

opinion

Nobel prize winner: the value of research

It is particularly gratifying to see that Barbara McClintock, a tireless scientific researcher from Cold Springs Harbor, N.Y., was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize for medicine.

This must also be gratifying to all those equally tireless scientific researchers working with little reward or recognition in college and university laboratories across the country. A few of those dedicated scientific researchers are here at this University.

McClintock won the Nobel Prize for her discovery that genes can move from one spot to another on the chromosomes of a plant and change the future generations of the plants it produces. McClintock discovered these "mobile genetic elements" in the late 1940s.

McClintock was far ahead of the startling discoveries in genetics, including the discovery of the structure of DNA. She was so far ahead that her research on the "mobile genetic elements" was considered heretical.

There's been a lot of comment regarding the awarding of the Nobel Prize to McClintock not so much because of her research, but because of her gender. She is the first woman to win an unshared Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, and only the third woman to win in that category. McClintock is but the third woman to win an unshared Nobel science prize. The company she keeps — Marie Curie won in 1911 and Dorothy Hodgkin won in 1964 for chemistry — is exclusive and distinguished.

While it is significant the Nobel Committee granted the prize to a woman, it is equally significant they awarded the prize to McClintock, who has been a scientific researcher in the strictest sense.

McClintock worked alone and largely on the outside of mainstream scientific research for 30 years. When she announced her findings on "mobile genetic elements" the scientific community was wholly disbelieving. For years she sought to convince the scientific community of the validity of her research, but to no avail. Then in the 1970s experiments with bacteria proved McClintock's "mobile genetic elements" true.

But to McClintock recognition from her peers became less and less important. Recognition didn't matter, the research did. She believed in herself, she believed in her work. Research, of course, expands the horizons of knowledge, though McClintock shows that research possesses its own rewards and benefits.

When McClintock heard she was recipient of the Nobel Prize she said it seemed unfair "to reward a person for having so much pleasure over the years."

This attitude toward research and perseverance is admirable. Not only did McClintock's research offer benefits to science and society, it also offered her satisfaction in her life.

City handgun ban good idea for Eugene

The U.S. Supreme Court recently aided the cause of handgun control in this country when it upheld the Morton Grove, Ill. ordinance prohibiting the possession of handguns inside the town's boundaries.

The Supreme Court also refused to take up complaints that the handgun ban is a violation of the Second Amendment guarantee of a right "to keep and bear arms." According to a lower court, that Constitutional provision was to prevent Congress from interfering with the right of states to form their own militias, not the absolute right to private gun ownership.

Morton Grove enacted its gun-control ordinance in 1981. This was the first such ban on handguns in any city in the country. After the Morton Grove ban similar legislation was passed in San Francisco.

The Supreme Court decision could have far-reaching consequences in the fight to ban handguns. Although the decision doesn't set a precedent it does set forth the perimeters for any local or state government that seeks to adopt limits on the possession of handguns. Now the local or state governments can do so without fear they will be violating citizens' Second Amendment rights.

We hope the decision by the Supreme Court is noticed by the Eugene City Council. Eugene has always been noted for being progressive. Now that the legalities have been mapped out the city could advance a handgun ban for Eugene on the Morton Grove, Ill. model.

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

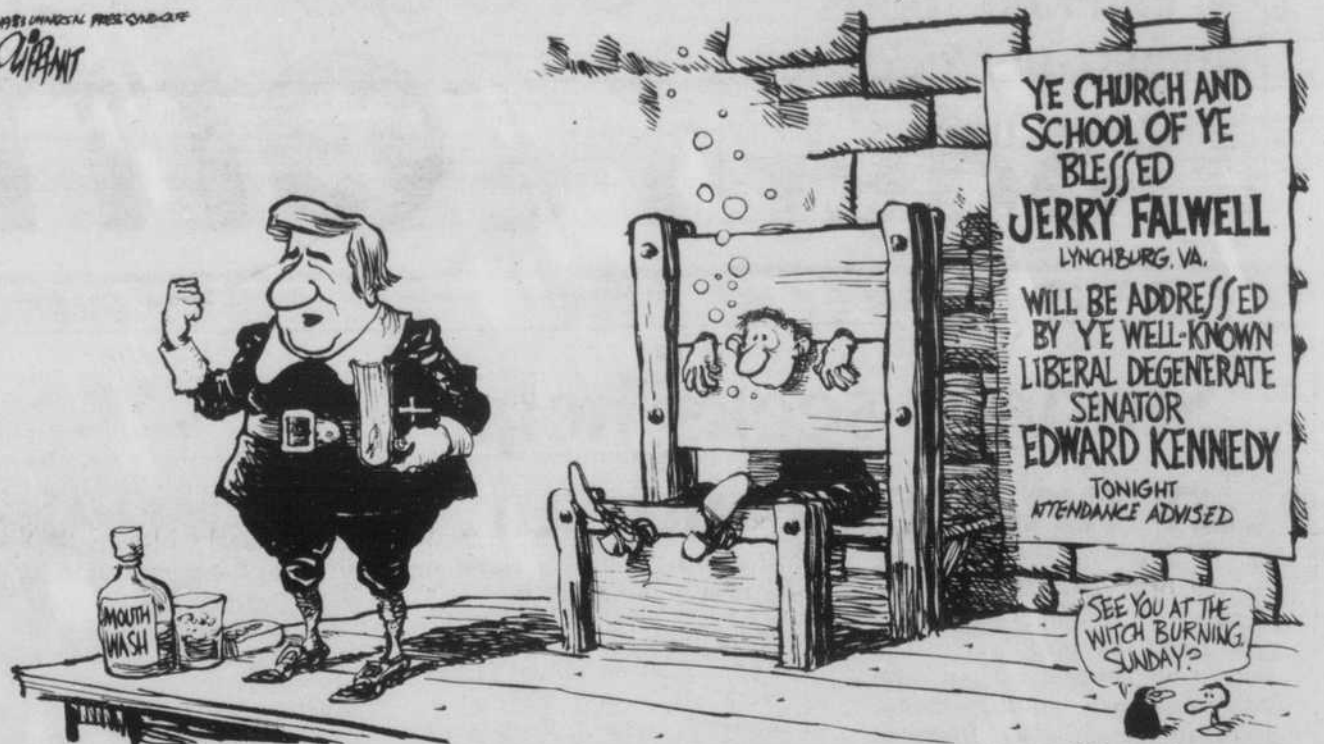
Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

