

**UO'S ANGRY MOB**

A mob formed at UO's Mac Court last night (11/30) — an angry mob of faculty, staff and students ready to confront the demonized OUS Chancellor Pernsteiner and board member Lynda Ciufetti. It was called a UO Faculty Senate meeting, but its tenor was that of a mob.

As I sat, daring with a handful scattered around the arena applauding the demonized, I was harassed by a person sitting nearby. To be demonized for applauding — that is mob-inspired intimidation.

A line formed for audience comments. Here are the questions I would have asked:

How many of you support the UO becoming a more corporate, a more private university — as would ultimately happen under the new partnership plan? How many realize that we are showing the state our back side — acting as if because of Phil Knight and other corporate donors, we can go it alone?

How many classified staff realize that if we lose the connection to OUS, we will stand alone against this mob to bargain for

our fair wages and benefits? How many realize that going it alone makes each OUS university easy pickings for corporate scavengers to gain control of Oregon higher education?

How many of you support taxing those corporations and wealthy individuals so we can fairly fund all OUS universities, rather than let them control us by throwing their money around? How many faculty canceled office hours or appointments with students to be here today? And aren't the students the reason we're all working at this university?

*Hope Marston  
Eugene*

**4J'S GOOD CATCH**

The *EW* interview with Shelly Berman (cover story, 12/1) demonstrates what a "good catch" 4J made in a new superintendent. Shelly's expressed views are in accord with progressive educational leaders in this country.

This is especially the case with respect to the way to approach evaluation to

encourage positive professional growth. Shelly has a long tradition of excellence in fostering this approach. The professional growth evaluation system he developed for his district in Massachusetts became the model for that state. Shelly also has the same approach to student assessment — use of assessment to encourage and support student achievement.

It is nice to know that Shelly has the school choice issue on his "to do" list of issues to address. I have begun to gather this year's data. Predictably, the disparate impact of choice has continued — despite a decade of attention to 4J's two-tiered system of inequitable schools.

For example, only 15 percent of Charlemagne's students are on free and reduced lunch, compared to nearby Edgewood, from which it pulls 88 students, which has 28 percent of its students on free and reduced lunch. Family pulls 77 students from Chavez and River Road. Only 9 percent of Family's students are disadvantaged racial minorities (American Indian, black or Hispanic) compared to

34.5 percent at Chavez and 44 percent at River Road. Corridor pulls 90 students from Howard. Only 11.7 percent of Corridor's students are disadvantaged racial minorities, compared to 27 percent at Howard. All of the alternative schools have far fewer students than the board has determined is the minimum size for an elementary school.

Perhaps under Shelly's leadership, 4J can finally become a district that ensures high quality equitable education for all students, not "exclusive schools" for the more advantaged.

*Nancy Willard  
Eugene*

**WE'RE NOT TO BLAME**

Judging by the appearance of identical letters in *The Register-Guard* (11/22) and *EW* (12/1), Pete Mandrapa is really trying to convince a lot of people that the group Citizens for Jobs and Schools is somehow responsible for the dire situation in our public schools. What Mandrapa doesn't understand is that this group had very

**que pasa** BY JUAN CARLOS VALLE

**Paving the Future**

Creating a *common* community

**C**ommunity is what you make of it. I would have a tendency to agree, but how is community defined?

I remember when I became a U.S. citizen several years ago, up to that point, I considered and described community as my *barrio*, but it was one that did not look like Lane County. In retrospect, I was hanging on to an image of a community that in the end had evolved, changed and ultimately left me behind as I was transitioning and adjusting to my new reality. I belong here, my family is here, my interests are here, my whole life, connections, desire to improve my life and my investment for many outcomes is here. At the same time, my heart and soul will always have the extra richness of my roots and family's ancestry. So how do we define and who is the community? Where is the community?

