

Better swallow now while we still can

Looks like we're finally going to have to answer for all that fun we been havin'. You know — all those cars, all those factories, all those electric slicers and dicers. All that progress, all done at any cost.

Does ozone-layer depletion ring a bell? Yes, it's been in the news here and there, but nothing worth worrying about. Right? Well, heads up — that never-happen-to-me ozone hole is headed our way.

Severe ozone depletion over the Northern Hemisphere is expected to begin this decade, opening up some of the world's most populated areas (including America) to higher degrees of the sun's ultraviolet radiation, according to a recent six-month study by a group of scientists headed by NASA.

And if we're real lucky, the United States, Canada and Europe may get a hole this winter. The report based this claim on the scientists' January recordings of chlorine monoxide over the northern latitudes via NASA's Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite. The substance, which destroys the ozone layer through a chemical reaction with sunlight, was recorded at the highest level ever in either atmosphere, north or south. If you don't already know, the South Pole has seen dramatic ozone depletion for several years now.

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What will happen *when* (not *if*) the hole occurs? Educated guesses list agriculture disturbances, increased cases of skin cancer, cataracts, and immune system damage as a few menu items. Who knows what possibilities exist that scientist can't foresee.

So how do we stop it? Because it's caused by pollution-induced chemicals, all we have to do is cut our pollution.

Ha ha — good one. Problem: Pollution is caused by all our "progressive" toys. And everyone knows how we love them thar' toys, especially us Americans. Can't live without 'em.

Well here's news: We can't live with them anymore.

It means change, folks, and that's a hard pill to swallow. But we better start now, while we still have a throat to choke it down.

COMMENTARY POLICY

Commentaries should be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit for grammar, style and length if necessary.

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COMMENTARY

Students should be embarrassed



THE FINE PRINT

BY MIKE FREEMAN

As a close friend of JoSonja Watson's, I have watched her response during the past months to the continuous bombardment of complaints, allegations, charges and accusations against her because of her all-too-familiar pre-electoral activities.

Over all, she has fared quite well considering the lengths people have gone to hunt down and divulge very personal and in some cases, very irrelevant background information and relate it to her performance as ASUO vice president.

Before this first began with the *Oregon Commentator's* "earth shaking" revelation of our newly elected vice president having stolen from the University's bookstore, I had spoken with JoSonja over dinner about the infamous "Troll Trouble" at the bookstore.

Amidst her chagrin, we laughed, and I kidded her at how dumb she was for taking \$7.25 of crap like an ugly troll doll. I also said that regardless of what the *Commentator* had to say, like us, the majority of students would likely be amused by her foolishness and chalk it up to poor judgment and move on with their lives. After all, this is just student government. Oh, how wrong I was!

Immediately stuff started hitting the fan and JoSonja was called a liar, a cheat, a thief, and a general embarrassment to the student body. Almost immediately following these accusations, more stuff began flying.

Jen Bills and JoSonja were accused of pulling the wool over this fine and conscientious student population's eyes by knowingly appointing a "crook" as v.p. (Bills was well aware of the "Troll Trouble" and considered it irrelevant to JoSonja's ability as vice president.)

Then mentions of race started making this a "Black Thing" and that had JoSonja not been a

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woman of color, this tizzy wouldn't have started. Well, that ain't it either. (Except, as some maintain, that perhaps had JoSonja not been African-American, she might not have gotten caught "troll-handed" at the bookstore in the first place.)

More recently, the issue of overpayment from her summer position as a University comptroller has arisen. If I were receiving one all-encompassing paycheck for three low-paying positions, it would be difficult to figure out how much of the total sum came from each different job.

Now the latest buzz is her attempt and failure to get a fake identification under her sister's name. My God! Is JoSonja applying for a home loan? Is she asking to adopt a Romanian orphan? Is she even applying for an American Express card just to use the cheap airline tickets? Granted these are extremities, but the situation has required such lengths.

Perhaps the worst thing JoSonja ever did was accept her nomination for vice president, not because of all the embarrassing stuff she has done, but because of the embarrassing community she was elected to

represent.

JoSonja is a student representing students. Not all of us, and I'll even wager the majority of us, are God-abiding, lawful, clear-thinking, virginal examples of perfection as JoSonja's critics seem to maintain.

She is a 21-year-old student representing similar-aged people; most of whom have yet to find themselves a concrete, professional and secure place in the world outside of the University.

It is unfortunate that the one place where she can truly experiment in what could have been perhaps one of the most positive, liberating, and unifying experiences on this campus, turned into a torrid struggle of political figure against tabloid-esque media hounds.

The bottom line is that this is not real life politics. Granted, college is supposed to prepare you for life in the real world, be it as a politician, dentist, park ranger or even *Enquirer* correspondent. But neither JoSonja nor any other student-elected position need be treated along the lines of Richard Nixon or Clarence Thomas, or even Gary Hart or Bill Clinton.

We exist in Eugene, Oregon and in Eugene, Oregon only. JoSonja Watson should have been allowed to exist here in this small city and on this small campus that claims to be so accepting and diverse and welcoming, particularly of those of different ethnicities, beliefs and backgrounds.

JoSonja Watson was a victim of her past, her inexperience and her foolishness — all of which she attempted to amend by serving in the ASUO and growing as a person.

The most unfortunate aspect is that she wasn't allowed to grow in soil that once seemed so fertile and progressively became sterile manure.

Mike Freeman is In Touch editor for the Emerald.

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.