

Program suffers as budget cuts roll on

We've been waiting for the "peace dividend." You all know what that is; the government's big plan to re-route funding away from the defense industry. After all, the Cold War is over, isn't it?

Watch the Pentagon and you realize some things never change.

Earlier this week, several states announced there would be severe cuts in aid for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, otherwise known as the WIC program. The reason given is surging food prices; the federal government's \$2.1 billion allocation won't cover the additional costs.

WIC affects more than 4.5 million people per year. It is one of the few federal programs that really works, and was mercifully spared during the Reagan era of welfare-slashing. WIC differs from other programs because it focuses on preventative measures by giving food, juice and infant formula to expectant mothers and families who cannot afford to feed their children adequately.

It is a much needed program, and should be a prime concern for all politicians. Unfortunately, it isn't.

States that can't afford to continue WIC at its current level are faced with a tough choice — cut down on the food packages or kick "borderline" participants out of the program altogether. There is no telling just how far, just how many people are going to be effected. There is no way of knowing what a smaller WIC budget will do to infant mortality rates or the overall health of our nation's newborns.

While \$2.1 billion is an unthinkable amount to most of us, in terms of trillion dollar budgets and deficits, it is a pittance. The defense budget runs over \$300 billion annually. So far, the "peace dividend" has amounted to nothing.

The WIC program works — even the federal government's endless studies have proven that. Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio) wants to inject another \$150 million into the program. But even that might not be enough.

Why does something like WIC suffer while big defense contractors continue to receive billions for weapons? It is ironic, almost eerie, the announcement about WIC came just before the start of the Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting. One of the big summit topics will be reduction of conventional and nuclear arms.

If Bush and Gorbachev can somehow come to mutual understanding on weapons reduction, can we dare hope some of the unneeded defense dollars will funnel back to social, environmental or welfare programs?

Given past record, don't hold your breath.



"This is an emergency! Is there a decent role model in the house?!"

Letters

The wall

I have seen the Vietnam Wall. I do not forget its touch. I cannot remove the vision of its black lists from my eyes' memory: small squares which escalate to monolithic blocks of cold flesh; the tiny tablets rise over my head, or rather, I descend step-by-step beneath them. But it is not the wall which holds my gaze.

Three men stand guard at the entrance to the wall. Rather, their stationary pose connotes a desire to flee, but they are unable to flee a threat which they do not know, nor cannot see, nor touch, nor hear, nor taste. Their eyes, however, leave little doubt: they smell fear.

I smell with them, and I am taken back to the jungle I have never seen. My feet, like theirs, turn to stone. How should I, mere mortal, not share the feat of these three colossal men of stone, whose obvious manhood belies their youthful visages.

It is obvious they are larger than I am or may ever hope to be, but that helps me to share their emotion: I cannot forget that men who belong on a pedestal stand in fear.

Bruce Hunter
Eugene

Thank you

I would like to thank the following people for sharing their experiences with my classes in ethnic studies over the past year. Their willingness to make presentations and to pose and respond to questions on cultural and political topics helped to clarify for students the perspectives of people of color in Eugene.

From the University staff and student body, I appreciate the contributions of Grieg Bustos, Ally Clark, Edwin Coleman, Allison Davis, Dale Montoy, Armando Morales, Jan Oliver, Clarence Spigner, and Sandy Tsuneyoshi.

From the Eugene community I thank Rueben Cotta of the Chicano Affairs Council, Charles Dalton of the NAACP,

Bobby Green of the Eugene City Council, Al Smith of the Native American Church, and Florence Date-Smith.

I particularly want to thank Gerald Seals, city manager of Corvallis, for driving down to explain his work and to describe his career for us.

I am most appreciative of the enthusiasm and cooperation I have received from people, and I know my classes have learned much from them.

William Toll
Assistant professor
Ethnic and folk studies

Old dude

In response to Timothy Webber's letter to the editor (ODE, May 29): Now let me see if I've got this art history stuff right.

Hmmm... let's see now, Leonardo da Vinci sculpted the "Venus de Milo" (Ancient Greece, Hellenistic period) — jeppers! That would have made him almost 2,000 years old when he painted the "Mona Lisa." Cowabunga! That dude really was incredible.

Gerry Parson
Student

No recall

This letter is in support of EWEB commissioner Rob Willis. The firing of EWEB general manager Jean Reeder generated more controversy than it warranted. Former board member Jack Craig called Reeder's firing the "Monday Night Massacre."

It really turned out to be the "Media Massacre." Quite a few people who didn't know what was going on at EWEB undertook the unassigned task of being the public conscience.

The truth is, even with the knowledge there might be serious political repercussions, commissioners Thwing, Solin and Willis took the only action available to them. Because of declining morale among EWEB employees and clear evidence Reeder was leading EWEB into serious financial jeopardy, her

employment was ended.

While some may question the manner in which this was undertaken, I would ask you to stop and consider this: EWEB commissioners are not paid for their services.

They are hard-working citizens who have chosen to serve the public. It is unfortunate some persons within the community jump at the chance to turn a routine affair into a political circus.

Willis deserves to retain his position because he has duly represented the people who elected him. It is not a popularity contest. Sometimes difficult decisions need to be made, and I applaud him for taking a stand — even though he knew it might not be a "popular" move. Upon receiving your mail-in ballot, please mark it to retain Willis. Vote no on recall.

Michael Lindley
Student

Stop killing

I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said "Meat is Murder." I guess I ought to applaud that kind of awareness, but something bothers me.

Poultry and livestock are not the only victims lying motionless on the kitchen table. Every year, literally millions of vegetables are cruelly slaughtered for food.

Carrots and radishes are uprooted; potatoes are peeled, fried and served as chips on cheap hors d'oeuvre trays. It's sickening.

When you think about it, it's easy to understand why plants have been victimized for so long. They have neither the ability to effect a defense nor a recognizable voice to plead with their killers.

But life is life, wherever it's found. So please, stop the killing.

Michael Matthews
Eugene
Friday, June 1, 1990

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