

THE TRUTH ABOUT MUPTE

Too often the line between news reporting and editorial seems to be erased in *Eugene Weekly*. Last week's story "Student Housing Eyesores" (3/8) is an example.

It's fine that the author has an opinion about what is pretty. It's not fine that she doesn't know her facts. The MUPTE program, established in 1978, was not an effort to address affordable housing. Rather, it was a way to implement Senate Bill 100, which had recently created statewide land-use planning.

In order to encourage compact urban growth rather than sprawl, incentives were needed to promote redevelopment — which costs substantially more. In response, the Oregon legislature adopted the program and jurisdictions could choose to use it.

At the time, and since, there are better exemption programs for low-income housing, which provide longer benefits. Eugene has used MUPTE and, over the years, the City Council has changed the rules numerous times to encourage a particular public benefit. For many years it was used to encourage higher quality and greener buildings, for instance — but always to promote compact urban growth.

Additionally, the reporter asserted that two housing projects were cheaply constructed, but she offered no support for that claim.

Richie Weinman
Eugene

Editor's note: The story was a design review, which is opinion.

FIND THE RIVER

The proposed redevelopment of the riverfront area in Eugene and Springfield would reduce the river to simply a view shed unless planning also included access and restoration of our beloved river ("Designing a Waterfront Town," 3/8).

Of particular concern are the man-made riprap debris and wire relics in the river just north of the I-5 bridge. For years this has been an ongoing safety hazard for river users, as well as a visual blight. The Sheriff's Marine Patrol often makes rescues of summer tubers floating down the river.

With the phenomenal growth in paddle sports in our region, we should make better use of the magnificent river-wide whitewater rapids just below the hazards that range from easy to thrilling for river runners. Many other cities have capitalized on their urban rivers to create the kind of recreational venue that we already have.

All we have to do is restore the free running river by removing manufactured hazards that should not be in there. A new nonprofit called Cascade Wave along with local paddle clubs is envisioning such a venue.

As development planning continues on land, it should logically include the river itself.

Mark Murphy
Eugene

LIBRARY ART

Kelly Kenoyer writes ("Life, Library and Happiness," 3/8): "High vaulted ceiling, natural light streaming through ..."

However, her excellent article fails to mention the 2002 commissioned artworks that are found throughout the Eugene Public Library — from James Carpenter's bronzes "Eugene Skinner" and "Leif's Dream," Marvin and Lilli Ann Rosenberg's "Outdoor Children's Play Area," John Rose's two-story "Stained Glass Windows," James Ulrich's "Reading Islands," Robert DeVine's paintings "The Wells," Dennis Keogh's prints "Artifacts of an Event Unknown," to my site-specific exploration "Works: Fragments of the Material Age," which preserves 50 obsolete library paper cards.

The Eugene library begins the new millennium dominated by post-industrial computer tools, such as the online-card catalog. Computerized library catalogs began replacing the paper-and-wood-drawer variety in the early '80s, and few libraries still rely on the pre-digital paper card version.

I invited 50 Eugene citizens (12 to 80 years old) to select a memorable fiction or nonfiction book. Each participant selected a book quote and wrote a comment, which appear on 50 Plexiglass book-sized wall placards, each 9 inches by 7 inches. Each placard includes an obsolete paper index

card from the libraries original paper card catalog.

Infused with both nostalgia and reverence, "Works: Fragments of the Material Age" is a quiet, potent act of mourning — it laments not just the passing of the card catalog, but the spirit and sense of our won history that vanished with it, as we forgo slower, more scenic routes, the green valleys, for the sterile speed of cyberspace.

Mike E. Walsh
Eugene

KNIGHTS ERRANT

The UO's plans for the Knight Campus expansion are currently under review. As a current graduate student in the natural sciences, I am concerned about the ecological consequences of the current proposal to install 5.5 acres of artificial turf athletic fields only 200-300 ft. from the Willamette River.

