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Photo by Jeremy Bishop

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FOUNDED JOYFULLY BY ELISABETH LYMAN, LUCIA MCKELVEY, SONJA UNGEMACH, BILL SNYDER AND LOIS WADSWORTH AS WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 1982, EUGENE WEEKLY WAS THEN PUBLISHED AND LOVED BY ANITA AND ART JOHNSON, AND FRED AND GEORGA TAYLOR STARTING IN 1992.

Eugene Weekly is published every Thursday by What's Happening Inc.
Five free copies maximum per person from newsrack.
\$1 per additional copy.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO EUGENE WEEKLY,
1251 LINCOLN ST., EUGENE, OR 97401-3418.
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OPINION

letters

The Wrath of the UO

Bob Keefer’s article (“Art of Politics,” *EW* 7/31) describes a University of Oregon administration that has lost its moral bearings. At the heart of this case is the alleged distress to a highly-paid dean from a four-day undergraduate exhibit that the Dean did not even see. The administration is spending tens of thousands of dollars to conduct an endless investigation addressing the Dean’s concerns. But the administration has shown absolutely no concern for Cassy Steuerwald, the student being hounded by all this. Four hours of interrogations, endless requests for photos, emails, etc., etc. — consider the distress you would have felt as a sophomore student with all of this bearing down on you.

But the UO administration couldn’t care less. By policy, investigations of this sort are supposed to last 30 days. This one is now into its fifth month, with no end in sight. I have been complaining to the administration for months about the distress this is causing Steuerwald, and the response of the administration has been — to blame Steuerwald!

What is happening to the University of Oregon? Steuerwald is a talented, brilliant student attending the UO on an academic excellence scholarship. The administration should be welcoming to students like him; instead, they treat him like a criminal. The administration should be encouraging art-works addressing the difficult political issues of today. Instead, it responds with McCarthy-esque inquisitions to “name the names” of other students upset about Gaza.

In the past, the UO has been a place of robust dialogue and disagreement. It has been the home of principled voices, like Paul Olum, Robert Clark and Jennifer Freyd. Not anymore, when merely mentioning “Gaza,” or “Palestine” or “genocide”

can bring the wrath of the administration down on your head.

Cheyney Ryan
Eugene

Helpful Advice

If you take an art class at University of Oregon (*EW*, 7/31), confine yourself to pictures of happy seagulls, happy mushrooms and happy running shoes — and avoid using the color pink.

Jan Mascall
Eugene

It Was Inevitable

Daniel Aron Kahn’s actions in stabbing two Springfield police officers were tragic and inexcusable, but understanding the why behind this incident is critical. Mental illness, as described by his father in a recent *Oregonian* article, played a significant role in this tragedy that ended up costing Kahn his life July 31.

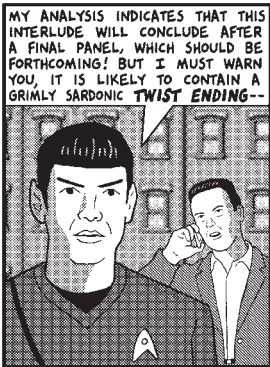
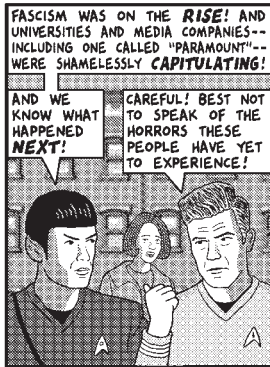
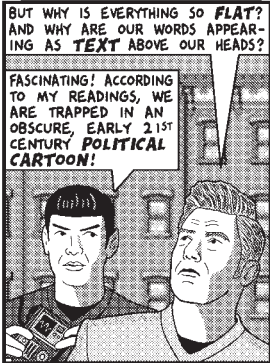
According to his father, Kahn suffered from severe mental health conditions, including a disorder that caused him to reject the very existence of his illness. This is a devastating Catch 22: part of his condition was an inability to recognize that he needed help. This is not an excuse for his actions but a stark illustration of a broader systemic failure. Like millions of Americans living in poverty, Kahn faced a health care system that is often inaccessible, underfunded and ill-equipped to address complex mental health issues.

For those without financial resources, navigating mental health treatment is a daunting challenge, made even harder when the illness itself convinces the individual they don’t need care. Add to this the stigma surrounding mental health and the lack of proactive intervention programs, and it’s clear why tragedies like this can occur.

This incident underscores the urgent need for reform in how we address mental health, particularly for the most vulnerable. A system that leaves people like Kahn untreated and unsupported doesn’t just fail the individual, it endangers communities and puts law enforcement in impossible situations. We need better access to

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BY TOM TOMORROW



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