A sense of belonging to a place was not in my vocabulary for many years; I could only focus on the tasks at hand, on surviving the day, on ensuring my family's well-being. Being a part of a community, invest in it, take interest in it, even learning about it was simply not an everyday occurrence for me. I am talking about a type of investment or lack of, in my case, in the years I was a migrant worker and about the investment and welcoming systems that would make any migrant or immigrant want to call Lane County home.

**Community is not a physical place.** In defining community in terms of a generic description, it might include interactions, values, and the way its residents behave as to meet certain expectations between members of like groups or neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods purposely chose their own identity, yet they are also a part of the larger community. Crest Drive with its winding narrow roads and forested hillsides, a country in the city experience, with noticeable feel of season changes; and Whiteaker with its many unique buildings and home of artists' studios, funky bars natural food stores and best coffee and ethnic restaurants, the reborn micro economy in the neighborhood are just two examples of communities defined by physical descriptors. Describing community that way only gets us a general idea of what it is; however, community is not something you can touch.

Community begins when you make it your own, take pride in it, and are even willing to talk about it.

So when you are outside the area and someone asks about your community, about what it is your community believes in, what would you say? Would you initially describe who lives here? Would you have a solid idea of where to start? When I am asked those questions, I start with our children. I would say that our younger generation is our future and our present. In schools, for example, of the total school age population, Latino children compose 16 percent in the Springfield School District, 12 percent in Eugene and 18 percent in Bethel, thus giving people a glimpse of the composition of not only the demographics, but what wonderful opportunities and challenges that lie immediately ahead for our community. Some of the challenges include whether or not the districts have the capacity and appropriately trained personnel to deliver services to help support a community of individuals that contribute to make a vibrant community.

**Defining your community.** Creating a community is to be willing to put your face on a video, share your story with others in hopes of a little encouragement to others, getting involved with entities that make and create a community, such as United Way, Rotary clubs or Centro Latino Americano to name a few. Needless to say, there are communities that are created by common interests. For example an interest of improving our school system, and improving the physical appearance of our streets, homes, businesses and parks. Better yet, what about communities whose interest is the advancement of a cause or a group seeking inclusion and consideration such as the horticulture/gardening community, or communities named neighborhoods that seek attention of city officials such as the Whiteaker or Bethel neighborhoods. No, I do not dare to leave out our Latino community as its complexity, multifaceted, multilingual, multilayer and multicultural communities within our community is in itself enough for us to have a sense of pride and a strong and flexible bond and, of course, a community. In fact, this is about community as a whole.



**We are neighbors, we are community.**

Community is also defined by its worth and the dignity from which residents would relate to each other thus creating a type of virtual community; a common bond. This is better captured by his holiness the Dalai Lama *You can relate to community and its people because you are still a human being, within the human community. You share the bond. And the human bond is enough to give rise to a sense of worth and dignity. That bond can become a source of consolation in the event that you lose everything else.* That is,

once we go beyond that basic descriptors such as language, skin color, culture and beliefs, then we would see many commonalities among us as it relates to the larger community such as our Latino community, Asian, African-American, etc. We are all neighbors and we are all community.

**Taking care of your community.** Creating, defining, and knowing your community starts with our involvement and interest of making it what we want it to be and it all starts with voicing our desires for a community self-fulfill prophecy. One that is willing to say *this is the type of standards we want, this is the type of community values we want for all of us and this is what we will become.*

Whether you are here for a short time, or long-term, I call out to you for action, to get involved, show you care, and show *them* you have something to bring to the table, bring in your piece of stone to pave the future for all of us. Without the piece, the foundation for a strong community is not complete and it is not as strong. Someday, we could all walk on that path called community and all because of your piece that completed it or helped build it. As history repeats itself in how our economy sputters and teach us lessons, one lesson we need to learn once and for all, is what is at stake: The creation, reflection or refinement of a community we all want as the differences and diverse ways of being a community actually make us stronger and with a more defined identity. Ours is NOT a common community.

*Que Pasa is an occasional column submitted by members of Lane County's Latino community. Juan Carlos Valle is a longtime resident of Eugene who serves on numerous boards and commissions dealing with civil rights, human rights and the environment.*