

Mutual Benefit

Campus and community are intertwined

Dear Aiden R. Smith: You asked me for a response to your letter to the editor ["Student Disconnect," 5/31], so here it is. I'm sorry that you feel deeply disconnected from Eugene's government. We're here to serve you and every other member of our community.

While you live here, this is your city and we value you as part of our community. As you know, there are approximately 25,000 students who live, study, work and volunteer here. We benefit every day in terms of our local economy, the many cultural opportunities the UO provides, and from the amazing contributions students make to our community in sharing their skills and talents. I often say that I would never think of talking about Eugene without talking about the UO and I invite those of you who attend the UO to thoroughly participate in our city.

Just a week ago I was on campus reviewing some student proposals for a local indoor/outdoor farmers market. These proposals broaden our thinking and contribute to our local planning efforts. They matter a great deal. Last week at the First Friday Art Walk, student art was on display for our community to enjoy. This past weekend's track and field events filled our community with activity. And, in our Regional Prosperity Plan, the spin-off businesses from student research have a key role in ensuring a more successful future for our community. Your impact is large and important to us.

I'd be the first to admit, there are always town and gown conflicts here as in every university community. We work at this consistently and contribute to the broad discussion in the International Town and Gown Association.

Personally I take every opportunity to recognize and appreciate students for the role they have in community. That's why I'm on campus every month talking to classes and attending events.

Former President Richard Lariviere and I introduced the annual community welcome and asked ASUO presidents to join us in walking door to door to welcome and thank students and to encourage them to be good neighbors and active in their neighborhood associations. As a community we struggle to provide for student housing needs and maintain our beautiful older, close-to-campus neighborhoods. We'd welcome your help with this.

The university has created a Communiversity Assistants program and the city facilitates a neighborhood livability work group, which includes student leaders, and meets once a month to address quality of life and relationship issues near campus. These do include the challenge of how student parties (and after-party behavior) affect the people who live and raise their families around them.

Eugene Police Department has built a comprehensive education campaign to help students avoid being victims of property crimes, especially during school breaks when students are gone. The crime reduction has been substantial.

I think investigation would find that the neighborhood and university spend a great deal of time considering parking issues. It's not easy. There are many needs that must be balanced. To that end the city is doing its utmost to increase options that work, whether that's pedestrian, transit, bike or car.

The city encourages students to participate on city boards and commissions and we take pride in having students or former students currently serving on both the police and planning commissions. If you have concerns/observations, please know that you can contact your city councilor, speak at the community forum part of our council meeting, or speak directly to boards and commissions. We welcome your input and participation.

We've had students come to our City Council meetings to discuss options for skateboarder use of bike paths, and we've had students directly influence city rental policies. We've had students speak out for social, environmental and economic justice and equity. These voices are valuable and their activism an important part of our city.

Finally, we know our economy is tough and we're all working on it. We'd love to have more students stay in this community and that means there must be jobs. UO, LCC, the Chamber of Commerce, Eugene, Springfield, Lane County, Metro Partnership, the Workforce Partnership, the hospitals and schools are all working together to foster entrepreneurship, bring in more investment, offer loans, one-stop online business help, incubator space, training, research and cluster development. Our hope is not only more jobs, but also jobs with good wages and in keeping with our community values.

This is just a small part of the picture. I encourage and invite you to become involved and I wish you well with your studies. Don't hesitate to contact me at Kitty.Piercy@ci.eugene.or.us

Kitty Piercy has been mayor of Eugene since 2005 and served in the Oregon House for three terms in the 1990s.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A LOT OF TURNIPS

A column written by Paul Conte in the May 24 *EW* expressed concern about the Eugene City Council and professional staff in the way they worked with the proposed Capstone student housing project.

Here is some information that may be helpful: The project was first introduced to the Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) Jan. 25. There was a community forum sponsored by DNA and City Club of Eugene March 11 and an open house sponsored by the city March 13. There were numerous meetings with Steve Master and Capstone staff by members of the DNA Steering Committee. Master and Capstone's Conrad Sick were directly involved in discussions with residents of Olive Plaza.

City staff was generous with their time as was Mayor Kitty Piercy and Councilor George Brown. I assume that other members of the public were afforded equal opportunity to give input if they asked for it.

All of this took place between Jan. 25 and May 13 when the council approved the project. I believe that public inclusion was welcomed, heard, and respected; I don't think anyone was shortchanged in the process.

Another issue raised is the profit that Capstone stands to make on this project. In today's economy, 9 percent is certainly a healthy profit. But that's a red herring. Consider this: The city is investing \$8.8 million in tax exemptions. The Capstone project is bringing \$89 million in new money to Eugene in the form of jobs and taxes (people with jobs pay taxes!). That's a lot of turnips. This looks like win-win to me.

The DNA Steering Committee voted 6-1 to support the proposal, with reservations. The City Council voted 6-2 in favor of the project. We share responsibility for ensuring as best we can that the project is successful for everyone and that agreements are kept.

Sure, there are disagreements, but the City Council and staff, along with many community members, have worked hard to

get the best possible deal for Eugene, and I think they've done an admirable job. It's time to turn off the negativity and move forward.

*David Mandelblatt
DNA chairperson*

THREESOME IN EUGENE

It's amazing how often I'm reminded of the joys of calling Eugene my home. This morning was another one of those special times.

With the sun already up, I fling the golf clubs over the shoulder and embarked on the short walk up to Laurelwood Golf Course (the city's only and finest golf course). Arriving well before its 8 am opening, my two companions teed off behind the greenskeepers already atop their mowers. No worries, we'll square away at the pro shop when we turn the corner. What a gem of a view of the south hills and the northeast flank of Spencer Butte hold as we descend the #1 fairway. Despite the quiet we're not alone this morning: The cart paths are dotted with dog walkers, a jogger or two and the robins hunting for wayward worms.

Now mind you this is *not* the Laurelweed of old. Steady course improvements over the years have enhanced the drainage features of the old dairy bottomlands, and absent are the fairway white daisies camouflaging your golf ball. Not lost however, is the dawn charm of this precious park valley with its majestic tall firs, rolling hills and the huge statuesque oak (once a twin) midway through hole #7.

Hackers we are, but skilled enough to know what a treasure we have nestled in our own backyard. Or perhaps it was the two pars and a bogey on #9 that helped emphasize this point? Either way, thank you sooooo much, south Eugene.

*Rich Heil
Recently retired*

NO METER, PLEASE

Dear EWEB: Please don't put a smart meter on my house. I already pay for the electricity with my money. Do I have to pay with my health, too?

When I first heard about EWEB's plan