

Higher Education Act doesn't solve problem

College students got a break when the U.S. Senate passed the Higher Education Act last Thursday. Now it just remains to be seen what gets broken — the spiraling tuition costs limiting higher ed access, or the collective backs and pocketbooks of students.

Should the Senate bill get through the run-around gauntlet known as the legislative process and avoid a veto stomp by Bush and Co., students will have the opportunity to go even more into debt to complete their college careers.

The Higher Education Act raises the Pell Grant program's family income limit to \$42,000 a year — up from the current \$30,000 level. The grants themselves would also increase, from \$2,400 now, on up to \$4,800 a year in 1997.

Yes, if the bill passes, more middle income students will be eligible for federal grants. Students don't have to pay back the grants, but because the money comes from federal coffers (a limited source), not everybody who qualifies for a Pell Grant will receive it.

It's the same old, tired story of an ever-increasing amount of students competing for an ever-shrinking pool of federal funds.

Which brings us back to the way most students get through college — loans, loans, loans.

Two senators, Paul Simon from Illinois and David Durenburger from Minnesota, proposed a plan that would take private banks out of the student loan business and create a direct federal loan program. With such a program, student loans would be consolidated into one source, making it easier for students to finance their education.

But Bush doesn't like the idea of a direct loan program. So the Senate, under the threat of a veto, axed the program from the bill.

Some education president.

The bill now goes to the House, where the representatives will get an opportunity to present their own plans. But because any new addition would have to go back to the Senate for approval, then on to Bush, it seems unlikely any new or improved Higher Education Act will come forth.

Students got a little bit of an improvement, but not enough of one to really get excited about. It's still the same old game, with no significant changes in sight.

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LETTERS POLICY

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Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3180, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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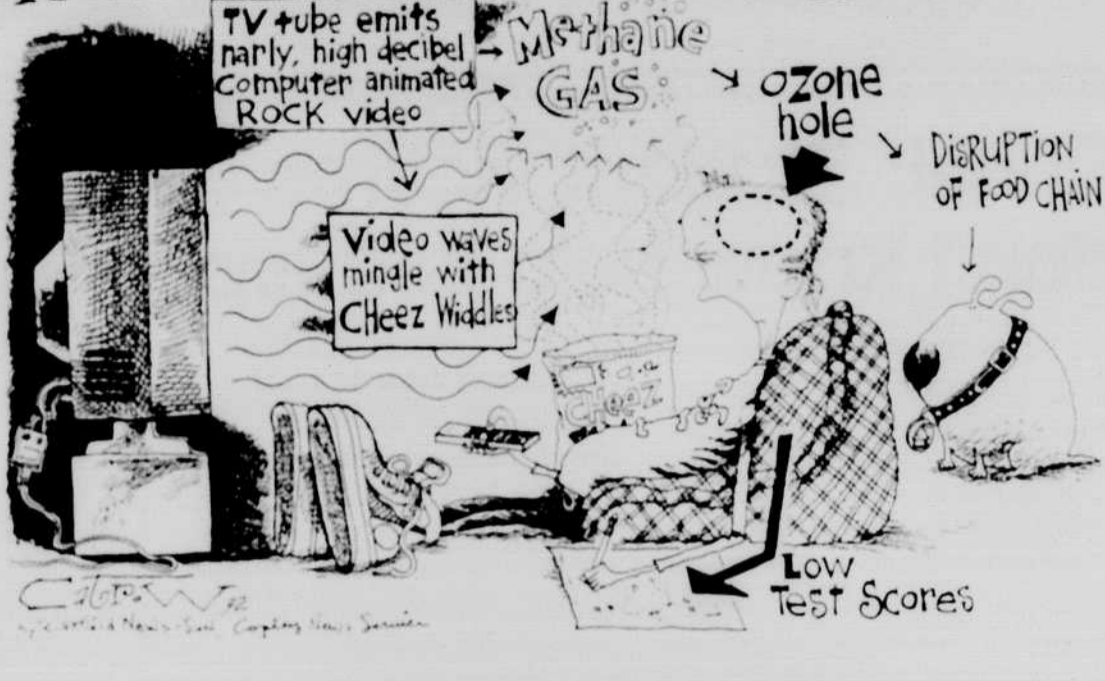
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How the "IN THE HOUSE Effect" works



COMMENTARY

Don't limit self, others, with labels

By Frank Tagore Sardina Miles

In the past few years — and intensifying recently — I have been noticing terrible events on campus, and indeed in the world in general. Up to now I have just been keeping the experiences in mind, but now I am too concerned to allow it to pass any longer.

