

# opinion

## Decaying buildings in need of dentistry

Universities are like teeth; if they go too long without care or maintenance they begin to decay. And once they begin to deteriorate, repairs or replacements are like most dental bills — unaffordable.

Recently, the State Board of Higher Education woke up with a pain in its palate, and placed physical renovation near the top of its multi-million dollar capital construction priority list. This puts the importance of new paint right up there with new computers.

It was a smart move by the board, applauded loudest by workers at our own physical plant no doubt. For too long these maintenance workers have been rendered nearly helpless by steady incursions into their operating and supply budget.

When the Emerald performed a check-up on the University's physical health last year, the results were scary: Window sills were rotting because the state system wouldn't spring for new paint; floors in Gerlinger hall were in danger of collapsing (the University's response was to prohibit jumping in P.E. classes, because it couldn't afford to replace the floor); and the University's green lawns were still brown and patchy from a dry summer and an even drier watering budget.

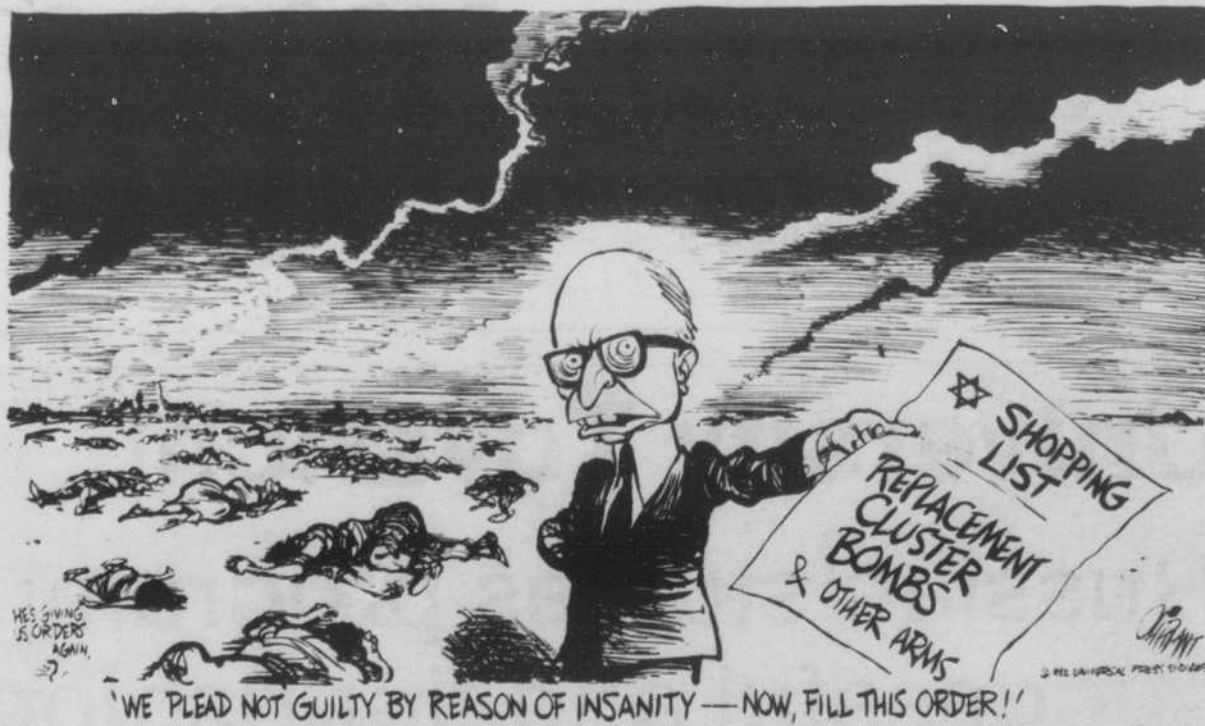
University vice president Ray Hawk voiced the problem succinctly. "When push comes to shove, the presidents would always cut the physical plant."

Now the state board is realizing that consistently shoving money away from the repairs budget in times of monetary crisis tends to backfire. Replacing rotten window sills in an entire building costs a lot more than a fresh coat of paint every year.

The state board's realization is simultaneous with a national awareness that the country is wearing out and we're not spending enough money to repair the damage. Overshadowing that is the simple but hair-raising fact that we don't have the money to replace what crumbles.

The results are discouraging and sometimes tragic. Parks grow into weed fields, lives are lost and businesses destroyed when a neglected dam collapses.

