



greg wasson

## a quorum of one

As I left Friday's House session, I felt like a sixth grader who'd been sent to the principal for talking back. Five members of the lower body had risen to publicly condemn the column I wrote on marijuana last week.

Ostensibly, the representatives were upset with the use of a barnyard reference to what your parents did nine months before you were born. The moral indignation that filled the chamber was pervasive. It was also, I suspect, contrived.

If any of the speakers were sincerely offended by my vulgarities, I apologize, because that was not my intent. But I'm afraid "thou doth protest too much."

Capitol conversations, in fact some I've had with the very representatives who jumped on me, usually contain language I wouldn't use around my grandmother. For someone who includes the words in their vocabulary to so feverently castigate me when I write them reeks of hypocrisy and contradiction.

However, the experience did provide a reason to pull my writing out of the gutter: the shameful word allowed opponents to shift the focus from unjustified state control of pot to me and my style.

Perhaps, Rep. Grattan Kerans, himself a former Emerald editor, was right when he said the battle of what you can print isn't worth fighting (and it's not one I'm interested in taking on). Giving detractors opportunity to divert the argument to other, and meaningless, discussions is too high a price to pay for writing like you talk.

So, like our sixth grader, I'll modify my behavior; not because I'm convinced that they're right; but because it'll make it easier to get along.

Finally, the debater in me forces a response to two points made in the House Friday.

First, Rep. Max Rijken, the ring-leader of the verbal circus, siezed on my writing and drew an analogy that looks strong at first blush, but collapses upon closer scrutinization.

In the article, I talked of legislators exercising self-control and not attempting to regulate a lifestyle simply because they disagree with it. In his discourse, Rijken suggested that I also show some self-constraint and concern myself with the impact of my writings.

My reply would be that decisions Rijken helps make about who gets hassled by the police far outdistance the importance of whether my pieces are offensive.

Second, the hypocrisy mentioned above reached its extreme in Rep. Ted Bugas. Bugas, an attorney, prefaced his remarks by pointing out that he was an expert on the First Amendment. Allowing that I was protected to write all the filth I wanted to, he made it clear he no longer wanted anything to do with me.

*Translation:* The First Amendment is one of the things that makes this country great, but try to shield yourself with any of its protections and I'll dump on you.

yours

### Jackson Browne

As a supporter of Pacific Alliance and a Jackson Browne fan, I feel I must respond to Darrel Plant's belittlement of Browne and of today's benefit concert (Feb. 16 Emerald). Mr. Plant is rather misinformed about Browne's work as a songwriter as well as his role in the anti-nuclear movement.

I don't believe that anyone regards Jackson Browne as "an expert and world authority on nuclear power plants." He is simply a rock and roll band man with a rare concern for life and the future of our planet. When he performs in a benefit concert, he is doing his job for no pay — the profits will be used to support organizations that are taking action to keep the world intact for the next generation.

Mr. Plant pleads for "some social significance" in Browne's music. I refer him to "Rock Me on the Water," "For Everyman and "The Fuse" for starters. Mr. Plant's criticism is based on his reference to "Cocaine" — a song that Jackson Browne did not write and only sings for a laugh, not as an anthem. Anyone who is committed to the anti-nuclear crusade knows Jackson's anthem:

"Some of them were angry at the way the Earth was abused,

By the men who'd learned  
How to forge Her beauty into power  
And they struggled to protect Her from them  
Only to be confused  
By the magnitude of Her fury in the final hour . . .

Let the music keep our spirits high  
Let the buildings keep our children dry  
Let Creation reveal Its secrets and by and by  
When the light that's lost within us reaches the sky."

"Before the Deluge": Jackson Browne  
I wish Darrel Plant much joy with his "good novel" tonight. I'll be at the Pit having a great time for a good cause.

Dale Blanchard  
Senior, Journalism

### Brainy teams

I have news for Doug Butler ("Brainy teams," Tuesday):

The present College Bowl academic competition is a lineal descendent of the College Bowl academic competition is a lineal descendent of the College Bowl television program of the '50s and '60s. Hi-Q, the program on Portland's Channel

8 for some years in the late '60s and '70s, was a high-school version of the old College Bowl. It may have carried on the tradition, but can hardly be called original.

Michael Stamm  
Graduate, English

### Reasoning flawed

Re: Ms. Skinner's defense of abortion. The failures of her reasoning (I use the term loosely) are evident. First, there are some similarities between appendixes and unborn children (fetuses); there is, however, at least one important difference: all of us were fetuses; none of us were appendixes. Second, if she will use the unborn's dependence as a rationale for the right to extinguish its life, will she not be willing to use the same reason to justify infanticide and euthanasia? (Those who consider this a fatuous question should consider that the incidence of both has increased sharply in the last few years.)

Finally, although she doesn't make herself completely clear, she appears to believe that abortion is a religious issue. She is correct if she means that most of those who consider themselves religious are opposed to abortion. In another

sense, however, abortion is no more a religious issue than income tax fraud or rape. If any of these were just religious issues, only those strongly religious would oppose them. That is obviously not the case.

Mark Albrecht  
Law student

### From neck down

At the Oregon vs. Oregon State men's basketball game here last week, a group of students stood at courtside waving tortillas in the direction of the court. That's right, they were waving *tortillas*. And they were so earnest and proud on themselves that there was even a large sign hung from the stands explaining why they were waving the tortillas. Their reason? One of the referees was a Mexican-American.

Unless it's an affection for tortillas that they find offensive, their mocking behavior seems to indicate they feel there is something wrong with being Mexican-American. I suggest to those students that there is, instead, something wrong with ethnocentrism and bigotry. It is sad to see human beings functioning only from the neck down.

Russ Winick  
Law student

### Skewer reporter

Your reporter Phil Bernstein should be skewered. Slow Train may be loud. They may be a little crude sometimes and their music may not be breaking any new ground, but what they do, they do well; they make people dance. The last work Phil can use to describe them (and be at all justified) is "bland."

He's nuts.

Staci Wertz  
Geology

### letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters containing fair comment on ideas and topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be typewritten and no longer than 250 words.

Letters must be signed, the author's field of study or faculty status noted and must include address and phone number for verification.

