

Yacht trophy sails for good of 'sport'

Hey, we don't want anybody to call us traitors for rooting against our country, nor do we want to be labeled elitists by anyone who thinks we really give a darn about the high-brow sport of yachting, but this newspaper is glad to see Dennis Connor handing over the America's Cup to New Zealand.

In New York's Supreme Court last week, Justice Carmen Ciparick ruled that Connor's lopsided victories over New Zealander Michael Fay were a "gross mismatch" that violated the ideal of fair play in the Cup's deed of gift. Connor used a speedy catamaran to sail past Fay's more traditional monohull.

Connor wasn't the only loser in Ciparick's decision. The city of San Diego, which would have hosted the 1991 defense of the Cup had it stayed in the United States, was hoping to rake in over \$1 billion from the wealthy globe-trotting competitors and spectators who follow the Cup around. And the real winner in the decision isn't Fay, who continues to live up to his reputation as a whiner, but the "sport" of yachting. Consider:

- First of all, the courtroom drama adds some life to what seems like a pretty dull event — two boats slowly going around in circles, several times. Now we've got people yelling at each other, which is the best part of the traditional American sports, like football or baseball. It makes better television, too.

- The courtroom squabbles also add to that wonderful element of wealth that surrounds professional yachting. It already costs millions to build a 12-meter yacht suitable for a Cup defense; now, one has to figure in lots of bucks in legal fees for a court defense. This is something else to separate the true bluebloods from the "not our kind, dears."

- The courtroom moves add strategy to the Cup. Sure, Connor can make the right maneuver and the right tack on the water. But can his lawyers make the right appeal and the right motion on land?

- Seriously though, the America's Cup has always had the reputation of being something of a big, expensive joke. First, there was the century of America's pitifully easy Cup wins. Now, Connor's grumbling and Fay's whining have taken the Cup's ridiculous image to a new level.

These two men have tied up the overburdened New York State court system with a truly petty, unimportant case. These are little boys playing with big boats in a bathtub. These are the kind of people who play Monopoly with real money.

But there are those who take yachting seriously. Some interested yacht clubs around the world have formed a committee that will update the anachronistic deed of gift that regulates the Cup. A new, standardized class of boats has already been proposed. This long overdue modification will be the only thing that saves the America's Cup from being the butt of cruel jokes and banishment to reruns of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."



Forum

Rookie fans discovering glory of baseball

By Thomas Prowell

The day is finally here. Break out that bat, oil up the mitt, find that ball — it's under the bed, the cat was playing with it last winter. But get it quick, because baseball is back.

Oh, sure today is Opening Day, if you hadn't noticed. But when I say "baseball is back," I don't mean just the start of another season of pennant races and losing streaks. I don't mean the

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commencement of the sport's annual high drama and history-in-the-making, the yearly statistics and Steinbrenner. I mean baseball is truly back.

A whole new generation has discovered this grand old game. Call it the Pepsi generation, call it the Yuppies, but whatever you call it, you have to realize that baseball has reclaimed the title of "America's pastime." Goodbye, football. Goodbye, professional wrestling. Baseball is the hip sport now.

For those of us who have always loved baseball, we think it's about time you guys caught on. But at the same time, we're a little leery of you rookie fans. You're making a tremendous impact on a game that values its traditions. Not all of the things you're responsible for are good. So, if you're going to be a baseball fan, please do these things — for the sake of the game:

- Don't go to the games. Watch 'em on TV. First

of all, you'll see more on TV than you would squinting at that outfielder a mile away from you.

You see, with all these new fans, there's talk of expanding the National League. That's bad. The last time a major league expanded, we got stuck with the Seattle Mariners. And worse, there's talk of putting a team in South Florida. Florida doesn't deserve a baseball team. Look at what the Miami Heat did for basketball.

- Pick a favorite team — now. You new fans are too fickle. You root for only the winning team. In 1987, there was a sudden increase in the number of Twins' fans waving their stupid Homer Hankies. Last year, all these Dodgerites came out from nowhere. You don't know what it's like to cheer on a team through a losing season. You don't know what agony is. I know what agony is. I'm a Cleveland Indians fan. I'm a better person for it.

- And the one thing that really irks old-timer baseball fans — the beginners are changing the ball parks. There's night baseball at Wrigley Field now. And the vendors are serving sushi at Jack Murphy Stadium. That's terrible. That's sacrilege. If you like sushi, you'll never be a true fan.

Sushi belongs with a dignified wedding reception, not a sweaty, dirty, lovely sport like baseball. Get that raw fish out of your mouth and give it to the cat. And welcome to baseball.

Thomas Prowell is the Oregon Daily Emerald's Editorial Co-Editor and has himself only been a baseball fan since 1986.

Letters

Wasted dollars

As coordinator for Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (SETA), I unfortunately have to respond to Neil Daener's letter (ODE, March 9). Mrs. Daener interrupted a SETA protest on March 3, and someone made a rude and tactless comment toward her. I do not know who made this remark, but I would like to assure the Daeners that this comment does not reflect the view or intellects of SETA members.

I have encountered Pam Daener twice, and both times she has only spoken about babies with AIDS. SETA members have been accused by Mrs. Daener of killing babies with incurable diseases because we do not make regular trips to the hospital to care for them.

This logic astounds me. Most of the general public has never

visited an AIDS ward. Instead of exploiting the AIDS catastrophe and the children who suffer from it, why not advocate the rights of AIDS sufferers of all ages?

Contrary to the Daeners' beliefs, we do not need animal research in order to save lives, or to find a cure for AIDS. The truth is that no animal other than the human has developed AIDS. Only humans have developed the malignancies and opportunistic infections that are characteristic of the disease. As a result, animal experiments have been directed at developing a "model" for the disease with little success.

The National Academy of Sciences reports that education is important in turning the epidemic around, as well as in vitro research and clinical and epidemiological studies. Every dollar that goes into AIDS research involving animals is a

dollar that is taken away from these vital areas of research.

Please, Mr. and Mrs. Daener, stop fighting against us and start fighting with us. Energies combined, we could make a difference. We're for rational discussion, if you are.

Brigitte Leach
SETA coordinator

Racist pattern

I'm tired of hearing excuses made for racist and sexist assaults on campus. The latest, written by Cary Stephens (ODE, March 8), provides a model for apologists of racial intimidation.

First, blame the victim, in this case Myrna Bobb. Stephens states that Bobb lies, manipulates the press for her own hidden needs, and directs an organization that "want and, in

fact, need incidents like this to capitalize on."

Second, trivialize the incident. Stephens does this when he states that this "incident has more to do with the parking problem than it does with racism...." Also, Stephens characterizes the incident as having merely "racial overtones."

Third, sympathize with the perpetrator of the racist crime. For example, from Stephens we learn that the malefactor was patient, reasonably upset and the victim himself of a number of false accusations.

This pattern signals racism. Learn to see it, because of this

simple fact: Racists never call themselves racists. Racists know themselves as reasonable and patient people. They call themselves patriots in South Africa and believe that they're saving the country from ruin. David Duke calls himself a protector of civil rights. And Carey Stephens — who stood idly by while a racial attack occurred and now screams out injustice because the victim seeks justice — no doubt considers himself a tireless pursuer of truth and fairness.

Andrew Viles
Educational Opportunities
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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.