The Oregon Legislature should approve the \$6 million that the state board has requested for "rehabilitation, remodeling and renovation" within the state system. It will be money well spent. If the money isn't approved, perhaps we should call the dentist anyway — and send the Legislature the bill.



## letters

### Nepotism

The stories on "Faculty couples" by Joan Nyland in the July 20 edition of the Emerald were interesting and informative. One of Nyland's articles focused on a proposed University policy statement which would prohibit nepotism.

It was reported that this new regulation may be formally adopted by Oct. 1. Its intent is to prohibit "nepotism" in the employment sector at the University. "Nepotism" was defined as "the exercise of preferential selection practices based upon family relationships rather than upon merit."

Apparently several years of study by the University's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity have been devoted to the formulation of this policy which will emphasize the principle of hiring on the basis of qualifications for the job in question.

This is all highly commendable, of course. But, I note that there will be "exceptions for special cases of employment without a job search."

Now it is certainly reasonable to allow for the occasional consideration of exceptional circumstances which might permit setting aside the anti-nepotism regulation. I would just hope that the exceptions provision does not represent a "Catch-22" mechanism subtly designed to legitimize arbitrary non-compliance with defensible Affirmative Action guidelines pertaining to fair personal search procedures.

The human temptation to set aside rules governing fairplay when it is to our personal advantage to do so is one that we must monitor vigilantly. And un-

iversities — even liberal ones — are by no means immune to the politics of personal convenience.

Ronald J. Rousseve  
Counselor Education

### Enrollment

Your recent article on state system admissions for fall may have been unintentionally confusing to your readers.

First, the article gave the impression that statistics provided by individual institutions regarding admissions changes differ from those displayed in my report.

The reason for the differences reported in your article is simply that my report was based on admissions as of June 11, 1982 and the figures given to you via telephone by the institutions were based on admissions as of a later date.

Second, I was incorrectly quoted as saying my report can be misleading. The report is not misleading. What I said, in fact, was that admissions data can be misleading to someone who does not understand new admissions in the context of total fall enrollment.

While percentage changes in new admissions may appear large, the resulting changes in total enrollment would be considerably smaller.

Third, the comments in the article regarding the Oregon Institute of Technology are incorrect or, at least, incomplete. Official admissions reports from OIT do show a decline in admissions, contrary to what was reported. However, the OIT Admissions Office staff member who spoke with the ODE reporter (the staff member, incidentally, was not the person to

whom the comments were attributed) explained to the reporter that admissions are about the same as last year if you subtract admissions data from both 1981 and 1982 on programs that were eliminated as a result of budgets cuts.

Nevertheless, the official admissions reports from OIT — which do not make any adjustments for program reductions — were entirely consistent with my report.

The essential point of the article was in my view accurate and informative: The economy and uncertainty about financial aid do appear to be among the major factors affecting fall admissions. However, your readers would have been even better served by an article that did not present confusing and conflicting statistics without an adequate explanation of the discrepancies.

Susan F. Weeks  
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Planning Studies  
Oregon State System of  
Higher Education

### Quacks

During the recent uproar over the KWAX budget I have heard several people pronounce the station's call letters "kay-wax."

It seems probable to me that the intended pronunciation in choosing those call letters was "quacks" to go with the duck totem. Certainly that was the most common pronunciation for many years, and remains a more euphonious, appropriate, and appealing way of referring to the station.

Rory Funke  
Library

## letters

### Baffled

As someone who thoroughly enjoyed "Look Homeward Angel," I was a good deal baffled by the Emerald's review. However, I don't want to make this seem like I'm baffled by the Emerald baffling me.

Let's face it, the Emerald is a rag. To simplistically say that it is not believable that Eugene Gant is so thoroughly oppressed by his mother, Eliza, is to understand very little of the symbolic subtleties of the people being portrayed.

Unlike the television pro-

gramming Mr. Siegle is so surely accustomed to, plays do not often hand you the story in a nice neat little package.

If you were unable to feel the dominance of Eliza Gant, were not able to sense her narcissism and her ability to break other human beings, you've got to be numb.

As for dull sets... well, buddy, the theatre is not the same as your Star War's bred preferences obviously call for. But then, it's not as if the Emerald fits my tastes in newspapers.

Dennis Mohatt  
Eugene

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The letters must be limited to 250 words, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned into the Emerald offices, EMU 300.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content. Publication is dependent upon the space available.