

Simpson trial unveils horror of spouse abuse

■ **OUR OPINION:** The system has not dealt justice to victims of domestic violence

You can't miss it. Draped over an overpass on the Los Angeles freeway, a white banner proclaims: "Welcome Back Butcher of Brentwood."

Regardless of whether the verdict in the Simpson case is perceived as a testimonial or a transgression on the justice system, O.J. Simpson's previous history of domestic violence and the legal system's ineffectiveness in protecting Nicole Brown Simpson cannot be ignored.

As if by some cosmic irony, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month takes place every October, and the coincidence of the Simpson verdict has not been lost on organizers of the annual campaign.

Each year, thousands of women are beaten or killed by their male partners, and

the justice system has often been unable or unwilling to protect these women from their abusers.

Despite restraining orders, desperate 911 phone calls and a divorce, Nicole Brown Simpson continued to suffer under her husband's fists. She continued to suffer, and the legal system did nothing to stop him.

The Simpson case will continue to raise issues among analysts and the public about television media, racism, the jury system and the relationship between wealth and justice.

The true injustice, however, occurred long before Nicole Brown Simpson's death. The one crime O.J. Simpson is guilty of beyond a reasonable doubt is a crime for which he has never been punished.

If this case can alert women and the legal system to the life-threatening terror of domestic violence, it all may have been worth it.

Yes, Virginia, women can compete with men

■ **OUR OPINION:** Public military academies need to open doors for women

Virginia and South Carolina can't seem to let go of their boys-only mentality.

Following the Citadel's multi-year battle to prohibit Shannon Faulkner from attending the military academy, Virginia Military Institute has brought its case before the Supreme Court seeking the exclusion of women from its prestigious institution.

Federal law prohibits the

allocation of government funds for gender-specific organizations. If a woman can meet or exceed the requirements for any public occupation or educational opportunity she should be allowed to pursue her goals.

If the Citadel and VMI want to exclude women from the best military training in the country, they should do it with private funds on private property. Women's tax dollars pay for these establishments, and as such they should be given equal access.



Columbus: Just what did he discover?

Sometime between high school (longer ago than you might think) and college, I lost track of exactly why it is we celebrate Columbus Day.

What I remember learning in high school is that Christopher Columbus discovered America. What a great guy! An adventurer, an explorer — a regular American hero.

As we've all probably heard by now, it didn't quite happen the way some of the history books say it did.

Columbus didn't discover anything, except if you want to say that he discovered there were civilizations and established cultures already inhabiting the very countries he is said to have discovered.

One can hardly be said to discover a place where other people live. Think of how you would feel if I came over and "discovered" your house!

Anyway, he didn't ever reach America, at least not this North American continent we know as "America, the Beautiful." He reached the Americas, which is different.

Specifically, on Oct. 12, 1492, he landed on a small island in the Bahamas. The natives — that is, the people *already* living there — called it Guanahani. Columbus claimed it for Spain and called it San Salvador.

In fact, Columbus didn't reach the South American mainland until his fourth and final journey, when he finally found Central America.

So on Columbus Day, we commemorate the first foreigner to arrive on the American continent.

Well, not exactly that either.

There are numerous theories about those who might have arrived in the New World before Columbus. In a 1992 *Smithsonian*, Donald Dale Jackson summarized the most reasonable, if not widely accepted, of these theories. Japanese, Irish, Chinese, Jewish, British and Welsh explorers, fishermen and refugees are all potential pre-Columbian arrivals.

Even if all these theories are wrong, it is widely accepted that Norsemen, led by Leif Ericsson, arrived in Newfoundland around 1000 A.D., beating Chris out by 500 years or so.

And of course, there's still that pesky problem of those people who came across the Bering Strait and settled this continent long before that.

Well, Columbus was the first colonizer of the Americas, albeit failed colonies, in the Dominican Republic and Panama. Right?

Wrong.

I hate to harp on an issue, so we'll leave the Bering Strait immigrants, now called Native Americans, out of this for the time being. Leif Ericsson and his Viking crew still beat Chris to a valid claim to early colonization, although their

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Jean Bond

colony also failed.

By the way, Columbus thought he had discovered something, but he didn't think it was a new continent. He thought it was a route to Asia, and thought so for the rest of his life.

So did everyone else, until Amerigo Vespucci decided this was a new continent. Vespucci, a mapmaker, may or may not have ever been here, but that's another story.

Columbus was lauded in Barcelona after his first voyage, but he lost favor, along with most of the titles he'd bargained for with the Spanish crown

because of the poor results of his subsequent expeditions — not the least of these was the failure of San-

to Domingo, the colony Columbus ruled in what is now the Dominican Republic.

After this fiasco, Columbus was stripped of his titles, arrested and sent back to Spain in chains. He was eventually granted permission for a fourth voyage, during which he found Central America and unsuccessfully tried to colonize Panama.

Regardless of these failures, colonization became all the rage sometime later, and here we are today.

What Columbus did do that Ericsson and other possible explorers did not, aside from enslaving the natives, was that he publicized his voyages. He kept careful journals, and sent letters back to Ferdinand and Isabella, telling of his discoveries and the riches he found. He seems to have been somewhat prone to exaggeration; he actually found little of the gold he'd promised to Queen Isabella.

He was, however, greatly anticipated back in Spain, and received all the fanfare due a hero. He made a show of what little gold he did find, along with slaves, parrots, and other booty he brought back from his trip.

Because of the documentation, not to mention all the fuss, Columbus' voyages were the first easily proved trips to the New World, even if he didn't know what it was at the time.

Columbus' success, then, was not as a discoverer of new lands, or even as a colonizer of them, but as a publicist.

Public relations majors, rejoice! You have a new hero.

Jean M. Bond, a junior majoring in journalism, is a columnist for the Emerald.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159, 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. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board; signed columns represent the opinion of the columnist.

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