

It is my opinion that dog owners are about the most inconsiderate people on earth. Do they feel because they are so special to own a dog that others should clean up after them, like spoiled-brat teenagers? Grow up and be responsible!

Thomas Kopriva
Eugene

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

In his Jan. 9 analysis “Incompatible Infill,” Eben Fodor argues against Eugene allowing small lots and alley-access homes. He asserts these changes will automatically cause developers to ruin neighborhoods.

Not necessarily. Look at examples in older downtown neighborhoods. Some years ago, I owned the house at 109 W. 17th Ave. The lot is 40 by 67, a total of 2,680 sq. ft. There is a two-story home of about 1,000 sq. ft. on the lot. It looks a

little sad now. The last owner died and the house fell into foreclosure, but that home was owner-occupied and well maintained a few years ago. The yard is small but had room for what was once a wonderful garden. Someone clearly loved that house.

Walk the neighborhood around 17th and Olive. Other lots are as small or smaller. One with a tiny house is 40 by 33 for a total lot size of 1,320 sq. ft., much smaller than the new proposed minimum. Still it is a nice neighborhood. Many homes are owner-occupied. Smaller lots and houses allow more people to afford their homes.

Check it out. Walk through the alleys to see hidden-away homes. Look at what works and make standards that allow small homes on small lots. People living in little houses are good neighbors, too. Welcome them.

Nancy Nichols
Deadwood

DEMORALIZING GAMES

The Mapleton School Board is expressing our outrage at the very real problem of vast point disparity in girls’ basketball contests, as evidenced by Regis’ trouncing of Waldport 100-7 on Jan. 3 and Triangle Lake’s pummeling of Mohawk, 109-16 on Jan. 7. This is a national trend affecting both girls’ and boys’ athletics. It must be not only addressed, but resolved. Wherever actions occur that do not uphold basic standards of proper conduct, i.e., good sportsmanship, it is the responsibility of the “adults in the room” to appropriately solve the problem.

John Johnson, communications director for the Michigan High School Athletic Association, states, “The primary purpose of public school sports is to educate kids. That’s what makes us different from colleges and the pros. There is nothing to be learned in these blowout games. No one

should be embarrassed in high school.”

We will no longer remain silent, thereby tacitly endorsing this glaring reality that undermines healthy competition. We remain committed to working with the Oregon Student Activities Association (OSAA) to develop a solution that ensures resolution, acknowledging our mutual responsibilities as advocates for all students. Neither winners nor losers benefit from the results of such poor and demoralizing behavior. We can and must do better.

Michelle Holman
Mapleton School Board Chair
Deadwood

HORRIBLE AGREEMENTS

Regarding Jerry Ritter’s letter of Dec. 26: If you are concerned about there not being enough “illegals” in the U.S. you can blame the Obama administration. It deported more people than all previous

VIEWPOINT BY JOYCE BERMAN

Why Civic Matters

A PLACE WHERE COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINED

Recently, a new transplant to Eugene asked me why people are so emotional about Civic Stadium. What follows is my note to my new friend, Austin.

I don’t know when you moved to Eugene but my guess is that it was after Civic Stadium was wrapped in mothballs and allowed to decay.

It wasn’t that long ago that the Eugene Emeralds played in Civic Stadium every summer, that South Eugene High School’s baseball team trained and could feel like the big boys there and that other important events (I can think of the tribute after 9/11) brought people together for recognition or celebration.

But unlike Autzen Stadium or Mac Court, Civic Stadium represents, to me, at least, the place where Eugene (not UO) came together to celebrate our own home team, our own community. This was where beautiful summer nights, baseball and families converged to cheer on a home-grown sports team, support local ice cream parlors and restaurants and be amazed by a scoreboard being changed by humans, not computers. The stadium was *ours* — our community’s, not the university’s. It was one of the few places where Eugene felt unified, assembled from every walk of life with a ticket that cost \$5, to thrill over a stolen base or a good catch, without the sports hype and hysteria that has now overtaken our town.

