
Eugene

DON'T PROTECT US

Regarding Jim Greig's thoughtful May 3 op-ed, if health outcomes determined drug laws instead of cultural norms, marijuana would be legal. Unlike alcohol, marijuana has never been shown to cause an overdose death, nor does it share the addictive properties of tobacco.

Like any drug, marijuana can be harmful if abused, but jail cells are inappropriate as health interventions and ineffective as deterrents. The first marijuana laws were enacted in response to Mexican migration during the early 1900s, despite opposition from the American Medical Association.

Dire warnings that marijuana inspires homicidal rages have been counterproductive at best.

White Americans did not even begin to smoke pot until a soon-to-be entrenched government bureaucracy began funding reefer madness propaganda. By raiding medical marijuana providers in states with compassionate-use laws, the very same Bush administration that claims illicit drug use funds terrorism is forcing cancer and AIDS patients into the hands of street dealers. Apparently marijuana prohibition is more important than protecting the country from terrorism.

Robert Sharpe, MPA
Common Sense for Drug Policy
Washington, D.C.

THROW OFF THE CHAINS

I just heard a report on the radio about the percentage of U.S. corporations that have foreign ownership. It is amazing/appalling how many are over 50 percent foreign, which shows why our economy is hitting the skids. To the extent that a company is foreign owned, its profits are leaving the domestic economy.

In Eugene, people who want to do public-subsidized development are focused on bring-



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