

Should Eugene's Urban Growth Boundary be expanded to accommodate a rising population? Let us know.

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

BY MAIL: P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 BY PHONE: (541) 346-5511
 BY E-MAIL: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
 IN PERSON: Suite 300, EMU

Internet requires safe surfing

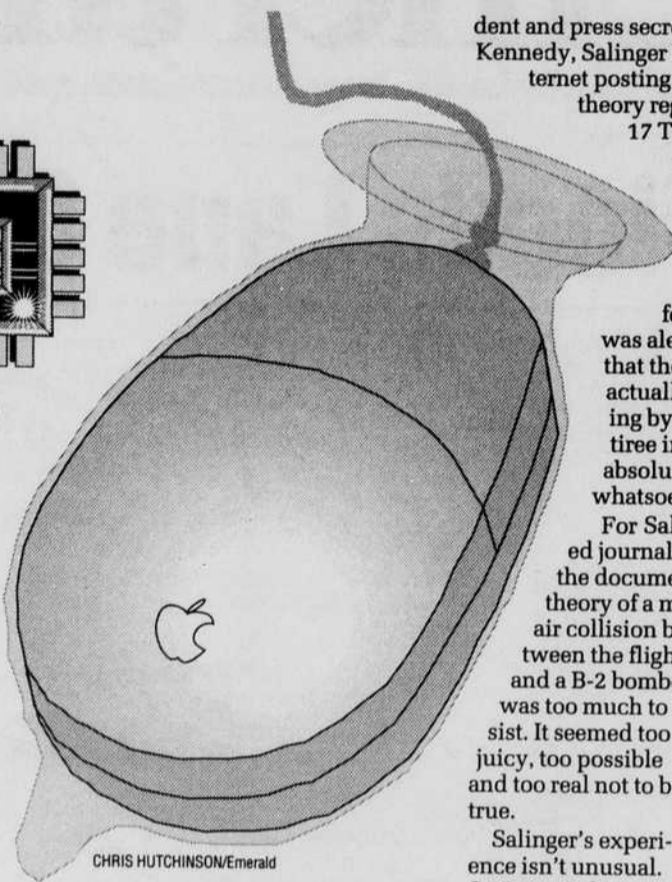
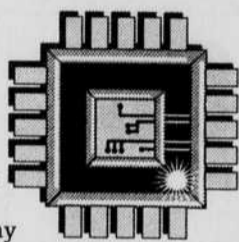
■ OUR OPINION:
 Cyberspace patrons must approach the new world with caution

It's a common fact that the Internet is full of idiots. Anybody who has spent time on the World Wide Web can attest to this. Conspiracies, claims and stupid obsessions clog every word search we try. Web pages detailing movie stars' every life detail (and usually "exclusive" nude photographs) are too many to count. Societal and government theories abound. In our usual search for the legitimate, we continually run into rambling blather.

To prove our point, we recently looked for the ridiculous in cyberspace instead of letting it find us. Using key words like "bombs" and "conspiracy," we came across many deceiving pages with seemingly harmless labels like "pyrotechnics" and "fireworks."

After a bit of probing, we found detailed instructions on the creation of all sorts of explosives. And "conspiracy" unearthed a treasure trove of ideas as well. The Great Pyramids, Bible, Mars and even the Internet itself all factored into their own sordid plots.

These pages, complete with the usual links to X-Files and Dungeons & Dragons sites, aren't afraid to present their opinions — no matter how



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

warped those views are.

But it is where these sites turn from opinion and claim to be fact that things can go horribly wrong. Just ask Pierre Salinger.

A former ABC News Correspondent and press secretary to President Kennedy, Salinger came across an Internet posting about a "hot" theory regarding the July 17 TWA Flight 800 crash. After announcing his findings in a Nov. 7 speech in Paris, the former newsman was alerted by the FBI that the document was actually a random posting by a 66-year old retiree in Florida with absolutely no validity whatsoever.

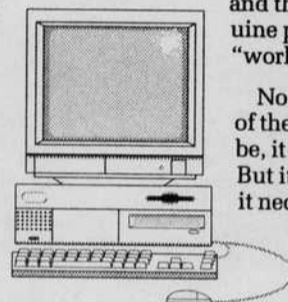
For Salinger, a respected journalist, the document's theory of a mid-air collision between the flight and a B-2 bomber was too much to resist. It seemed too juicy, too possible and too real not to be true.

Salinger's experience isn't unusual. Seeing words in print can be a temptation for assumed truth in all of us. And the Internet, the site of the most available information, is also the least reliable. No major restrictions on content exist yet, and the authors of questionable material have no obligation to reveal their

identity.

Sharon Lopatka, an Internet junkie from Maryland, carried on an intimate on-line conversation about sex and death with fellow cyber-resident Robert Glass. When the couple finally met face to face in October after months of shadowy communication, Lopatka didn't make it out alive. Two weeks later, police found her body in a shallow grave in Glass's yard and he was named the prime suspect.

We can learn from Lopatka's mistake. We can recognize the Internet is a place for those who are afraid to meet real people and reveal themselves in the process. And we can learn from Salinger. We can see the Internet is a place for cowards and those too lazy to seek genuine publication for their "works."



No matter how idiotic much of the Internet's content may be, it has a right to be there. But it doesn't require nor does it necessarily deserve our respect. The Internet is a privilege we all have. And its influence will be hard to avoid in the future. But using its resources doesn't mean we forget its many faults.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

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.

