

Barometer earns our support for content

We've all heard the term "hot off the presses," but in the case of Oregon State University's student newspaper, the Daily Barometer, it's a matter of someone being hot about the press — hot under the collar.

Bradley Slaven, one of OSU's student senators, has sponsored a resolution (now pending before the student senate) asking, among other things, that student journalists promise to publish a weekly conservative column before being considered for appointment as the Barometer's editor.

Moreover, Slaven claims the Barometer should include this weekly conservative column in order to balance what he says is a liberal slant at the newspaper.

Ah, but we intrepid journalists know (and are relieved) that Slaven doesn't have a leg to stand on — for many reasons.

Perhaps the most obvious and fundamental of reasons would have to be the Constitution, the law of the land. Freedom of the press is a right guaranteed under the First Amendment; to be even more simplistic, the Barometer staff has the right to print just about whatever they want, as long as it's not libelous and doesn't pose a threat to national security.

To delve even further into legal matters, Slaven's proposal is a fine example of prior restraint — something else the press is protected from. Slaven cannot impose restraints on the Barometer's candidates for editor in order to ensure a point of view he agrees with.

Another important factor in the Barometer's favor, according to editor Douglas Crist, is OSU's administrative team, who have written a veritable "hands-off" policy into the university's regulations. The policy, of course, is superseded by law.

Finally, the Barometer's editorial page includes a letters column which contains virtually every opinion and slant known to mankind. And the Barometer has an "op-ed" section that publishes opinions of lengths longer than letters. If Slaven hasn't seen any conservative elements in the Barometer's content, he's obviously not reading the paper's editorial page, where "there are as many viewpoints as there are stars in the sky," according to Crist.

So it's a cut-and-dried case. The Barometer is in the right and Slaven and his proposal are in the wrong.

Crist and his staff, in fact, seem to have the right attitude about how to handle this poor attempt at injustice for press freedom: They are going to ignore any resolutions passed by the student senate.

"It's just like having a big rock in your shoe," Crist said. "Eventually it will go away."

Compact discs a travesty to the long-playing world

No doubt about it, it had to be one of the sneakiest takeovers in history.

No, it isn't planet Earth that's at stake here. It's our musical heritage. Compact discs have glutted the market, sending vinyl long-playing records another step toward extinction, and, undoubtedly, cassette tapes won't be long in following.

Last year, manufacture shipments of CDs jumped 64 percent (that's 70.4 million units) in the first six months, while LP deliveries declined 22.4 percent (43.5 million units) in the same time period.

True, the whole idea of digital audio sound is intriguing, but to record collectors and those who don't own a CD, the fated extinction of LP's is an idea that's hard to swallow.

Even harder to swallow are comments from managers of appliance and music stores, who have had requests to ditch their turntables in favor of the more technologically exciting CD players. If time-honored forces like supply and demand dictate the end of the album, so be it; when suppliers try to dictate demand by limiting choice, we draw the line.

Should the CD takeover continue unabated, people will find themselves between a rock and a hard place if their turntables break. Ever try to get any work done on a 1953 Studebaker?

It is also possible that following in the wake of the album's extinction will be the demise of cassette tapes and cassette tape players. Owners of these will have the same parts and service problem, not to mention what will happen to those who take advantage of tape's ability to record.

Heck, CDs can't record. So what's with all of the magic about CDs? It's not hard to understand why manufacturers love them.

Manufacturers and promoters must realize a love of LPs and cassettes is ingrained in our society (and history), and just won't disappear. At least not without a fight. At least we hope not.



"PSST! Has our congressional pay raise gone into effect yet?"

Letters

Layoffs?

At a time when we are uncertain if the fiscal actions of the legislature will force Higher Ed to make budget cuts in the next fiscal year, it seems curious that the University is immediately implementing a new faculty fellowship program for the spouses and partners of newly recruited faculty (ODE, Jan. 23).

Under the Family Employment Program (FEP), fellowships of \$6,000 will be awarded to qualified "trailing spouses" for one-year appointments in appropriate disciplines or support units. From where is this money coming? Has the University tapped some new source of funding to cover the cost of this program, or will this money come from already existing funds?

Provost Norman Wessells refers to FEP as a "useful recruitment tool" (Inside Oregon, Jan. 26), yet I can't help but wonder if this may also be a useful tool to save money by replacing classified, research and/or GTF staff with cheap, unorganized labor. We would probably never see a "trailing spouse" actually assume the duties of an employee who had been laid-off. However, the money saved through layoffs would pay for the creation of positions into which these fellowship appointees could easily slip, while the remaining positions absorb the duties from the lay-off.

It is not uncommon for things to be more than they seem; FEP will need to be seriously questioned and monitored as it progresses.

Risa Haberman
Chief Steward
OPEU Local 085

Heart

After the recent racial incidents all newspapers and conscious citizens of Eugene have intensified their anti-racism movement and quite justly so. A special incident today prompted me to write this letter.

I joined the University in Fall '88. I am an Indian and came to this University with stories of muggings and skinheads in the

U.S. Within this short span of four months I have had experiences contrary to what I had heard. I found Eugene beautiful not only because of its scenic beauty but also because of its beautiful people. Everywhere people were happy to be helpful. The Carters, my host family, are now as close to me as my real parents.

Then today this incident happened. I was walking on the street and I accidentally opened a partially healed wound and my thumb was bleeding profusely. I went to the Hilyard Street Market to buy some Band-aids. The lady at the counter immediately nursed my wound and bandaged it. Then she gave me two spare Band-aids. After all this she did not accept any money from me, even after my repeated requests.

I request you to publish this letter so that those miniscule number of racists will know that they can paint as many walls as they want, but they can never paint the heart of Eugene. So thank you, Eugene!

Samir Mokashi
Architecture

Inhibiting

In the midst of a tragedy such as the Cleveland Elementary School massacre it is easy to make hasty decisions. We all need to find something to blame to get the painful feelings out of our minds.

After lengthy contemplation I find it hard to blame an inanimate object such as a firearm for the actions of a man.

Patrick West, the murderer of the five Cleveland students, could just as easily have driven his car through the school's fence and probably killed many more.

Before trying to ban the necessary part of the sport which literally tens of millions of Americans enjoy, because of

West, you should realize that West's firearm was purchased in violation of many existing laws including perjury and unlawful possession of a deadly weapon. He further, using knowledge gained in a black market weapons manufacturing gang, committed the truly difficult crime of converting it into a sub-machine gun.

West was an insane drug using criminal who would have been as hindered by proposed gun control laws as he was by drug control laws. Any further legislation except those involving background checks will only inhibit law abiding citizens from exercising their rights.

Jeffrey A. Hawkins
Eugene

Ignorant few

To David Pierpoint and John Worley (ODE, Jan. 25):

What kind of god is it you worship that is benevolent, kind, forgiving and un-judging except in a few cases? And what kind of "Christian" are you to tell your brother that the Gates of Heaven are not open to him? Religion is a human invention, not divinely inspired, however designed to create a fellowship between people, a support for those in need who want to walk on faith. But time after time I have seen this system fail because of the ignorant few.

Scott, I'm not going to tell you that we are going to "Heaven," much less that there is one or a "Hell;" but I want to point out that you lead an alternative lifestyle — so realize this and choose the alternatives. Don't trouble yourself with the ignorance of others and don't be burdened by society's archaic beliefs.

Nick Mamayni
Student

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.