"Comment" is an Emerald opinion feature submitted by members of the University community. "Comment" columns must be limited to 500 words and typed.

Letters to the editor and "Comment" columns should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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OUTRAGE



"BROTHER FINCHLEY HAS VOICED THE OPINION THAT, JUST PERHAPS, SENATOR KENNEDY COULD BE CORRECT ABOUT SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE! ARE THERE ANY OTHERS?"

letters

Task force

On Sept. 20, the Emerald editorial expressed concern about recommendations of the Vagrancy Task Force. Based on those comments, I fear the Emerald did not read our reports, especially our report to the council in June, 1983.

The Emerald stressed two points: it asserted that our report did not define the term "vagrant," and that to control the vagrant population our primary emphasis was on the police. Neither statement is true. To correct the record, I would like to summarize our actual approach to the Emerald's concerns.

First, the task force worked at length to study the vagrant population, with all its diversity. As a result, we not only developed a definition of "vagrant," but also eight pages of "findings of fact," including eight categories of homeless people. By segmenting the vagrant population, we were able to develop recommendations sensitive to the varying needs of the homeless and the many people they affect.

Our recommendations were grouped in two sections, service and enforcement. The enforcement section, contrary to the Emerald's perception, did not emphasize police. Rather, they dealt with mall mediators, park rangers, camping areas (some prohibited, others not), pedestrian circulation on the downtown mall, waiting spaces at blood plasma centers, zoning, code enforcement against landlords of abandoned properties, and crime prevention through community education. Only one out of twelve "enforcement" recommendations dealt with police discretion regarding arrests. The Emerald need not fear, therefore, that new city policies will infringe on the rights

of vagrants or others mistaken for vagrants.

The Vagrancy Task Force viewed all Eugeneans, including the homeless, as part of a community which share responsibility for its members. The task force focused new resources, coordinated others, and provided a balanced policy framework for everyone to live in Eugene with greater peace and comfort.

Mark Lindberg
Eugene city council
assistant professor, PPPM

Excuse

In response to Randy Shepard's denunciation of Eugene's peace activists (Emerald, Oct. 10):

What makes him think all the facts are in — or ever will be — on the Korean airliner incident? True, the massacre of innocent people is always abhorrent. But has he bought into the mass media's representation at face value?

There are those who have found this tragedy a perfect excuse to hate communists, and there are those who question why it really happened.

Bonnie Souza

Welcome back

Welcome back Greeks, we're glad to have your support and involvement on campus — that is what the Oct. 11 column by Frank Shaw was supposed to be saying, right?

I have been going to school here for three years now, and I have been a Greek here for as long, and it never fails that each year it is always the same with the Emerald. Each year, within the first month of school, the Emerald manages to downgrade Greeks, be derogatory toward Greeks, or run anti-Greek articles. Just because the Greeks are the largest

organized body of students on campus is not an open invitation for the Emerald to take cheap shots at them.

It seems that the Emerald is always finding negative things to write about our organizations. We are not the only organizations to tail-gate at Autzen Stadium before the games, although we are the most visible. We are also not the only group to save seats for themselves. Think about it realistically; we often have as many as 50-100 members from each Greek organization attending their games. Obviously we want to sit together so we can show our school spirit as a group, and talk and have a good time with our friends. When you look around you at the games the people making the most noise and trying to get the crowd going a lot of the time are the Greeks.

I resent the fact that you represent us as a loud, raucous, beer-guzzling group. We are not the only ones having a good time at the games. After all, what are the games for...to relax? I find it disheartening that the Emerald continually writes negatively about the Greeks.

During the past year the Greeks have been trying exceedingly hard to change their image to more positively-oriented within the community and on campus. I saw very little coverage on our community service events, cultural events, or community interaction in the Emerald last year or this year. I am disappointed with Shaw, the Emerald, and the editor for not recognizing a group that has the potential and the willingness to help the University.

Please, in the future, give some thought to what you are printing and whether it is worthwhile to criticize a group that does so much for the University.

Mark Makler
junior, public relations

oregon daily emerald

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