

Editorial

Release of Sakharov speaks well for USSR

The recent release of Dr. Andrei Sakharov, a leading Soviet physicist and outspoken dissident, from internal exile in the industrial city of Gorky certainly comes as good news, although the Soviets have a long way to go to end their harsh repression of dissident opinions.

However, whatever the motives, it is in itself good to see Sakharov released.

After nearly seven years of often harsh treatment in the closed city, Sakharov was allowed to return to his home in Moscow with his wife, Yelena Bonner, who was sentenced to Gorky in 1984 for anti-Soviet slander. Bonner herself has since been pardoned.

Sakharov gained Soviet acclaim in the 1950s while working on Russia's hydrogen bomb, and is a three-time recipient of the honorary title of Hero of Socialist Labor for his work in nuclear weapons research — although he was stripped of his awards after his exile.

He later gained international recognition while publicly championing human rights for ideological dissidents — for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975 — and criticizing Soviet foreign policy. He was finally sent to Gorky in 1980 for openly condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Sakharov's only offense was to speak his convictions and express his support for human rights.

Sakharov's release follows the emigration of another prominent dissident, Anatoly Shcharansky. These two cases illustrate that the Soviet Union, under Mikhail Gorbachev, has tacitly agreed to the United States' precept that trade issues and arms control hinge on human rights conditions.

While the release of Sakharov, along with a handful of other prominent dissidents, makes a case that the Soviet Union is serious about improving its image and wants to ease criticism of its human rights record, critics cite correctly that the move was mostly a public relations ploy.

Countless others still remain behind prison walls for speaking out against the Soviet system. Emigration from the Soviet Union, after reaching a peak of 51,000 in 1979, has currently slowed to a snail's pace; Jewish groups worldwide estimate that 400,000 of the Soviet Union's 1.7 million Jews wish to leave the country, yet are denied exit.

More poignantly, Sakharov's fellow dissident Anatoly Marchenko recently died in a Soviet prison after a hunger strike.

The switch in Soviet human rights policy has so far only applied to a select, prominent few. Aside from these cases, Soviet handling of dissidents remains repressive. It remains to be seen if other, less visible dissidents will be granted their autonomy.

Despite the doubts about the Soviet Union's sincerity regarding human rights cases, there has been an improvement in Soviet civil liberties. We hope that the trend will continue.

The expansion of Saferide may have been too hasty

During this term, Project Saferide will expand its service to receive riders on the blocked-off section of 13th Avenue from University Street to Kincaid Street.

Although the reason behind the expansion of the route seems admirable, we do not believe enough student input was considered before the decision was made, nor do we feel the decision was correct.

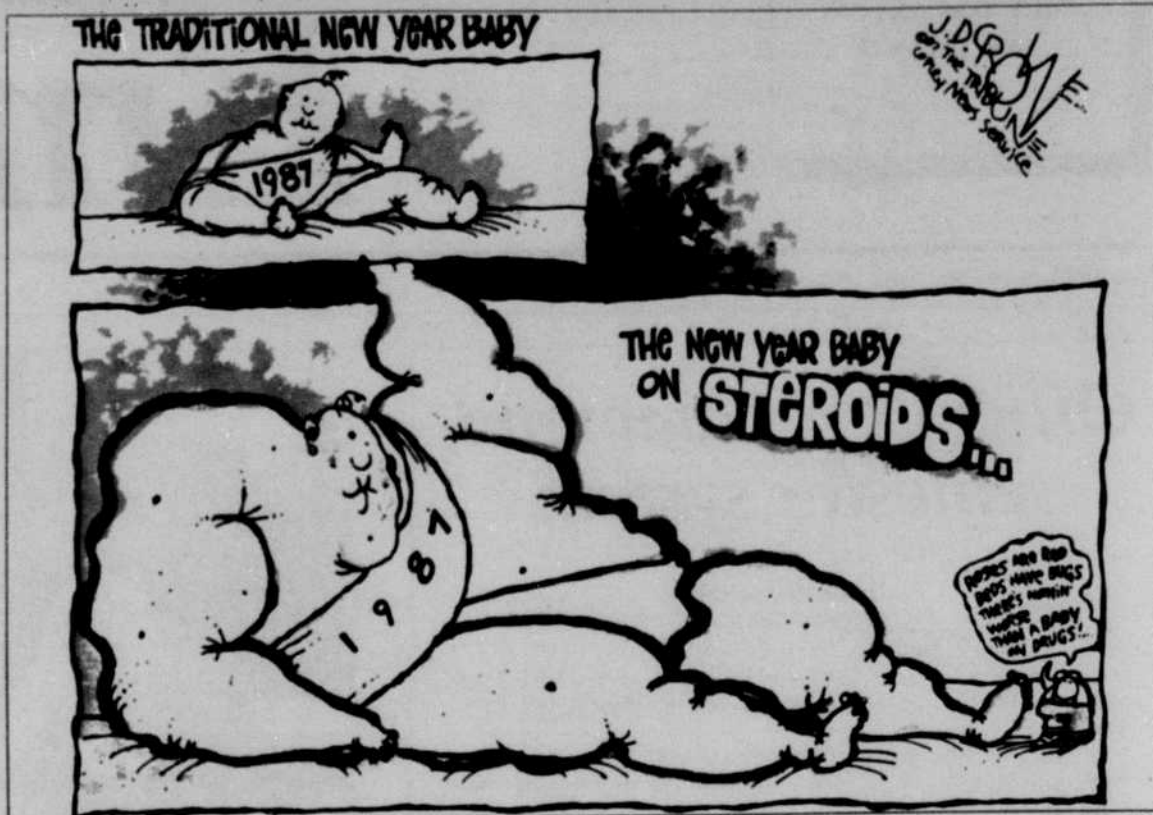
The basis for the decision to open the blocked-off section of 13th Avenue was to increase safety for Saferide riders and to shorten the route the shuttles must take to retrieve them.

