

SPORTS VS. DECENCY

I want to know why the three basketball players are not being prosecuted for rape. I find it unfathomable that their word would be taken over the victim's. Could it be because they are men playing a sport at UO? Just as Josh Huff, UO wide receiver who, despite being clocked at 50 mph down 18th, and having a urine sample that came up positive was acquitted of all charges — and picked up at the jail by a former UO chief of staff.

It looks like sport is more important than the law or human decency. The players think that they can do anything — that any woman's body is theirs for the taking. We are all being given this message.

Why? So the UO can get more federal funding? So they won't be said to be negligent (like taking player Brandon Austin who was suspended by another university and is being investigated for sexual assault)?

Our educational institutions should be the first to combat the insidious mind set that perpetuate the war against women in our society where women are underpaid, objectified, and brutalized on a regular basis. But that's not all. *Eugene Weekly* publishes ads like American Apparels' Valentine "gift" to Eugene, full page, so every man, woman and child could see it — and get the message that this young woman was not a human being. She was a sexual gift, free for the taking.

The Equal Rights Amendment is long overdue. We should all be outraged.

Jean M. Denis
Eugene

BETTER URBAN SPACES

Jerry Diethelm's "Design Matters" column May 15 was the best written comment on the proposed City Hall

and Farmers Market that I have read. I was especially pleased that he proposed opening the street in the northwest corner of the Park Blocks. That would help remind us of our connection to the original layout of the city.

It would seem that the mayor and the majority of the City Council want to continue the policies of piecemeal urban development with little regard to the historic past or to the vision of better public spaces in the future. I think it would be better to make do with current make-shift arrangements than to commit to a second-rate City Hall and parking lots that will be with us well into the future. If the government bodies — city, county, state and federal — do not truly concern themselves with the organization of the urban spaces in downtown Eugene, then who will? Every organization, whether public or private, must consider the context

of its building activity and not simply its economic costs.

And when the city, with a planning staff, ignores both the better physical elements of its history and the future form, texture and physical structure of downtown, Eugene will continue to make "vision" statements not backed by results on the ground.

Alvin Urquhart
Eugene

LOGEVALL'S OMISSION

Fredrik Logevall, author of the Pulitzer-winning study of Vietnam, *Embers of War*, spoke in Eugene May 14 as part of the Wayne Morse Legacy Series. He stressed how six U.S. presidents, beginning with Truman, began our involvement. At length, he enumerated how political considerations played a major part.

Not once, however, did he mention the

DISPATCHES FROM AFGHANISTAN BY KATIE POTTER

A Necessary Strength

KINDNESS AND SUPPORT ARE CRITICAL FOR MILITARY FAMILIES



EDITOR'S NOTE: Jake Klonoski, the usual author of this column, is now back safely from Afghanistan and his wife, Katie Potter, is here offering her perspectives.

If I am honest, I will tell you that for a period of my life *Army Wives* was my favorite TV show. I would make great efforts to be home or wake up at odd hours so that I could watch it on the Armed Forces Network (AFN), a TV station provided to American service members and their families living overseas. AFN also showed wonderfully hokey commercials about how not to stand out in your host country and the important distinctions between general and special powers of attorney for those deploying. AFN was great and entertaining television.

As a newlywed in 2008, living overseas with a

husband deployed to Afghanistan and no friends or family nearby, enjoying those silly commercials and watching *Army Wives* made me feel less alone. Even back in the U.S., experiences and worries that did not always translate well to those untouched by these long conflicts could be isolating.

Fast-forward six years and I am now on active duty myself, having become an Air Force judge advocate general in 2010. My husband, Jake, has returned from his second deployment to Afghanistan. We now have a 2-year-old and I have not watched *Army Wives* in a very long time.

But I will never forget the feeling of fear and sadness I had when Jake first deployed, or the ways that the kindness and support of others — and a little *Army Wives* — helped me through. Military members and military families (which now, it should be acknowledged, under Oregon law includes same-sex couples) are strong, but it is a strength born of necessity. They often draw their strength from friends, family and community who reach out to let them know they are not alone.

Spouses and children, siblings and parents, they all serve and they all endure in their own way. And as recent news reporting highlights (wkly.ws/1r7), sometimes family members should be counted among the casualties of these wars. After tireless advocacy by the National Military Families Association and others, the Pentagon's Defense Suicide Prevention Office proposed ways to track such casualties in March (wkly.ws/f).

Thank you for your support to our family and all families who serve. While Jake, our daughter and I are fortunate to be reunited after this deployment to Afghanistan, we know that many others are not so lucky. We would like to take this opportunity in advance of Memorial Day to recognize and honor those service members and their families who have made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as those carrying wounds from these 13 years of conflict and conflicts past.

This Memorial Day please consider what you can do to help support those who are currently deployed, their families and loved ones, and all people who have been impacted by war. Some of the wonderful organizations

helping military veterans in the Eugene area are the following:

- Eugene Vets Center, 465-6918, for counseling and referral services.
- Oregon Employment Department Veterans Services, 686-7601, press 3 for employment placement and assistance.
- Lane County Veterans Service Office, 682-4191, for expert legal benefit assistance.
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families, St. Vincent de Paul, 743-7166, for housing assistance and family support.
- Yellow Ribbon Family Reintegration, Oregon National Guard, (503) 584-2245, for family support services.

Eugene is a progressive college town where one might not think there are many around who wear a military uniform, or many who have. But you may be surprised at the number of veterans and service members and families in your midst. An unexpected meeting of three Eugeneans in Kabul in March certainly surprised my husband.

If I have learned nothing else from my time as a military spouse and on active duty, it is that you cannot pigeonhole or stereotype military members and their families. We come from all walks of life and, ignoring the guys' haircuts, you might not even be able to pick us out in a crowd.

Especially with more and more deployments coming from the Reserve and National Guard, chances are that we and our families could even be your neighbors. In my experience, military members and their families have little say in their assigned missions, but serve because we love our country and our freedoms and we want to give back. Of course, it is important to recognize that there are many ways to serve and some of the most brave and noble ways do not include wearing a uniform.

You may never know how grateful veterans, military members and their families are for your kindness and support. Stoicism becomes a way of life in a military household. But please know that your efforts to reach out make a difference. Thank you to *Eugene Weekly* for publishing my husband's "Dispatches from Afghanistan," and thank you to everyone who has supported the people of Afghanistan, those who are serving and have served, and their families and loved ones. We salute you.

Katie Potter is the chief of Military Justice at Los Angeles Air Force Base where she also provides legal assistance to military members, their families and retirees. She was one of the first special victim's counsel for the Air Force's pilot program addressing sexual assault that has since been expanded throughout the Department of Defense.