

deserve a roof over their heads and warm food every night. If we insure that these basic human needs are met for all Eugeneans, especially our children, I predict the issue of streets cluttered with "punk teenagers" will disappear with a little time and some much needed support.

*Skye Rios
Eugene*

NO BLIND FOLLOWER

In response to the letter questioning Lt. Ehren Watada's integrity and motivation for refusing to serve in Iraq "Do Your Job, Watada" (11/8), I would like to illuminate certain essential facts with regards to the actions taken by Watada.

Watada joined the military because the administration asked for citizens to become professional soldiers to help in the fight against terrorism and because he wished to defend the U.S. Constitution. He went to basic training in June 2003, after Iraq was attacked by the U.S.

Officers do not swear to blindly follow the leader, but instead swear to defend and uphold the Constitution. It is now clearly established that the Bush administration lied to Congress and the American people about

the reasons for invading Iraq, thereby violating the U.S. Constitution and international law.

The Nuremburg Tribunals established the principle that an officer cannot use the defense that "I was only following orders." The Uniform Code of Military Justice clearly places a burden on an officer to disobey an unlawful order. Watada now believes strongly that the Iraq War is illegal and unconstitutional and that he was upholding the U.S. constitution when he refused to deploy to Iraq.

For taking this courageous action, Watada should be thanked and appreciated. Instead he faces court martial and up to six years imprisonment for refusing to deploy and for speaking out against the Iraq War.

Join with me in supporting and thanking Lt. Watada, a true American hero, by signing a support petition at on the Thank You Lt. Ehren Watada web site at www.thankyoult.org

*Michael Carrigan
Eugene*

TRIBUTE TO THE '60S

In response to the review of *Across the Universe* (10/18): The reviewer states that

the film's problem is that it has no serious point to make, but also states that as it progresses it becomes "more overtly political." Which is it?

As someone who came into the world during the 1960s, I felt that the director did a masterful and artful job of recapturing the sights and sounds of my earliest years. I saw the film as the director's "love letter" to that unique time in our history. To want a historical account or portrayal of the people, and the social and political events of the decade, is to want a different kind of filmmaking. The point of the film, for me, was to recreate and express the visual and aural elements and impressions of that time, and fuse them against the backdrop of political and social turmoil that was also occurring. I think that was accomplished very creatively and movingly and was very stunning. Additionally, hearing those wonderful Beatles songs with a "fresh coat of paint," so to speak, was very enjoyable. I heard the soundtrack as a tribute to those songs and I felt that the arrangements were touching and well done.

I think it's OK to view this film as art without needing it to be "important" or "historical." I wouldn't want readers to miss such a beautiful piece of work based on the

reviewer's lack of enthusiasm.

*Kelly Shiver
Springfield*

HOPE TO NEW ARTISTS

A negative critique may cause a budding artist to throw their creations into the trash. That's where the Springfield Mayor's Show at Emerald Art Gallery becomes a haven for new artists. They see their work displayed for the first time.

After teaching art for numerous years, I know how discouraged many talented novices feel. The nonjuried Springfield Mayor's Show embraces professional as well as new artists. Their philosophy is keep art alive — encourage new artists to continue pursuing their dreams. Chuck — it's time you put on your thinking cap before you criticize a worthy cause.

*Ellen Gabehart
Springfield*

HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

This is an open letter of gratitude to everyone who participated in the cancer benefit for Gary Pyne on Sunday, Nov. 4, at Spirits in Springfield. In particular we would like to thank all the local Eugene mu-



Downtown Apples

A new plan is needed for our urban core

Suppose two-thirds of the people who came into your store told you they didn't want apples. You could spin that any number of ways, such as: "Damned bunch of utopians and lefties, small-thinking incremental creeps, cheap skating, worm-worrying fruit-haters." But eventually you'd have to admit that the overwhelming majority of your shoppers just didn't want apples.

A smart shopkeeper would turn quickly and try to offer them something they did want. Why is downtown so different?

