

a socio-economically diverse community with a Title I program that serves more than 40 percent of our students (who qualify for free or reduced meals). Our school's commitment and approach to our racially and ethnically diverse community is outstanding. Bottom line: The Village School is accomplishing what the district would like its alternative programs to accomplish. Messing with this success by requiring a poorly conceived move is bad policy. Village School parents have spoken clearly in several past surveys and last year's focus groups about the importance of a central location to their continued involvement with the school. More than half of our families live within the immediate area of the current Willard site. Many of our families are economically situated such that transporting their children to a distant site is not possible. It is ill-advised to consider moving any schools this year, until the long awaited comprehensive planning process is complete. Moving Eastside and Village (or any schools for that matter) might limit future options and/or cause targeted schools to endure an expensive, time-consuming move again next year. The prudent choice is to leave things be for this year. Attempting to solve the Eastside-Parker conflict should not involve displacing other schools and their

communities. Over the past eight years, the Village School has become a model for what the charter school initiative intended. It is a thriving, neighborhood school, doing more with less, and should be recognized and supported for such.

*Andy Traisman
Eugene*

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

In the long eternal quest for female equality, a legislative act passed and signed by the governor was implemented on Jan. 1. It took the force of this legislation to require private health insurance to include in their plans some of the cost of birth control. It should come as no surprise to the reader that private health insurance plans had prolonged their unwillingness to provide this type of pharmaceutical equity for women under the probably guise that "abstinence" would accomplish the same thing, while simultaneously exalting Viagra, which private health plans willingly covered. As long as these types of antiquated Paleolithic blocks exist (primarily a male phenomena) against female equality, it will take state and federal legislation to create a sense of fairness and equal status for women.

*Oliver Thornton
Eugene*

KEEP HOLY COW

One of the best things UO has going for it as far as social responsibility and sustainability is Holy Cow Café — the very thing a few administrators at UO's student union decided behind closed doors to replace with the franchise Laughing Planet. They didn't seem to seriously take into consideration the hundreds of signatures on a petition showing support for Holy Cow. And now they have a lot of people at UO upset and shocked that our only vegetarian restaurant on campus is being yanked out despite its popularity and cutting-edge sustainability practices. I wonder how many people in the administration who were in charge of deciding on the fate of UO's vegetarian/vegan restaurant were actually vegetarian or vegan? Perhaps if they were, they would not replace a vegetarian restaurant with one that serves flesh. Where can the growing number of ethical vegetarians get a meal on campus without supporting a business that also sells flesh? I only hope that the administration is now willing to listen to the will of most of the campus consumers and change their decision in order to keep Holy Cow — a local and beloved campus icon.

*Carrie Packwood Freeman
Eugene*

COW CAFÉ SUSTAINABLE

I would like to give my support to Holy Cow Café. Holy Cow buys direct from Willamette Valley organic farmers and Organic Growers Company. When I moved to the Valley to work on an organic farm, I discovered a strong bond between restaurants and local producers, with Holy Cow leading in that connection. Few restaurants on the planet serve over 90 percent organic foods like the Holy Cow. Organic foods are grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, human waste or sewage sludge — testaments that restaurants serving conventionally grown crops cannot guarantee, especially when few imported foods are quality tested by the FDA. Owners Kathee and Anton have designed a fresh space, not to mention an atmosphere that delights in promoting issues in social justice, community and good stewardship. Holy Cow owners and staff do a commendable job of accounting for waste, from composting food scraps to recycling veggie oil into biofuel, recycling and donating extra foods to nonprofits and the Mission.

For 10 years they have continued to build customers, build family in a dedicated staff and offer lessons for all on how to manage a sustainable business. This year the café was given a sustainable business award while Kathee and Anton were recognized



DESIGNMATTERS

BY JERRY DIETHELM



DIVA and the Downtown

Eugene needs to come to its senses

Something new happened downtown the other night (Jan. 10) at DIVA. The subject of the forum — downtown — wasn't new, but the outlook was. It was as though the train going in the wrong direction had finally left the station, and we were all left standing on a higher platform rediscovering the basic principles of a better way. I heard no one express disappointment that they were not going to Kemper City. That new platform was being built on art and a triple bottom line sustainability.

