

RAPE IS A DISTRACTION?

I continue to be troubled by the way the UO is handling the rape of an 18-year-old freshman by three basketball players. The university keeps telling us they have done nothing wrong. It seems to me that the UO has done everything wrong!

It is just wrong for the UO to file a federal claim characterizing the gang rape of an 18-year-old freshman as “frivolous.” It is wrong to attempt to silence the rape victim by making financial threats against her. It is wrong for the university to provide off-campus housing to sexual predators and then disclaim responsibility because the rape happened off campus. It is wrong to gull the rape victim into using the university counseling center then threaten to use counseling center records against her in court. It is wrong to tamper with potential witnesses by threatening to fire counseling center employees.

This week the university dropped the claim that the gang rape allegation is frivolous. University President Scott Coltrane now says the issue is a “distraction.” As I see it, the university is

engaged in a cynical and calculated effort to silence and intimidate the rape victim. A recent survey found that 80 to 90 percent of campus rapes are never reported. I wonder why.

Jeff M. Phillips
Eugene

FOCUS ON YOUTH

As a former social studies teacher, I found your news brief “Cynical Youth Lack Civics Education” [2-26] to be quite enlightening. It illustrates that our state legislators are quick to blame local youth and educators for low young voter turnout and poor civics knowledge.

I wonder when legislators like Sens. Chris Edwards and Floyd Prozanski will meet and talk with youth on topics youth care about with the same enthusiasm they have for older wealthy constituents. Edward’s use of the word “abysmal” to describe young voter turnout could instead be used to describe the efforts of local legislators to adequately address youth at a level they can respect and understand.

The fact that some social studies

teachers have never been to the state Capitol falls squarely on the teachers themselves. Nothing is stopping them from visiting and scheduling meetings with their state legislators at the Capitol or local offices to discuss topics that are of concern to them.

I find it disturbing that my tax dollars may be used to provide funding for a meeting that pulls teachers from the classrooms where they are needed and yet another exam for which to prepare.

Steve Ference
Eugene

REQUIRED READING

Alex V. Cipolle’s “Setting the World on Fire” feature Feb. 19 not only captured the enthusiasm and love behind the Betty Roberts Portrait Project but she also painted a lovely biographical portrait of the late Oregon Supreme Court Justice that should be required reading for young women contemplating careers in public service.

Martha Anderson
Corvallis

TURN TO SOLAR ENERGY

Regarding Kate Brown and green agendas [News story, 2/26]: It’s the time for solar! Living in Oregon, a state that I consider to be one of the most environmentally conscious states in the U.S., I have been waiting for this change for a long time. Now that we have a new governor, we have the chance to set a very strong tone of environmental progress throughout our state.

One of the best ways that our new governor can lead Oregon to the front of the environmental movement is though leading us into better solar development. In Oregon, we are currently receiving .02 percent of our energy from the sun, and by developing better technology and policy, we can easily grow to an impressive rate. With Kate Brown I have a lot of faith that we can become a leader in solar energy and environmental protection in general.

Caitlin Feely
Eugene

BROWN BIOFUELS

Oregon State Sens. Chris Edwards and Floyd Prozanski have unwittingly voted

VIEWPOINT

BY OTTO POTICHA

Standing Naked

CITY HALL’S MASSIVE FRAMEWORK CAN BE SAVED, BUILT UPON

I hope the community will take the time now, before it is too late, to visit the exposed structural frame of our City Hall. It currently has been reduced to the frame, structure or bones. It is very open, transparent, extravagant and architecturally significant. It is still a strong and valuable base one could build from anew if our city seriously embraced sustainability.

This is the structural base condition that previous studies had suggested a new City Hall could spring from for a next generation of users. This is the framework that, with some modification and new clothes, could be brought sustainably into the new century.

I realize it was apparently too hard for some to imagine the potential until the old and deteriorating skin and walls were peeled back. It was too difficult to envision an uncared for and degraded City Hall being transformed into an energy efficient, modern building. But now that very real possibility stands naked and apparent for all to see.

The citizens committee that considered whether to rebuild from the frame or build a new building supported the rebuild from the structural frame approach, after they came to appreciate its potential and the cost advantages it would provide. But they were overruled by a majority of our decision makers and leaders, intent on having a shiny new building, even though it would mean throwing away a frame easily retrofitted to two to three times the area being replaced and a parking structure that housed more than 100 cars and sacrificing or throwing away \$6 million to \$8 million or more, in order to build a fashionable new box.

It takes very little imagination to see the possibilities of this frame as a significant statement for this community. The original concept is still

evident and simply needs updating for the criteria of the next generation, not difficult and still possible. In a community that mouths “sustainability,” throwing away this beautiful piece is criminal and suggests that there is a very serious community problem.

What has become clear during this experience is that we don’t hire or elect a city manager or decision makers for their imagination, creativity and vision. We do, however, hire and elect them for their fiscal prowess and responsibility. I believe we got neither. To pay for the costs of chasing fashion we close and don’t maintain parks, reduce necessary community services and replace City Hall with only the manager’s offices, the mayor and council members’ offices and a council chamber. Meanwhile, we will continue to rent

spaces for services and staff, scattered throughout the community, spending \$1 million extra rent every year.

My hope is that the voters and those who hire managers add creativity, vision and imagination along with fiscal responsibility to the selection criteria. Without these skills, we will simply be and look like what we have seen elsewhere and a cheaper version reproduced for our city. We are very slow learners. We destroyed our downtown and have spent enormous sums of money to recover a portion of what we had and lost, and now we’re in the process of doing it again. This is not responsible leadership, creativity nor fiscal management, and we need a change.

I urge everyone to go and view the City Hall frame, give it a second look and imagine what we could or still can achieve. Please join me in seeking management and decision makers with a deeper and more profound vision the next time we go to the polls. ■

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