

# It's time to pull the *Commentator's* plug

From time to time I enjoy talking to a friend of mine who works for the gun lobby in Washington, D.C. Mike is what you might call the Karl Marx of gun distribution. He spends most of his time on the phone talking to politicians, trying to get the most guns for the greatest number of people.

In Mike's world view good Americans are people who own guns, smoke cigars and eat a lot of steak.

Although it is rare, Mike made a good political point while we were discussing the government shutdown. "Keith," he said, "Even if you completely disagree with the freshman Republicans, you should at least respect them for doing what they promised and standing up for what they believe in."

I had to agree. I still believe that dismantling welfare and education are dead wrong. But I sense that some Republicans are trying to solve the nation's problems with what they consider to be bold solutions. I have to respect them for that.

Sadly, if political courage were gauged in a similar fashion at the University, our leaders would fail miserably.

From the ASUO, to the Student Senate, to the Women's Center, what University women learned last month when they were journalistically raped (see related column on page 2) was that the political ideology of the day is meekness and silence.

I never knew that humans could survive without spinal cords until my interviews with ASUO President Jennifer Williamson and Women's Center Director Edwina Welch. So intimidated by the school-yard bullies of the *Oregon Commentator*, these "leaders" sit quietly as their female constituents endure the *Commentator's* jovial advocacy of violence against women.

The publishing of the "Top 75 Reasons Why Women (Bitches) Should Not Have Freedom of Speech" was merely an escalation of the *Commentator's* continuing attempt to subvert University women's sense of safety.

Last year the journal suggested a "Take Back The Women Night." In this article the "blatant, yet subconscious oppression of women" is laughingly lauded. The article explains how "women make better property than partners" and "why men should not be persecuted for acting upon their instincts."

The remedy is not to request a *Commentator* apology; people don't apologize when they are ignorant of their own wrongdoing. The solution is to revoke any and all *Commentator* incidental fees and to remove the *Commentator* from its current EMU space.

Certainly free speech should be encouraged in any society. Bigots have a right to say what they will.

Make this distinction clear: There is a world of

difference between exercising free speech and funding free speech.

The University Clark Document, which establishes the guidelines for incidental fee distribution, states that all groups receiving funds "must not substantially interfere with the University's ability to carry out its educational mission."

## COMMENTARY

In the previously-mentioned stories, as well as other issues, the *Commentator* has advocated rape jokingly and overtly. The University has made its anti-rape advocacy clear through programs such as Saferide and the Women's Studies Department.

Based on the Clark Document criterion, the *Commentator* has repeatedly interfered with the University's ability to carry out its educational mission and thus should be defunded immediately.

Based on their statements, Williamson and Welch appear more content to hide in their EMU cubicles than to even pose this argument. When asked about the "Top 75" list, Welch said she would embrace silence as a defense. So accustomed to the *Commentator's* monthly beating, Welch didn't even entertain the thought of fighting such repugnance.

Williamson exhibited equal complacency. When asked if she would call for the *Commentator's* defunding after the infamous, "If she can't speak, she can't cry rape" statement, Williamson blankly responded: "I don't think I'm willing to risk the political capital on that."

Williamson just spent the last weekend in Washington, D.C. at the Feminist Expo '96. At this event she was able to listen to prominent feminists and to speak with Gloria Steinem. If our "feminist" President is unwilling to risk the political capital to confront the *Commentator's* aberration, one wonders what would take Williamson out of her inactive web.

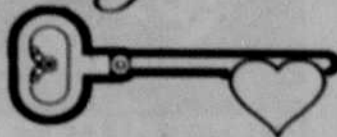
Seven years ago, the *Commentator's* funds were temporarily removed. The publication's incidental fees hearing is scheduled for February 29 at 9:30 p.m. in the EMU Boardroom.

The Program Finance Committee has said that students' voices must be heard if it is to consider revoking the publication's funds. You can mail all complaints to the PFC at Suite 4 of the EMU. If you refuse to have your incidental fees used to propagate hatred, attend the meeting or contact the PFC and say so.

University women and men who oppose pro-rape discourse have been silent for too long. Perhaps they can still raise their voices on a campus where their political leaders lack the courage to join them.

Keith Cunningham, a senior majoring in English, is a columnist for the *Emerald*.

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## LETTERS

### Two lives?

In response to David Bartlett's thoughtless fumble into the abortion debate (*ODE*, Jan. 25), I would like to expose the flawed thinking of his column.

First, he wants us to understand that there are "two" lives at stake when considering abortion.

The scientific community is divided on whether sentient life begins at conception. The quality of life of the pregnant woman is often overlooked in this fetus-oriented debate.

Motherhood should not be left up to chance. Women are too often seen as only vessels of future generations and not as autonomous beings.

Bartlett reasons that restrictions placed on late-term abortions are because the fetus is then termed human.

Third trimester abortions are simply more complicated procedures. Fortunately, 95.5 percent of all abortions are performed in the first two trimesters. According to Dr. Dominick Purpura, Dean of the Albert Einstein Medical School, the synaptic connection that permits pain sensation of the fetus does not exist until 28 weeks, not 12 weeks as Bartlett stated.

Bartlett sees a link connecting

abortion with Nazism and slavery.

He is right in that Hitler chose, through mass sterilization and genocide, who could have children. Slave owners viewed their female slaves as breeders and often sexually exploited them to produce "chattel."

In both situations the individual rights of the woman were disregarded and taken away. Isn't this exactly what anti-abortion activists proscribe?

Sukey Lupton  
Eugene

### Work together

I am concerned with your publicizing the opinion that "group projects suck" and "must be stopped" (*ODE*, Feb. 2).

I think you are promoting a spirit of intolerance we've seen in Eugene lately. In this case, an intolerance of students toward teachers and toward other students. Group projects succeed or fail depending upon the spirit of inquiry of the participants.

You get out of an education what you put in. Your concern over whether others are benefiting from your work is an example of how business-world values have begun corrupting the value of education.

Rather than "let the weak drown," why not let the strong students help teach the weaker ones? If a teacher is able to make his or her workload more manageable by relying on students for input, then there is no reason why this should be counter-productive.

Teaching is not simply about filling class time with information, and learning is not simply absorbing facts. Information is wasted on those who don't know how to work with ideas, and this is why group projects can be valuable.

If we focus on competing with ourselves instead of with others, we can change the climate of intolerance and the quality of education.

Bradley Butterfield  
Graduate, Comparative Literature

## CORRECTION

A photo caption in the Feb. 6 issue of the *ODE* incorrectly stated that a Lane Transit District bus was the cause of an oil leak into the Millrace. In fact, the cause of the contamination has not been determined. The *Emerald* regrets the error.

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1 one

2 two

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