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. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: Steven Asbury

Managing Editor: Jennifer Carter. Night Editor: Thom Schoenborn

Community: Jennifer Schmitt, editor. Jean Bond, Christian Hill

Entertainment: Nicole Kreuger, editor. Jesse Stephenson

Higher Education: Tamiya Howser, in-depth. Laura Cadiz, Benjamin Kwasney

Opinion: Ashley Bach, editor. Chris Hutchinson, illustrator.

Brian Diamond, Larry Hattl, Sonja Sherwood

Politics: Shana Cohn, editor. Doug Irving

Student Activities: Kristin Bailey, editor. Angie Suchy, Tom Potter

Sports: Mark McTyre, editor. Andrea DeYoung, assistant editor.

Chris Hansen, Ryan Frank, Ryan Halvorsen

Copy Desk: Thom Schoenborn, copy chief. Sarah Kickler, Paul Maznarich, Mike Schmierbach, Kendra Smith

Presentation: Dennis Bolt, editor. Matt Garton

Photography: Mathew Stiffler, editor. Andrew Brackensick, Joe Bunik, Amanda Erickson, Shannon Kilduff, Chad Pattenon

Freelance: Lara Pittman, editor. On-Line: Nicholas Stiffler

General Manager: Judy Riedl

Advertising: Becky Merchant, director. Anne Amador, Lee Yen Beh, Marco Ching, Yujin Chi, Matt Johnson, Anne Miller, Trina Shanaman, Rose Soll, Matt Solomon, Greg Walsh

Classified: Tara Sloan, manager. Natasha Lumpkin, Debbie Levy, Heather Moyer

Production: Michele Ross, manager. Ingrid White, coordinator.

Shawna Abele, Laura Daniel, Susan Head, Trevor Kearney, Tara Knight, Melissa LeBahn, Molly McCanta, Allison Stormo, Mike Young

Business: Kathy Carbone, supervisor. Judy Connolly

Distribution: John Long, John Paull, Ferenc Rakocz

Newsroom (541) 346-5511

Display Advertising (541) 346-3712

Business Office (541) 346-5512

Classified Advertising (541) 346-4343

LETTERS

Innocent alumni

I was apprehensive about returning to campus because of some not too happy memories. Nonetheless, I looked forward to visiting some favorite campus haunts during mine and my husband's homecoming visit with my step-son. As we walked on campus, I was overjoyed to find an Emerald still intact. I took it to Rennie's Landing, as I had many years ago, and anticipated a good cup of coffee, greasy hashbrowns and eggs and reading the ODE. Those fond memories were soon squelched as I read the Emerald's editorial on Homecoming (ODE, Nov. 8).

The editors were referring to me, an alumnae, in numerous ways. Homecoming was an event interested in pleasing those "aging alumni and parents who write the checks." The Duck Party was "a great excuse for alumni to get uncontrollably intoxicated." The Fun Run was a "scary" event watching "large groups of 50 and 60-year-olds 'powerwalking'...students just wouldn't want anyone to keel over."

Where is all this animosity coming from? I'm only 34 years old; I don't drink alcohol; I don't powerwalk or run, and I feel quite comfortable finding my own entertainment. Is it so bad that a University where I spent seven years of my life and thousands of dollars invites me back to enjoy a weekend?

You asked, "What ever happened to parades, bonfires and true school spirit?" Yet you also mentioned the under-25 students "don't care and probably never will"? If you don't care, then what are you complaining about? If you do care, quit complaining and do something about it but don't attack me.

Kate Newton
 Alumnae

Don't forget

Can it be that the Emerald has already forgotten the lessons of intolerance from last week? How are students supposed to take your publication seriously when, a week after your last bout of ignorance and apology, you publish an asinine column by Brian Diamond on affirmative action?

Diamond claims the main "flaw" in affirmative action is that it "leaves many white males feeling cheated by the system and even more resentful" and this ultimately is counter-productive for women and minorities. So, the inference is that not only is affirmative action flawed because white men don't like it, but women and minorities should feel bad that they have offended white men by standing up for their rights. It seems that if white men are feeling bigoted, Diamond expects those affected by that bigotry to recant their bid for equality. I'm glad to say that I can't follow that logic.

Diamond also says that approximately 50 percent of female-headed households live below the poverty line, while "African-Americans and Hispanics are doing a little better." I'd like to remind Diamond there are women of color who are female heads of households, and that your biased data doesn't represent the overlapping identities.

How can such skewed data be meaningful? Diamond bases his column on biased statistics and faulty logic, which in turn invalidate the conclusion he draws from them. While classism is often ignored as an oppressive reality, addressing only class issues would ignore the reality of racism and sexism in this country.

Tracy Scham
 Religious Studies

ALL

Thumbs



To Russell Donnelly:

Now that the University physicist is \$5 million richer after receiving a grant to develop his "cryostat," the University is better off as well. A stronger scientific reputation and good public relations are already becoming a reality for the University's science department. And students may also benefit from Donnelly's experimental helium device. With more revenue and prestige, better faculty and funds will come our way — and not just in the science department.

To Gov. John Kitzhaber:

His vow to keep higher education funding at near the same rate amid Measure 47 is gallant and appreciated. Now his new task force and rhetoric must become action. The State Legislature won't be easy to work with. And he, like all of us, has one thing against him already: reality. The money will be hard to find — but not impossible.