Artificial turf fields are commonly composed of silicon sand and "crumb rubber" sourced from recycled tires. The rubber and plastic components of these fields also harbor a host of chemicals that are known to endanger human health and the environment. The potential negative ecological ramifications of this decision are numerous.

Of primary concern is that artificial turf fields display a "heat island" effect, where-

VIEWPOINT BY BOB WARREN

My Favorite Place

WHAT MAKES EUGENE HOME

What's your favorite place? Sounds like a simple question, but it's not. It was the first day of class in University of Oregon Professor Shaul Cohen's Geography 142 last fall, and he asked that question. This was a year after I took his class the first time, and a year after an election that empowered white supremacists, militias, neo-Nazis and the religious right.

It's hard to be positive. It's hard to see the glass as half-full. But I found a way to brighten up my outlook, to at least contemplate that things might not be as bad as they seem. And I found it here, in Eugene, at the UO.

I took the class again because it's the only class that Cohen was teaching. I wanted to get his unique perspective again. Like so many of his colleagues, he does a wonderful job of meshing current and world events with the course curriculum. And he helps his students think about bigger questions. Some seem pretty simple on their face, such as, "What is your favorite place?"

One of my true joys of being retired is the privilege of auditing classes at the UO. I get to attend classes in whatever field interests me at the moment. I get to sit in on lectures from world-class experts in their fields, every week. And I get to do it with undergrads and graduate students pursuing their futures.

As a direct result of attending classes, I got to visit the UO's rimrock rockshelter dig in eastern Oregon, where students are uncovering some of the oldest evidence of humans in North America. I did a field trip to the Klamath River to follow up on class discussions in Pat McDowell's watershed policy class. Prof. Diane Baxter's cultural anthropology class totally changed my outlook on immigration while I learned where my jeans were made and who made them.

There is a constant refrain among some in our community, complaining about UO students. I am not in that club. What I have experienced firsthand is an amazing parade of intelligent, hard working, motivated young people who want to make a difference in the world.

Near the end of a bitter, scary presidential election I saw and experienced the reactions of students. After a law professor's blackface Halloween fiasco, I saw in their eyes what I personally had never experienced in college: fear.

But, what is my favorite place? What first comes to mind, of course, are all of the cool places that I have visited and want to go back to. Places like Yosemite, the giant sequoias in the Sierras or Glacier National Park. Places like Death Valley, Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave Desert. Rivers like the Colorado, the Owyhee or the Snake. Places like Pinnacles National Park and Big Sur, where condors soar.

And places closer to home as well, like the McKenzie River, the Oregon Dunes or the Oregon Coast. These, and many more, are all favorite places for me. But getting it down to one place, one favorite place, well that was going to take more thought.

So I cut class for a couple days and went to another of my nearby favorite places, the Metolius River. It's been one of my go-to places, and a place where I go to think. It's as good a place as any to ponder the question. And, on that lovely river that magically emerges from the ground to flow through old growth ponderosa pine meadows and forest, it dawned on me.

I would soon be returning to my favorite place. It's the place where I spend more time than anywhere else. The place I moved to decades ago by choice. A place with a river running through it. The place where the politics are local, where you say hello to your congressman on the street. Where a small group of concerned citizens organized and stopped a nuclear power plant and created a nuclear free zone. Where citizens put an initiative on the ballot to make city government more accountable.

The place where the coffee has always been good and the bakeries are to die for. A place where you can eat at locally owned restaurants and buy books from a locally owned bookstore. A place where you know who grows your food.

This place charmed me from the first moment I saw it on a sunny Saturday in 1974 as I stepped off the Coast Starlight.

It was love at first sight. The place where I met dozens of what would become lifelong friends. The place where I met Mary, the love of my life. The place where I made a career doing things I liked to do. The place where we raised our son, Chris. The place I come back to by choice, where I always feel welcome, and at peace. My favorite place? It's here.

It's the place I call home. It's Eugene, Oregon.