This morning, reading *The Register-Guard* (Feb. 22), I chanced upon an article entitled "Jews worried by increase in intermarriages." In the article, Barry Shrage ("an Orthodox Jew and president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston") spoke of how troubling is the increase in intermarriages "to non-Jews."

He raised some good points because frequently the children of those marriages do not recognize their Jewish heritage. But is it necessary to refrain from intermarriage just to "retain their Judaism," as his statements in the article imply?

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, arguably due to this policy of segregation, Semites continue to eradicate Semites, with the occasional assistance of other cultural/regional groups.

But wait, I have a whole string of other troubling experiences to relate. Two weeks ago, I was passing two people — both men, one black, one white, for those needing to attribute blame to such things — who were commenting on their disbelief concerning the Mike Tyson trial.

One man (I was walking the opposite way so I didn't know who) stated, "Yeah, I know. You know she wanted it."

Chalk two up on the board. While I was at a leadership conference at Washington State University a few weekends back, I chanced upon a board with which I took great pleasure: a sign stating celebration of Black History Month with a cluster of blacks from around the world who had contributed to humanity.

Seemed to me like a good, positive assertion of value. Two other people waiting with me

The next time you start to denounce or judge someone, consider what you are doing, and try to understand them a little better. Please.

for the elevator, though, did not take as much pleasure in it. Both, taking me to be of European descent, proceeded into a series of profane denunciations of the Black Student Union's actions on their campus, and, in fact, its general existence.

I would educate them later. ... But, chalk three! Then there is this entire Oregon Citizens Alliance matter. (Yeah, you guessed it. Four.)

There's also this sudden need to see Japan and Japanese business as the enemy bringing down America (five). There is the entire Afrocentrism movement that feels it needs to assert African supremacy over world history, all in response to the equally incorrect and reactionary Eurocentrism that, unfortunately, has faced world societies for the last 500 years.

There was that black woman complaining about that "stupid Indian" at Native American Student Union. There are the men who think all women are valueless, the women who think all men are equally valueless. There are the men who think that all lesbians just need a "good man," and that gays are but half-men.

And, of course, the men and women who think homosexuals just have to have sex compulsively with any of their own sex. (And, dare I say it, to top it all, are a security risk.)

By now, you're starting to get the idea, hopefully. We're suddenly maintaining more angry, uneducated, uncommunicative myths than we should, by far. Feeling like you belong to something is one thing. But why does everybody suddenly — militantly — have to affirm

themselves as white, black, Native American, Jew, Arab, heterosexual, "handicapped," "fit," homosexual, bisexual, Asian, American, Nazi, gentile, Christian, Muslim, Basque, Irish, English, "old," "young," Republican, Democrat, "good," "evil," moral, immoral. Am I annoying you yet? Well, I'm sorry, but now you know how I've been feeling.

Who has the right to denounce another? To convert another? I don't think of myself as a white (though you wouldn't tell when I've gotten even an hour of sun), male, young, heterosexual, Blackfoot, Latino-American.

I tend to think of myself as who I am, or, when limiting myself, as a human being. Of course I have a very transitive conceptualization of the universe and tend not to have to be so absolute in everything, but still, just as a practice, could I induce someone out there to share humanity with me?

The next time someone is angry at you, don't get angry back, but attempt to establish lines of communication and understanding. The next time you start to denounce or judge someone, consider what you are doing, and try to understand them a little better. Please. Because we all seem to be dividing up into our own camps for sieges that definitely shouldn't come.

The more people there are who aren't limited to a camp, and can therefore go in between camps, the more people there will be to help break camp and create a unity.

And for those who complain about unity, you don't have to put aside your own beliefs to become unified. You just have to be willing to respect everyone else's (and they must respect yours) without imposing your beliefs upon theirs.

In the short term, it will be hard, but in the long term, our children or children's children, will have it much better. Seems logical enough.

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