The dream of downtown as a retail center in the older sense that Main Street was the town's retail center dies more slowly than Boris Godunov. I shopped in those yester years at Penny's and the Bon, bought shoes at Burch's and had my pants altered at the tailor's above Seymour's.

The mix of national and local stores wasn't an issue then, and it isn't now. At least it wasn't for me until Burch's stopped carrying my shoe size and explained it this way: "Look, Mr. D, we sell 100 pairs of shoes to people with fat feet for every pair we sell to people like you, so we can't afford to keep your size in stock any more." And so like everyone else I got in my car, drove free, parked free and shopped elsewhere.

I liked this summary in a recent letter to the editor, "I'll tell you what happened in three words: Valley River Center." Concatenate that admirably abbreviated history with, "and Internet shopping" for the rest of the story. I need more than fingers to count the number of times the UPS and Fed Ex trucks come to my street these days. Recently I shopped locally to replace a watchband that was wearing out — went to several local stores and was told that 17mm wasn't a popular size, so they only had one to offer. Guess what arrived in my mail a few days later.

People from all parts of the city, not just the left side or the right side, knew instinctively that the retail dream of Eugene's downtown's golden past wasn't coming back, not even if we threw a lot of money at it. And \$40 million to \$70 million seemed like a lot to throw after something disappearing at the speed of light.

Do we want and deserve a great downtown? Could and would our community find a way to pay for it? I think we do, could and would — but not if we remain obsessed with urban renewing those same old apples.

I've been saying, "For god's sake, for goddess' sake, get a new idea!" And people have been responding, "So what's yours, [expletive deleted]?" And so I tell them that I think we've grown past our present Downtown Plan and need a new and better one, one that sets out firmer public commitments to those things that will make downtown

humane, urbane and beautiful — and a model of sustainability for others to copy. Maybe even help us live up to the "World's Greatest City for the ...". Outside substantial investment needs to see those firmer commitments. No one, for example, is going to invest in Glenwood if we don't fix Franklin Boulevard.

And so we are back to asking ourselves what we would build there if we were not being ideologically bullied into subsidizing development that cares mostly about moving the most product or squeezing the most dollars out of each square foot. Imagine this: a downtown Eugene we really wanted to live in, work in, dance in and visit rather than a downtown we were told we had to accept or abandon our economic religion.

I'm betting we are ready to agree on some basic principles. For one: Downtown Eugene needs more people living and working there. All kinds of people, not just the present foreshortened segment of the population. Town and gown might have more in common if students and faculty actually lived downtown. It's past time for a new hotel to support our upcoming Olympic Trials, festivals and further aspirations.

Greater urban amenity IS the necessary flip side of greater urban density. Ever walked down Market Street to San Francisco Bay? Ever taken a walk along the Oklahoma City or San Antonio millraces — I mean canals?

Local services for an expanded downtown population would naturally follow, including those like Jane's Alterations at VRC that already attract people (who are in the know) from all over the region. Big 55,000 sq. ft. grocery stores aren't the answer. Look at what's happened recently to Ray's in Santa Clara where there was plenty of free parking.

The WBAC didn't agree with me, but public monies need to be channeled into a range of public attractors downtown: a park and open space system, not just wider sidewalks; a new 350-seat theater; an art museum-DIVA complex whose roof doesn't leak; a downtown UO-LCC center, and maybe like Springfield, a downtown public high school; a sustainable trolley system that starts by uniting and activating Willamette Street as an urban service corridor and later extends down 5th to the waterfront. And an enhanced downtown riverfront; a Millrace urban watershed restoration; a Skinner Market Square and new park on a recaptured North Park Block; a new and/or newly re-modeled-augmented City Hall.

Our new plan needs a more elaborate understanding of what makes up a city framework. It needs more committed, cultural flesh on its bones. A framework of just streets and developable blocks is a bloodless subdivision and not a city.

"As the times are new, so we must think anew." Who said that anyway? I think he stopped a civil war.

Jerry Diethelm is a Eugene architect and landscape architect, and UO professor emeritus of architecture and landscape architecture.