

**OPINION**

# Creative complaints spice up day

There seems to be some confusion on campus as to the best way to complain to the editor of this here publication.



**Write Angles**

Pat Malach

So, in the interests of better serving the readers, I'll try to point out some of the dos and don'ts of productive *Emerald* bashing.

First and foremost, don't call up the editor and say, "I'm going to make your life difficult for the rest of the year." My life is already difficult, and I doubt anyone can put a dent in my already rock-bottom self-esteem.

Besides, that line is absolutely overused. This is a liberal arts university. Be creative. How about, "I'm gonna follow you around, and I'll, I'll get ya, man."

Or most original of all, how about threatening to write a well-reasoned, well-researched letter to the editor. Now that would cause weeks of sleepless nights. Fortunately, I don't foresee it happening in the near future.

Secondly, don't send anonymous correspondence to the editor. I don't read anonymous criticism. I throw the letters in the recycling bin. If you don't believe strongly enough in your complaint to have your name associated with it, why should I care?

And to the person who addresses correspondence, "To the editor (if there is one)":

Prove you have some research skills by checking the staff box. It's on the bottom of Page 2 almost every day.

Thirdly, choose your battles wisely. There are plenty of things in the *Emerald* that are worthy of criticism; don't waste energy on inane non-issues.

In response to an editorial cartoon depicting George Bush confessing his campaign tactics to a priestly-garbed Richard Nixon (*ODE*, Oct. 23): One concerned reader asked if this was "yet another example of bigotry against Catholicism." The correspondent suggested we ask a Jewish member of our staff "if he or she would be offended by the same cartoon showing Richard Nixon dressed as a rabbi."

Latent Catholic bigotry? Richard Nixon dressed as a rabbi?

Here's an idea. Go to church. Light a few candles. Maybe God will give you a sense of humor.

I would also suggest you figure out what you're mad about and stick with it. If you're mad about the opinion espoused in an editorial, argue about the viewpoint. Don't quibble about semantics, such as whether a group of people forms a race or a culture.

And it only serves to make you look stupid (and inspire a few mocking laughs) if you stretch to make a complaint.

One "critique" sent to the editor complained about the headline on an Associated Press story in the Nov. 12 issue. The story's lead paragraph reported someone cut a "four-foot 'X' in the new screen." The headline on the story stated, "Vandals cut 'X' in screen."

The critic circled a quote from one person in the bottom of the story who said it looked

more like a "V." It was obvious to this correspondent that the one statement rendered the headline completely inaccurate.

I was happy to note this critic found nothing wrong with any of the stories written by *Emerald* staff writers. It should also be noted here that the Associated Press has an office in Portland. You can get the phone number by dialing information at 1-555-1212.

It's painfully apparent this person had an ax to grind about something the paper had printed in the past. But why go to so much trouble searching for something — anything — to complain about?

Figure out what you're pissed off about. Think about what you want to say. And then, before you call, drink some Malox and relax.

I'm always ready and willing to have a rational, intelligent and productive conversation with the paper's readers. But insults and threats don't meet the rationality criteria.

People who want to discuss issues will find a receptive audience. People who fall into the other category should remember, "The right to be heard does not include the right to be taken seriously."

*Pat Malach is editor of the Emerald.*

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