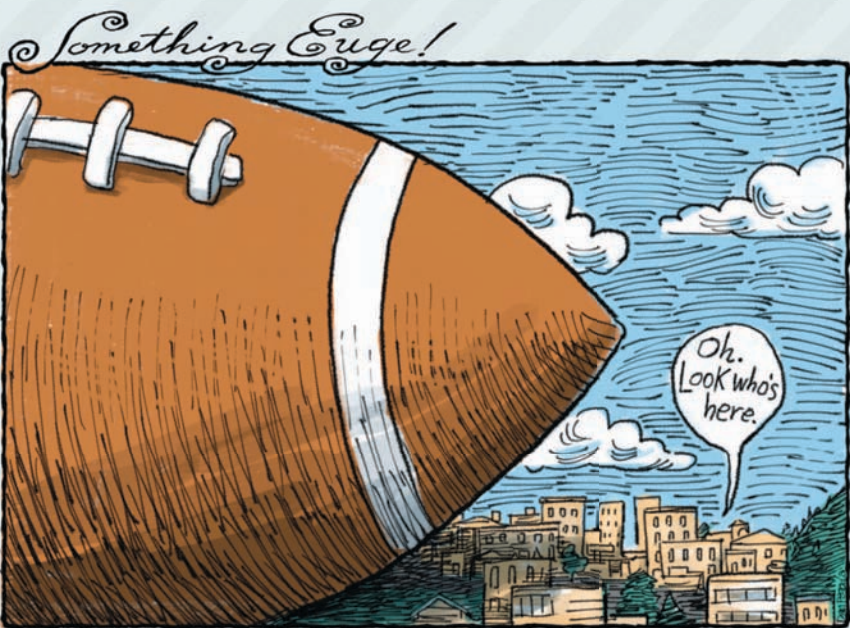


SLANT

• We lamented in this column Aug. 14 that **Eugene City Hall is about to be destroyed** following a split decision by the City Council to abandon the sustainable concept of repairing, rebuilding or repurposing the full city block structure. Rowell Brokaw Architects and city leaders are planning a brief celebration of "Eugene City Hall Past & Future" from 11 am to noon Wednesday, Sept. 3, at the corner of 8th and Pearl. "We will honor the history of the building and look forward to our new City Hall," reads the announcement. Will a wrecking ball be standing by to try to put an end to the growing objections? City Hall was an impressive, award-winning structure before it was purposely allowed to deteriorate. There's a bit of irony in "honoring" the history of this building: Eugene has a shameful track record of bulldozing rather than renovating its architectural landmarks.

One disturbing aspect of this decision to tear down City Hall is that we only have rough estimates of what the new City Hall will cost. No actual bids have been received. If the bids come in high, we could end up with just a big parking lot. The plan also assumes city voters in the future will approve a roughly \$60 million bond measure to expand the ceremonial itty-bitty City Hall to accommodate the city offices now scattered around downtown at a cost of \$1.2 million a year. That's a huge gamble. Finally, we hear through the grapevine that the city has received an offer to buy or lease the entire City Hall block. Let's talk about that before we start ripping up an entire two-level block of reinforced concrete with its 160 underground parking spaces.

• **We've heard some kickback** from our Aug. 14 Slant suggestion that the next president of the UO regularly invite economics professor Bill Harbaugh to lunch. Our sources tell us administrators believe such meetings would be unproductive. Harbaugh is the muckraker who puts up uomatters.com, and he has become a main source for local, state and even national media poking around the UO. His greatest strength is the documents he offers, and administrators in Johnson Hall detest the exposure. So, this public university could open up its actions ("transparency" is the word of the day) under a new president. It could also approach the athletic/academic rift with more courage. If neither happens, lunch with Bill is still a good idea.



• Hey, it's **Labor Day weekend** and some of us will be celebrating unions at the annual Labor Day Picnic (see Biz Beat). But most folks will be enjoying a three-day weekend with little thought to the social and economic achievements of American workers who battled big business and government agencies to give us the 40-hour work week, benefits, living wages and safe and humane working conditions. We owe a lot to organized labor (yay weekends!) and let's not forget that the fight continues today. Well-funded right-wing ideologues are dedicated to throttling the power of working-class people here in the U.S. and around the world. Neo-feudalism persists in 2014.

• Lane County stopped **routine roadside spraying** more than a decade ago, but we hear the conservative group Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS) is lobbying the Lane County Commission to bring back roadside spraying and Commissioner Jay Bozievich is supporting this effort, maybe even leading it? OFS is Oregon's largest lobby group for the chemical, fertilizer and GMO industries. The issue of vegetation management may come before the commissioners Sept. 9.

• The **Napa quake** last weekend did a lot of damage and it was only a 6.0 on the Oh-shit scale. Oregon, of course, is due to experience a much more destructive quake, but is there any way to know when it's about to turn our happy town upside down? Native Americans in the Midwest used to hang bags of rendered bear grease in deer bladders that were scraped thin enough to be nearly transparent. Shapes would appear in the grease indicating coming rain, storms, even earthquakes. Might be something to it. After all, mammals and birds are known to get excited just before seismographs start jumping. So let's add a Mason jar of bear grease to our earthquake preparations. If nothing else, it makes good cakes, or lubricant for those long nights when we huddle together waiting for the power and water to come back on.

EUGENE *City Hall* PAST & FUTURE

Wednesday,
September 3, 2014

11 a.m.-noon

Corner of 8th Avenue
and Pearl Street,
parking lot south
of City Hall

Please join Mayor Kitty Piercy, former mayors, civic and cultural leaders, and community members in celebrating the important role of City Hall in the civic life of Eugene.

We will honor the history of the building and look forward to our new City Hall that will serve as an accessible, welcoming center for the community.



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