

opinion

University committed to removing asbestos

Finally something is being done about the exposed asbestos insulation in the cross beams in Science I.

This summer the University will undertake a complete removal of the hazardous asbestos insulation on Science I at an estimated cost of \$100,000. Some people have balked at the price of the clean up, but weighing the persistent health hazard to students, faculty and anyone who may breathe the airborne asbestos fibers, the cost is reasonable.

University Pres. Paul Olum may have to go to the State Board of Higher Education for the money to pay for the asbestos clean up. We can't imagine the State Board refusing Olum's request. To do so would demonstrate callousness of an unusual sort. We believe the State Board will understand the necessity of the asbestos clean up at the University and show proper concern by funding the project.

It's more than a little ironic that the exposed asbestos is on Science I. Many members of the biology department have been spearheading the campaign to remove the asbestos. Howard Bonnet, biology professor, asked to move his office and laboratory facilities saying asbestos dust settling outside his office window aggravated a respiratory condition. And Walter Dodds, a graduate teaching fellow in biology, collected 250 signatures in April from concerned faculty and students on a petition calling for the removal of the asbestos. Dodd's petition apparently served as the impetus to the University administration for the clean up.

We can't criticize the University administration for the presence of asbestos, nor is it necessary to rap them for the time it has taken to begin a clean up. We commend the administration for realizing that the earlier stopgap measures are inadequate.

The administration has always understood the gravity of the asbestos threat and taken steps to minimize the health risk. This knowledge of the seriousness of the hazard is evidenced by University health officials creating an asbestos awareness and instant repair program two years ago. Physical plant inspectors have not just confined this repair program to Science I. They have been searching other campus buildings for exposed asbestos insulation.

Asbestos was a common insulation ingredient through the 1960s and many buildings on campus may have pipes, beams or ceilings insulated with asbestos. One University health official is reported to have said the asbestos problem at Science I "is just the tip of the iceberg."

But the University appears to be committed to removing the dangerous asbestos from this campus and that is something everyone should favor.

How about a truce in Suite 1 warfare?

It's unfortunate that EMU's Suite 1 resembles a battlefield. A truce is needed, or at least the declaration of the office as a demilitarized zone.

Suite 1 houses a number of important student groups such as OSPIRG, SORD, Intersivity Christian Fellowship and the College Republicans. At times the politics of these various groups mix like gasoline and water.

All of the groups have made a determined effort to co-exist with a modicum of success. Still vandalism has occurred — from all sides.

Office space for student groups in the EMU is limited. The necessity of as many diverse groups getting office space is important. Members of these groups must remember Grandma's basic rule of etiquette: treat others as they themselves wish to be treated.

STOP! MAKE THEM STOP!!



letters

Tragic

Being an outdoor adventure enthusiast, I found the death of Kenneth Kromer a tragic misfortune. Particularly so, since I had met him on one occasion that would have slipped from memory had his death not cemented his face in my mind. Two Saturdays ago, while rockclimbing at Skinner's Butte (a popular practice area a couple of miles northwest of the University), Kromer approached me and politely asked if he could join our climbing party. He explained that he enjoyed rockclimbing, was new to the area and did not have a climbing rope of his own. I told him he was certainly welcome to join us if he did not mind waiting until my roommate and I climbed once more. He patiently waited until his turn, passing the time with friendly conversation about his interests in rafting, photography and sky diving. When his turn came to climb, he asked me to check his harness and tie-in knots, as it had been "a long time" since he last climbed. Kromer then proceeded to attack one of the most difficult "jam cracks" at the area. On one particularly difficult spot, he "peeled off" of the rock four or five times, but kept at the task. He completed the climb, came back down and shared his exuberance with a big smile and lots of thanks. He asked if we would be back the next day so he could join us again. Since we were not planning on returning until the next week, he told us he would have to catch us another time because he would be rafting on

the Owyhee.

Ironically, as I drove away from the columns on that day, I wondered if we would indeed meet again to climb. The next time I saw Kromer was on the front page of the paper which was announcing his death; his smiling face the same as the day at the columns. Keep climbin' buddy.

Mark Wolfe
graduate

Punk???

Frankly, I expected more from the *Emerald* than the name-calling and mud-slinging directed at the *Commentator* in your April 23 editorial. I thought that you would welcome the new kid on the block as a chance to prove your superiority in news coverage, editorials and features, not in name-calling. You have proven successful only in the latter, so far.

Before you brush off the *Commentator* as "the scheme of a group of people who couldn't cut it at the *Emerald*," I suggest you take a good look at your own house. It's so easy to become complacent and smug when you're the only daily newspaper in the area. You see that in many cities ("Guard" forbid I should mention any names). However, that situation has changed. The *Commentator* is now hitting the stands weekly. I think it's worth 27 cents a term to ensure that the *Commentator* continues to come out weekly. The scenario is intriguing. The competition will do you good.

You may deny that the *Commentator* is your competitor, but by taking shots at it in your editorial, writing a letter to the *Commentator* (April 23) to shoot some more, and featuring a lead story on activism (as the *Commentator* did, also on April 23), you implicitly affirm the *Commentator's* importance. Now, will you respond with action or with more cheap shots? There are lots of important stories out there that you have ignored in favor of relatively trivial subjects.

The *Commentator*, on the other hand, is doing a good job of presenting some important topics. It is not afraid of using a variety of writers, and they don't have to be conservatives. I think

the *Commentator* is improving and maturing with each issue. It's editorial style is a raw blend of advocacy and punk journalism. Dammit, that's what this campus needs. You may think its parody issue was "vicious," but I think it was funny. You, of all entities, should know that nothing in government (any government) is sacred to journalists. To quote some unknown sage, "Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke."

Steve Hooks
senior, journalism

Com(men)tator

I refer to the April 23 editorial on the ASUO election ballot measures that mentioned the *Oregon Commentator*. My coffee cup trembled that morning as I read each sentence, the fear growing with every adjective.

Conservative student puppets, who previously were purged from the *Emerald* staff for sanitary reasons, are part of a conservative conspiracy being manipulated by the Eastern establishment. And because they are scurrying around campus unescorted, it looks like some of them will get out of town before the posse arrives.

Suddenly I realized I unwittingly had been converted by the hypnotizing trance of the *Commentator's* gray mass, swaying to and fro to the publication's chants in a manner much like a Dead Head at a Jerry Garcia concert. Now that's frightening.

But my fright turned to anger, anger at your sexist language. The *Commentator* has henchpeople, not "hencnmen." A cursory glance through their staff list reveals that women work there, some in positions of authority.

I thought such sexism died with the 1970's, but it looks like us language purifiers need to do some housecleaning at your citadel of unenlightened thinking.

So thanks for the warning, but, please, no more. I need to get some more sleep before I graduate.

Richard Burr
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oregon daily emerald

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