

Selling pollutants short term solution

No one with a brain in their head can come up with a valid reason not to cut down on air pollution. Even Bush and Co. agree, albeit reluctantly, that something must be done to clean up the air we breathe.

Problem is, no one can agree on a solution. What results is a hodge-podge of proposals and plans, with more scurrying than results.

Take the Clean Air Act, for example. In theory, it's a heck of an idea. Reduce chemical emissions by 10 million tons a year. Cut back on smog and the omnipresent specter of sulfur dioxide induced "acid rain."

But how?

One of the parts of the Clean Air Act allows corporations in the air pollution business to sell the rights for emitting toxics to another company. It sounds crazy, but in the madness there is a method.

Specifically, last Tuesday Wisconsin Power and Light sold the right to emit 10,000 tons of sulfur dioxide to the Tennessee Valley Authority for an undisclosed price believed to be between \$2.5 and \$3 million. This way, the Wisconsin company can keep itself under the federally-set emission levels, and TVA gets the time (and cash) to improve its facilities with smokestack scrubbers and other environmentally oriented equipment.

Economists like the idea, and some environmentalists have adopted a "better than nothing" attitude. Emissions are scaled back without crippling businesses. Both sides come away with something.

As the Wisconsin-TVA deal is the first of its kind, experts are predicting many other companies will go the same route. The market system can save businesses up to 20 percent on the costs of making factories cleaner.

However, no matter how worthy the project is in the present, it serves as a short-term solution. The emission standards requiring scrubbers doesn't take effect until 1995 — meaning that for three more years, companies can spew toxics into the air at will.

Cleaning up the environment is not something to creep up on. The government and private industry must take a more active role in reducing the toxic spills — accidental and planned — into our rivers, groundwater and air. Only by cracking down on abusers can we keep the planet from turning into an unlivable cesspool.

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LETTERS

Enumerate

The ASUO and Jennifer Bills did exactly the right thing in seeking to inform University students of their legal rights should they be called before the federal grand jury or indicted. As one who teaches philosophy of law, I am all too aware of how little information most students have about such legal matters; as I am all too aware of the possibility that groups like the FBI may exploit such ignorance. Even though only a handful of students were involved, we all have an interest in insuring the people's rights are respected — even if we disagree with what they did.

Moreover, we all have a reason to be discouraged by the *Emerald's* criticisms of the ASUO on this score. Its article of May 13 contained too many factual errors to enumerate here; its Fine Print column of that same day should be assigned to a freshman logic class — as an example of muddled-headedness. Let it just be said that the ASUO's understanding of the legal situation, and its seriousness, is fundamentally accurate.

Cheyney Ryan
Professor of Philosophy

younger publications that haven't yet learned the rules of unbiased reporting.

The issue isn't whether or not I agree with the decision or oppose it, but that this type of reporting doesn't create a respectable publication. Malach's article on the same topic is an editorial, and therefore he has space to express his opinion, be it right or wrong. Millegan and Koepping were writing front page news coverage and have no purpose but to report the facts.

Marty Schmith
Eugene

Switcharoo

Was the *Emerald* printed wrong on Wednesday, May 13? Usually the opinions are on page 2 and news is on page 1, but not this Wednesday.

Instead of simply "reporting" the grand "news" of an ad taken out by the ASUO to explain students' rights over the recent Federal Building incident, Lisa Millegan and Gerrit Koepping's article is laden with advice, opinion and criticism. Not only would I consider this "article" an insult to true journalism, but I also have to disagree with their opinions.

Imagine if a party of about 350 people, many minors, drinking by their own choice, led to a fire causing, say, \$27,000 damage. If the police wanted to do an in-depth investigation, promising charges would be brought, we would have many scared students who wouldn't know who to turn to. It's the ASUO's responsibility to assist these students, just as it's the ASUO's responsibility to help the students at the Federal Building.

Pat Malach, whose opinion at least appears on the correct page, says not all students were involved, so it's a waste of student fees.

It's not the ASUO's responsibility to benefit all students in everything it does, but it has a responsibility to all individual students. There's a big difference.

John Thomas
Fine Arts

Out of line

I am getting sick of hearing about how the FBI is harassing students or denying their right to protest by investigating the vandalism at the Federal Building.

Unless I missed something, only those who destroyed property will be prosecuted, not those who protested peacefully. The First Amendment mentions "the right of the people to peaceably assemble," but the last time I checked it said nothing about "the right of those who are politically correct to protest by expressing their righteous anger however they want to (and label any attempt to hold them accountable as 'harassment')."

If I had decided to express my anger at the Rodney King verdict by robbing a bank, would the FBI be harassing me by investigating it? Jennifer Bills was way out of line by spending my student fees for the ad to help the vandals deal with the consequences of their criminal actions.

Eric Slevorling
Student

Slimy green

Today I noticed that lamp posts all over campus have been receiving a new coat of paint. Then I realized, much to my chagrin, that every last one of them was being painted green.

What about all of the other colors? Why don't they paint some of the posts purple? Or yellow? I mean, I thought this University claimed to stress diversity. Sure, the color of lamp posts has absolutely nothing to do with anything, but isn't this sort of trivia the very thing one should attack in this politically correct age of ours?

After all, if we waste all of our energy on banal idiocy, it becomes rather simple to demonstrate how "open minded" and "enlightened" we are, without actually having to address the bigot that lurks in each and every one of us.

Kyle Harris
Education

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.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE, OREGON 97401

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. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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