

EDITORIAL



MATURE MOTHERHOOD

■ OUR OPINION: Just because a new mother is a senior citizen doesn't mean she'll be a bad parent

When the news hit last month that a 63-year-old California woman had given birth, the expected outcries of injustice and bad parenthood were heard all over the world.

How could this woman do this, people said. What about the child? What about the mother's physical well-being?

And it is true. The situation does bring up compelling questions. The woman will be closing in on 70 when the child is in preschool, 77 when the child enters high school, and 85 if she lives to see the child's college graduation.

And why did she want to have a child so badly at such an old age, so much so that she lied to the fertility clinic about her age? Did she just want to become famous? To become a novelty?

It's easy to ask these questions and feel almost angry about the choice the woman made. But many of these questions deny the woman her deserved chance to have a baby and pursue happiness.

And the usual doubts seem to deny this woman her individuality and instead make her just an age, nothing more.

In fact, "this woman" is Arceli Keh, a resident of Highland, CA, 60 miles east of Los Angeles. She is married — to Isagani Keh, a 60-year-old machine operator. The couple are both immigrants from the Philippines and have been married for 16 years.

Their neighbors describe them as quiet but friendly. And they also happen to be the new parents of a five-month-old girl named Cynthia. She is healthy, even "chubby," as reported by the Asso-

ciated Press.

Why do we feel we have the right to say the Kehs will not be good parents? Who are we to say they don't have the right to have a child?

Of course, there are dangers. Most fertility clinics will not serve any woman over the age of 55. And for good reason. The director of the New York program that Keh used said he sees serious obstetrical problems in more than half of the woman impregnated over the age of 45.

And Keh wanted a child badly and was willing to lie to get it. She was willing to risk the safety of her unborn child. This was wrong. Without full disclosure, the doctors unknowingly implanted into her another woman's egg, and she became pregnant. But when the doctors discovered her real age, they did not recommend terminating the pregnancy.

In the end, however, Keh now has a baby girl of her own, after a safe Caesarean delivery. And the debate must now lie in whether she can be a good parent. We think she can. She has a devoted husband, friends and family.

She and her husband won't be running laps with Cynthia or being terribly physically active in her childhood. But that doesn't mean they won't be good parents. It just means they'll be different parents.

If the Kehs are committed to raising their child, nothing exists to think they won't raise their child well. In fact, in many ways, they may raise their child better. They are no doubt both mature, with loads of experience.

Let's leave them alone to raise their child in peace. They didn't go through the right channels to have Cynthia, of course, but whether we like it or not, they are now a family.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Gardenburgers decision is individual, not institutional

Individual students, not the University, must choose whether to support a Gardenburger boycott

Do you want to choose for yourself whether to eat Gardenburgers, or do you want someone else to choose for you?

That is the essential question behind a boycott proposed by some student groups who are concerned about the working conditions of farmworkers and who are seeking ways to help bring the issue to public consciousness and force change. One way they seek to do that is by targeting a vegetarian product, called Gardenburgers, produced by Wholesome and Hearty Foods.

Their concern for worker's rights is laudable. Their tactics are not.

Rather than depending on a boycott by individuals, the Gardenburger protesters first demanded that the University ban Gardenburgers from its residence halls. After discussions with concerned students, senior staff, representatives from University Housing and the President's Council on Race, I decided not to institute a University-wide boycott.

My reasons are simple: the University is an open marketplace of ideas. We exist to help students make up their own minds. On political issues like this boycott, the University will not force a unilateral decision through its purchasing choices.

Instead, we strongly encourage education and individual action. When the Gardenburger issue was first brought to our attention, the University, through its housing office, sought to help the concerned students by setting up tables so they could distribute literature outside residence hall dining rooms and arranging for them to meet with the Residence Hall Governance Committee to discuss their case.

To make it easier for those students

choosing to join the boycott, an alternative vegetarian product was offered in the food line and labeled so that students could choose. The consumption of Gardenburgers was monitored, with the idea that if consumption decreased enough to make it unfeasible to serve them, they would be discontinued.

That has not happened. Gardenburgers have remained more popular than the alternative vegetarian product — with students choosing Gardenburgers 702 times, as compared to 386 times for the alternative in January and February. Offered an educated choice, students are making their decisions.

Perhaps because of that, Gardenburger protesters have now increased their efforts to spur an institutional boycott. They have demanded that residence hall students vote on the issue, hoping that a majority of students will side with them and impose their decision on others.

My view remains the same. Students have the responsibility and the right to educate themselves about the issue and then decide individually what to eat or what not to eat. I should not make that decision for them; neither should their fellow students.

It is appropriate and central to our mission, however, for the University to provide a forum for education and understanding on social issues. Therefore, I will ask the President's Council on Race to organize an educational symposium on the legal, ethical, and social issues related to labor and ethnicity. I am convening the Council this week to begin their work on the symposium.

Dave Frohnmayer is the University President. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Dave Frohnmayer

LETTERS

Racism workshop

Every year the cycle repeats. People from the ethnic student unions get offended by the *Emerald's* coverage and go to collect their five dollars and change in incidental fees to demonstrate their boycotting of the paper.

Providing an accurate coverage of people of color has been a heated debate in recent years at the University. Some journalists have stated that minorities complain about all representations of them and simply want editorial control of the paper. These journalists also question whether racism really still exists.

Some students of color would argue that the *Emerald* has a tradition of derogatory and insensitive coverage. Also that the newspaper has tended to have a race-deficient staff, respond only in defensive posturing and place the onus of responsibility on the unions.

On Nov. 12, 1996 the *Emerald* printed an editorial entitled "Racism is a problem that needs teamwork, not teams." Many were offended by the ignorant and derogatory piece. The *Emerald* soon published a retraction, but the need for the paper to undergo anti-racist training resurged.

For the past two months, Sho Shigeoka, Race Task Force members and I have worked hard to organize a racism workshop for May 10 that will provide critical dialogue and understanding. It is that important and is an issue that won't go away. We hope that the *Emerald* will see the value in anti-racist

training and implement it into their institutional structure.

The all-day workshop will safely address such topics as media accountability, a historical component, definitions and dialogue on racism and appropriate/responsible coverage and terminology.

Several interactive exercises are included. The highly qualified staff of Clergy and Laity Concerned will present the workshop. This team of trainers are powerful as agents of change.

Although the workshop is geared toward the *Emerald*, other journalism majors and media critics are encouraged to participate. It's a free event. To RSVP or to know more about the workshop please contact me at 346-1155 or jorozco@gladstone.uoregon.edu. It promises to be a frank and unique opportunity.

Jack Orozco
Race Task Force

Age of Aquarius

I'm not into astrology. I don't know who Aquarians are attracted to, how stubborn Libras are or whether or not Tauruses tend to be selfish. I do know that this Aries loves them horoscopes! Loves em!

Please be consistent about including the 'scopes in every issue. It's quite annoying when they are left out, and I know I'm not the only person who feels this way.

Emily Wallace
Journalism