

Newsletters, flyers don't justify \$13,960

Technology has never come cheap. Even so, \$13,960 seems a little much. That's how much money the Incidental Fee Committee has agreed to allocate to the new Student Media Resource Center, which would be a central computer workroom used by several ASUO student groups to create newsletters and flyers.

Why these groups need the center at all is a legitimate question. The ASUO's computers alone may not be able to meet the needs of all the groups, but it shouldn't be too difficult to simply give these groups access to the various computer labs on campus.

Admittedly, however, the unique demands of desktop publishing (the industry buzzword for this kind of computer work) may, on rare occasions, require more advanced technology than the ASUO machines and those labs can provide. But not much.

A top-quality newsletter can easily be produced on a simple Macintosh LC III and laser printer equipped with Aldus Pagemaker, which together total less than \$3,000. Presumably, the center would offer more than one terminal to work on at a time, but even if there were three computers (all with 14-inch color screens and a variety of other extras), the whole setup would still cost considerably less than \$10,000.

Why, then, the near-\$14,000 price tag?

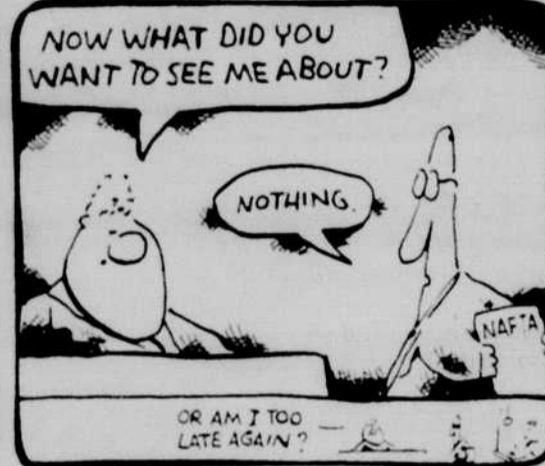
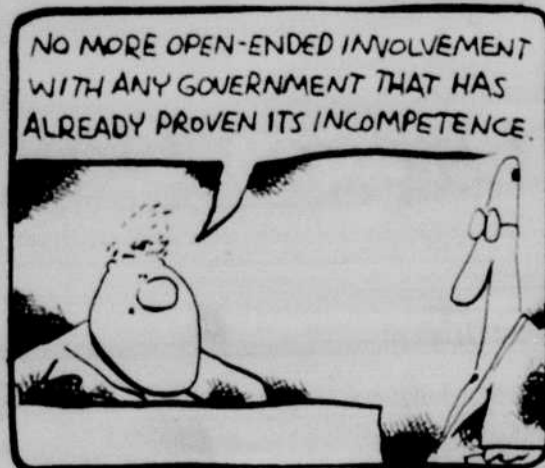
Because the center isn't getting the useful basics; it's going for the state-of-the-art. That may be a good investment if you're the *New York Times* or a Fortune 500 company putting out your annual report to stockholders.

But the student groups that will be using the center do not need all the computing power that they'll receive for \$14,000. Chances are, unless there's a computer information sciences major among them, they won't even learn all the capabilities of a basic setup, much less a top-notch advanced system. So all the extra technology is likely to go to waste.

Another issue of concern to students, who provide all the money that the IFC doles out, is the way the proposal to the IFC was handled. The total cost figure of \$13,960 was based on an outdated price list, and buying all the same equipment at current prices would cost considerably less than what was originally thought.

If the center can get all the same equipment for less money, shouldn't it revise its cash request downward to reflect that reduction in cost? Of course. But in the interest of expediency, and getting the center up and running as soon as possible, this was not done. Whatever money is left over when the original purchases are complete can be spent on whatever the center's leadership deems worthy. In other words, the IFC granted the center money without knowing exactly how all of it would be spent.

If a Student Media Resource Center is really necessary, it could be outfitted for substantially less than \$13,960. The IFC needs to be conservative with student money. After all, there's an endless line of campus groups just waiting to take advantage of the IFC's generosity. A decision like this one says just one thing to those groups: "Step right up."



