

## Ridiculous spending damages credibility

There must be a clause in the University planning code that requires money from the parking fund be spent on the dumbest idea available at the time.

What else could explain spending \$43,000 for the checkpoint outside Oregon Hall? What else could explain spending \$95,000 (and perhaps more to come) on seven covered bike racks to keep students' butts from getting wet?

Now, round three in this ongoing comedy of errors has been proposed, and, judging from recent history, will probably be enacted.

The newest fiasco is a proposed "gateway," which is supposed to alleviate the traffic problem at University Street and 18th Avenue. The plan calls for the installation of two concrete columns at the mouth of University Street.

These columns will be effective, no doubt, in eliminating the annoying traffic problem of people driving down the sidewalks, but it will do little else. And even better news, this war to eliminate sidewalk drivers will only cost about \$100,000.

The message to those who question wasteful government spending is clear: "Look elsewhere! You'll find no pork-barreling here!"

"Cars would be slowed down" by the gateway, according to a recent University planning memo. Assuming for a moment that cars really do come careening down University Street, across 18th Avenue and onto campus, the only time these columns would actually slow cars down is when they run into them. Now there's a plan.

Another part of the plan calls for realigning parking spaces on University Street to be at 90-degree angles, rather than slanted as they are now. The change would add about 70 new parking spaces. That's good. It's part of the \$100,000 plan. That's bad.

There's no parking problem that a couple buckets of paint and a few work-study students couldn't solve.

There may be a silver lining to all this. The checkpoint could be used to collect tolls from cars, and the money could be used to fund bigger, more defensible and more heavily armed checkpoints.

And wouldn't University President Myles Brand and ASUO President Bobby Lee look good standing in front of our new impact-absorbing, traffic-deterring towers, with cups in hand begging for loose change from passers-by.

It is important for the University to remember the public doesn't care where the money came from. The public is aware of only two things: The University is whining incessantly about the effects of Measure 5; and the University (if the gateway is built) will have spent \$238,000 to keep bikes dry and to eliminate a non-existent traffic problem.

No amount of public realtions, no amount of politicking and no amount of explaining will satisfy taxpayers' justifiable outrage and disbelief.



## LETTERS

### Respect

The quality of dialogue that goes on in our community and across our country concerning such "hot" issues as homosexuality and abortion is deeply disturbing to me. A typical contribution often consists of little more than an attack on the character and motives of some person or group that does not agree with the contributor.

Can we not treat those with whom we disagree with respect and civility, even when we view their ideas as truly ugly and destructive? Can we not avoid the reaction that allows us to justify stripping them of their humanity and pouring contempt on them instead of seeking to understand them accurately and sympathetically?

Are we so poor in our own humanity that we can't genuinely wish (and treat) someone well who doesn't believe as we do?

My attempt to silence my opponents by vilifying them and by assailing their motives and character, instead of engaging their ideas with my own, says more about my own character and values than it does my opponent. It also seems to preclude any realistic possibility that my ideas and values will come to have any influence on others, beyond hardening their positions and driving them away from me.

Placing dehumanizing labels on fellow humans ("hatemonger," "faggot," "queer," "homophobe," "Nazi," "bigot," "murderer," etc.) or ascribing to them motives of fear, hatred and ignorance, does not belong in an open and fruitful debate. Rather, they are the tools and tactics of insecurity used by the bully, the manipulator and the demagogue.

William L. Moore  
History  
English

workshops, to someone who has reached what passes for adulthood in this society without learning that attacking people because you don't like them is not acceptable behavior.

The expulsion from the University of a convicted offender would certainly be warranted; whether the victim is a student is irrelevant. It is long past time we discard the notion that one's actions (antisocial or otherwise) take place in a vacuum and that there can be no extended consequences.

Far more important, though, is that Horton, Ross and their minions must note my use of the magic word "convicted." The main point is that, so far, Pendexter has not been convicted of anything, and talk of expulsion or anything else is, to say the least, premature.

The lynch mob, metaphorically or otherwise, is an old American tradition, but let's not drag it from under its rock to this place of ostensibly higher learning and imply in any way that it belongs here.

Michael E. Stamm  
English Department

### KKKristianity

When I talk with folks who shove intolerance in the name of religion, I've discovered a revealing test. I ask them, "What is your view of Native American spirituality? Is this a legitimate religion?" One bigotry-pusher even answered, "It's satanic. They must convert so they can go to heaven."

Narrow-minded people shouldn't misuse the name of Jesus, who spoke of tolerance and unity among the downtrodden. I've created a better word for what these pretend-Christians really push: "KKKristianity."

This isn't about being white. I'm proud of my Lithuanian

ancestry. Lithuania was the last European country converted to Christianity — by the sword. It took the Crusades. That phony conversion didn't stick too well on many of us pagans.

People who push bigotry in the name of religion claim they're being "moral." Yet all major world religions agree that hateful lies are immoral. Instead, how about speaking out against people who rip off our savings and loans or who strip Oregon's heartbreakingly beautiful natural wealth and mail it out of state?

We who experience disgust at "KKKristianity" are getting a taste of what it dished out to other Americans:

New England women murdered as witches.

Native people invaded by the Oregon Trail.

Enslaved African Americans.

Emotional people forcibly electro-shocked for "mental illness."

And of course, Earth itself.

"KKKristianity" seems to create the hell on Earth it claims exists after death. Let Oregon go down in history as a place where independently thinking people joined the world in pushing back "KKKristianity"... forever.

David Oaks  
Eugene

### Brotherly love

In response to Jake Berg's opinion column "The University is a neat place" (ODE, Feb. 16), I would just like to say that I, too, derive great pleasure from witnessing bicycle crashes.

With the recent icy conditions in the Eugene area, I was fortunate enough to view several quality bike wrecks. In my book, there is no occasion more jovial than viewing a fallen cyclist. Injuries are a bonus.

Josh Berg  
freshman

### No obligation

In her pique and high dudgeon, Jennifer Horton (ODE, Feb. 17) joins Sarah Ross and Co. and manages to miss the point entirely about the alleged assault on Steven Laliberty by Todd Pendexter and the mob reaction to it.

The University is under no obligation to provide an education, let alone awareness-raising

### LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

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.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style

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