It was a place where our kids could wander around unchaperoned, being kids. So many of the attendees walked to Civic on foot it seemed like our own neighborhood sandlot. It was small enough that we didn’t feel like we were in the Roman Colosseum, but big enough that when the crowd roared, there was some there there.

Every Fourth of July, Civic transformed itself into the place to celebrate our nation’s birthday and our independent spirit. Folks were actually encouraged to hop the fence after the game, bring a blanket and watch the fireworks right out there on the grass, where just minutes before, home plate had been the center of

attention, not the stars and the sky.

I bet you have never sat in Civic’s bleachers on a warm, summer evening, watching the moon rise over the best view of the east hills that money can buy. The view from those stands while you sat and ate popcorn and cheered for your home team with your friends and family — it would take your breath away.

The stadium was a place where the best of Eugene’s community spirit shined — the interest in a level playing field, the importance of substance over superficial, the support for youth, athletics, family and recreation and keeping the finer things in life accessible for everyone, and local.

When Pat Kilkenny came to town and decided that it wasn’t worth the UO’s dime to invest money into fixing up what so many of us loved, but to build a new, sterile, concrete facility, with blaring noise and artificial turf, plopped into the middle of a parking lot that nobody walked to, people felt insulted.

It showed that a rich guy from San Diego could make a questionable decision with little input that could strip away our dear Ems and our community spirit. Our community spirit! For what reason? For keeping UO’s athletic facilities “centralized,” regardless of what our community loved.

That community spirit is embodied in the history of Civic Stadium. The stadium was built and financed during the Great Depression by the townspeople. In the middle of the darkest days of unemployment and poverty, Eugene aspired to raise enough money to construct a place to alleviate all that pain. Those dreams were actually realized by hard work, sweat and determined effort in the midst of a huge crisis — an amazing feat and a testament to Eugene’s grit.

Let’s also not forget that the old-growth timber that undergirds the stadium is irreplaceable, one-of-a-kind, and a hat-tip to the industry that built Eugene. That’s Eugene’s history, that’s its story. When people start stripping away the history, the spirit and the soul of a

community for the sake of money and what some people supposedly call “progress” then yes, some people might get emotional.

I have likened this to Jimmy Stewart’s fight in the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*. The movie’s premise is that the town of Bedford Falls might have been completely ruined if Jimmy Stewart’s character — one person — died. Well, Eugene’s soul may be lost and we might as well start calling Eugene Potterville if our school board can disassemble the work of those incredible souls who came together to create something lasting for our community in the darkest days of the Depression.

4J was handed the Civic property for \$1 as a community trust for the purposes of youth and community recreation. It is a violation of that trust to sell it for a use other than that which it was intended.

If there were no potential for this incredible landmark, I might believe that tearing it down would be reasonable. But the facts tell a different story. There is enormous possibility for Civic to be used as a soccer facility. The Timbers are interested in a minor league team. The Timbers have been wildly successful in Portland, soccer is one of the fastest growing sports, and Eugene’s soccer community has exhibited strong interest. Check out how much money the Timbers have pumped into the local economy of Portland and see if there might not be a reason to believe that this “albatross” could actually be Eugene’s newest sports venue and an economic engine for sports tourism. Coupled with a new YMCA, the property could be a boon for youth, recreation and creative preservation and reuse.

Time, money, sweat, a unified vision for Civic’s future and leadership are what is missing right now. Instead, the 4J School Board is marching forward to “unload” this “surplus property” for a quick buck after already rejecting similar proposals after significant community outcry.

Yes, Austin, I am emotional. I hope you will be too. For the history, the community, the soul and the future of our fair city, I hope many others will get emotional as well.

Joyce Berman has lived in Eugene since 1996 and has been active in public affairs through leadership roles for The Science Factory, Save Civic Stadium, and the successful bond campaign for the Eugene Public Library. She and her family are currently living in Washington, D.C., on a temporary work assignment.