Robert Oshatz, an architect from Portland, said, "Everyone wants to live where artists want to live." He said that we needed to strive to make our downtown beautiful and better connect it to the university and the river. Once we made it special, people with money could play their usual role of driving the artists out so that they could work their magic elsewhere. Eugene needed to profoundly come to its senses.

Brad Malsin of Beam Development talked about incorporating DIVA in the still unfolding Centre Court-Aster's Hole-Washburn Restoration project. He spoke movingly about the qualities of places he most admired and the kind of historically sensitive work his firm tried to do to a room full of affirmatively nodding heads.

I thought again of local architect-artist Scott Wylie's advice and his brilliant Carlos Scarpa examples (Viewpoint, 9/13/07) that showed how artfully it was possible to blend historic fragments and new construction. We didn't necessarily have to fully restore older, too heavily remodeled buildings, such as the Taco Time Building on Broadway and Willamette, in order to preserve our downtown history. Building a "temporal collage" in our downtown could also mean enfolding just the right architectural remnants and/or recontextualizing significant historic shards within the architecture of our own time.

Don Genasci, a professor of architecture who teaches at the UO's Portland Center, spoke about the essential, eternal civic role of public open space in the life of downtowns. It was more than just building wide sidewalks or Disney-inspired formulaic storefronts. His class, like several others before him, had explored the designing of an urban open space across from the Eugene Public Library, a popular consensus to emerge from the last election.

Now it remains to be seen if we will apply some of that thinking to the next round of planning and design for the area. It would seem civically and profoundly retarded to put out a new RFP for the Sears property that didn't include a conceptual plan, showing our community's strong preference for honoring the library by having a new "whatever" (housing, offices, mix of uses) clustered around a library park or square

next door. A clear civic commitment here will make development of that hole in the downtown all that much more attractive — and more whole.

Mayor Kitty Piercy, no stranger to the arts and the emerging art of sustainability, told the evening's standing-room-only crowd that she hoped that we could remember how important it was to listen to each other's stories as we began to build our new story for downtown. A vibrant city grew out of a dynamic conversation of many views and voices, she said. Downtown development has certainly proved to be great theater.

Also discussed briefly was the usual chicken and egg economics of a downtown trolley. You've heard it before: There is no present adequate demand for such a service, so we can't afford to build it. And if we built it, they might not come. Alan Pittman wrote a good article on trolleys (1/10) that imported useful knowledge and experience from comparable size communities who have traveled this path.

But talking about trolleys is to settle too quickly on a solution before we are clear about the problem or need that calls such solutions into mind. I see that need as making Willamette Street into the great street called for in our Downtown Plan. I see a central dimension of that greatness as being the enhancement of Willamette's role as a service corridor, linking and moving a growing density of downtown residents up and down the corridor to the things they want and need.

Building up our principal north-south corridor would honor the pioneering investment of the founders of the Tate and help call into being: a Dotson Building, a Pellitier Towers, a mixed-use and multistory Newman's, a Chamber Apartments and a Euphoria Place, and it would stimulate development throughout midtown and South Willamette. One of the reasons the trolley solution keeps coming up is that it could slip easily between the present Hult and Hilton squeeze.

And I'd connect that same service corridor down 5th Avenue to the Market with its proposed new hotel and nearby riverfront, shift our east-west great street emphasis from 8th to 5th (because 5th leads directly into the EWEB property and the Courthouse riverfront) and give West Broadway some time to incubate and tango to its own tune.

Yes, there is always a risk — no chickens need apply — to public development as well as private. Perhaps it's time to turn the tables and begin asking for large subsidies ourselves?

But it was a good evening. And, at DIVA, it became obvious once again that the central purpose of an economy was to enable art, that of wine to enhance civic gatherings — and vice versa.

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