LETTERS

Spirits

Ever had an out-of-body incident? Or any other experience that has led you to understand that you are a spirit, that your true essence, who you really are, is not the body that you live in but that your "inner being" is spirit?

If this has happened to you, to get caught up in it, to seek to reproduce it again can lead into metaphysics or the occult, into the secret things that are dangerous for spiritual and physical beings. This can be a rabbit-trail (that runs in circles, yet goes nowhere) and goes only into darkness, one subtle step at a time.

Or this experience can stimulate an awakening, as it did in me. To seek truth is an important growth process for anyone, but that's not my point; my point is — if you have come to realize that you are a spirit, then why is it so hard to realize that the spirit that grows within the womb is only residing in her physical tent, that she must have been known by God even before she was physically created to walk as a child, a baby, with her spirit within?

Yes, I'm pro-choice for that spirit to have a chance to live ... grow ... to experience ... to love ... to make her own choices! She has a right — a right to life! Besides, who wants to destroy a spirit?

John E. English
Springfield

I'm not condoning what they did, but he is responsible for promoting the stereotype much of the American public has concerning African-American males by printing their mug shots. You two believe that even if the perpetrators were white, their pictures would still be plastered on the front page? Obviously, you haven't been reading the *Emerald* over the years.

There were recent charges brought against a University professor for sexual harassment, and there were articles on the story, but because he was white, and a professor, we didn't see his picture on the front page.

If the *Emerald* was really trying to create awareness of sexual harassment on campus, then why hasn't the professor's picture been printed?

You need to take a look at yourselves and get informed before speaking out and realize that this is an issue of irresponsible journalism, of race and of class, even if Jake Berg is not a racist.

I did not have a problem with the story being written and printed — I had a problem with the pictures being printed. The story could have served the same purpose without the pictures.

Jan Harada
Eugene

included the multinational companies and was done in secret. Not a basis for trust. Mexico's President Salinas has promised only to raise the Mexican minimum wage to \$5 an hour — it's not in the agreement. Proper handling of hazardous wastes in Mexico is already mandated by the international treaty — but ignored. The maquiladora zone is a cesspool. With poetic justice, the effluent flows north where it is the U.S. border towns that are stuck with the cleanup, not the multinationals at the source.

Disputes over "unfair trade practices" will be conducted in secret without accountability or citizen input. Non-conforming state laws will be overturned. The similar Global Tariff and Trade Agreement undermined the Marine Mammal Protection Act while allowing the U.S. tobacco industry to void Asian laws outlawing its reprehensible advertising. Mexico already ships us food poisoned by pesticides outlawed here; "equalizing" standards will reinstate them. NAFTA protects oil and gas subsidies, while energy efficiency and conservation become "trade barriers." The "side accords" to correct the most obnoxious NAFTA provisions are too convoluted to be useful.

Please write your federal representative today — the vote is Wednesday.

Wanda S. Ballentine
Eugene

NAFTA

Clinton says the North American Free Trade Agreement is the solution to our economic woes. "It will remove all trade barriers" to stimulate the economies of Canada, the United States and Mexico — "trade barriers" such as minimum wage, environmental protection laws and health and safety standards. What's "free" is the free access of multinational corporations to cheap labor, cheap resources and huge profits, with no accountability.

The drafting of NAFTA

Puzzled

Thank you so much for forgetting the crossword again! I really did not want to see it any ways. I'd much rather read another letter to the editor about religion or maybe even take notes in class. I understand that putting out such a quality piece of journalism such as the *Emerald* must be exhausting, but please try to include the crossword in the future.

Tony Chiotti
Eugene

Irresponsible

I would like to respond to Rebekah Berg and Ginger Sonnie's letter (*ODE*, Nov. 12) concerning Jake Berg not being a racist. He may not be a racist, but he did show irresponsible journalism.

You two are obviously ignorant concerning issues about student/person of color issues. No, it is not his fault that these men committed the crimes, and

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