The shuttles will operate through the blocked-off section of 13th Avenue only at night, which raises concern about the safety of pedestrians during this time.

All non-emergency vehicle traffic is barred from entering that section of 13th Avenue, including campus security, and we feel that the Saferide vans should not be allowed special privilege — particularly since the distance between Kincaid and University streets is virtually a stone's throw apart. In light of this, we view the expansion of Saferide as more of a potential hazard to pedestrians than as a convenience to its riders.

There is currently enough congestion with pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and Saferide vehicles will only clutter what is designed to be a pedestrian-only thoroughfare.

We feel the policy should be discontinued until a broader review of the plan is established and more student input can be voiced.



Letters

Frustrated

As a junior here at the University, I find myself very frustrated with its arena-style scheduling process. As I sit here with my whopping seven hours of classes, I have to look back at this hellish day and laugh.

This University's present system is a joke.

Let's be honest. We all know that with today's technology — or yesterday's for that matter — computers could easily do what the present system can do with half the hassle.

Oregon State does it, why can't we? I have to admire the administration up there at OSU because they really seem to care for their student's needs. Here, we are nothing more than a social-security number.

I find it disgusting that my fate lies in the last four digits of my social security. I'm not a freshman, and when a class is closed I don't have a million ways to change my schedule.

Presently, I am on two waiting lists; consequently, I am not a full-time student. This means I have to stand in tuition lines twice, or wait and see if I am going to get into my originally-planned classes.

By this time, however, my late fee would be about 30 bucks. Now I have the option to add other classes, but what hap-

pens if I get into the classes I'm waiting for? Enter the \$8 drop fee. No problem.

And this is all beside the fact that these are the reasons one can fall behind so early in a term. Please change it.

Jeff Selis
Junior

Wild place

One of the last great truly wild places on planet earth is under the sword of Damocles of oil exploration.

The 19 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (almost the size of Ohio with no roads, buildings, or permanent residents) in Northern Alaska is on deck behind Prudhoe Bay.

The refuge is home to an almost imponderable abundance of wildlife: polar bears, several packs of wolves, wolverines, musk oxen, grizzly bears, dall sheep, fox, several hundred bird species, and a caribou herd that has a higher population than Lane County.

Far beneath the permafrost, however, lies the possibility of oil and gas reserves, and with only a 19 percent probability of finding any economically recoverable deposits, the Department of the Interior has recommended full leasing of

these suspected reserves.

This land was set aside as a wildlife refuge; to subvert this dictum for the slim possibility of supplying a maximum of four percent of the nation's oil demand is an outrage. Your comments to the Fish and Wildlife Service and your congressmen are needed this week!

Stop by the Survival Center in the EMU basement for more information.

Steven K. Albert
U.S. Fish and Wildlife seasonal volunteer
Graduate, biology

Dead dog

When will Michael Cross stop beating that poor dead dog?

Caitlin Hecsh
PPPM

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 or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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