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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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Switching the double standard

In our women-run, sexist society, men are treated more like sex objects than human beings.

A male friend of mine recently became involved in what he and others call the masculinist movement. And from his newfound cause, he has developed an awareness of the inequities between women and men.

Suffice it to say, he is not satisfied with the current state of affairs and so asked me, as a woman with a voice, to speak out on his and the rest of the masculinists' behalf. What he and many others are so urgently trying to rectify are the double standards society holds for women and men.

OPINION



Laura Daniel

My friend, a gorgeous researcher with a degree in chemistry, is tired of having other chemists, who are primarily female,

treat him differently and unfairly just because he has external genitalia and a different hormone balance. With passion, he utters a few complaints about his working situation.

He says they assume that just because he is good-looking, he is inept. He complains, "No one questions the intellectual abilities of a beautiful woman. Why should a beautiful man be any different?" Why, indeed.

Unable to go an entire eight-hour work day without being called "Sweetie" or asked to get female chemists of equal rank a cup of coffee, he feels that a woman in his position would never receive such treatment.

In fact, a female chemist, who was hired just two weeks before he was, was recently given a substantial pay increase while he has yet to receive any recognition for what he considers valuable work. To support his claim of inequality in the workplace, he points out that in 1994, male college graduates made, on average, \$11,667 less than female college graduates.

Perhaps my friend is getting a little too worked up about working conditions. Sometimes one just has to buck up and take it like a woman. Are affectionate nicknames and small chores really that big of a deal? I don't think so.

But some of his claims have some merit. He asked me how I thought he felt every time he went to the mechanic and was surrounded by greasy, sweaty women who stared at his crotch and had pictures of naked men with perfect muscles and large penises covering the walls. I had to admit, I could see his point.

Brought up in a traditional and religious family, he cringes thinking about the lack of respect he

and his father received from his mother and sister. When his sister stated she would rather believe the wrong religion than chance going to hell, he was outraged, demanding, "How can you believe in something that subordinates half the population?"

She replied: "There is an order to things: women first, then men, then nature. Men were created to be playmates, to be extensions of women. The only true achievement of man is to marry and supply his sperm so the woman, the one with the power of reproduction, may extend the family line."

Religion and family values integrate with entertainment to form one of the most sexist industries in the world. Men, my friend points out, have few role models on television or in the movies.

Women are constantly given the starring roles in movies and the leads on television. Sure, there is usually the token man appearing in shows, but he is always unnaturally beautiful, while the women may be balding or fat.

The latest movie to hit my friend's masculinist sore spot was *The Next Element*, the sci-fi action movie set in the 23rd century. He complained that there were few speaking roles for men but an abundance of D&A — dick and ass.

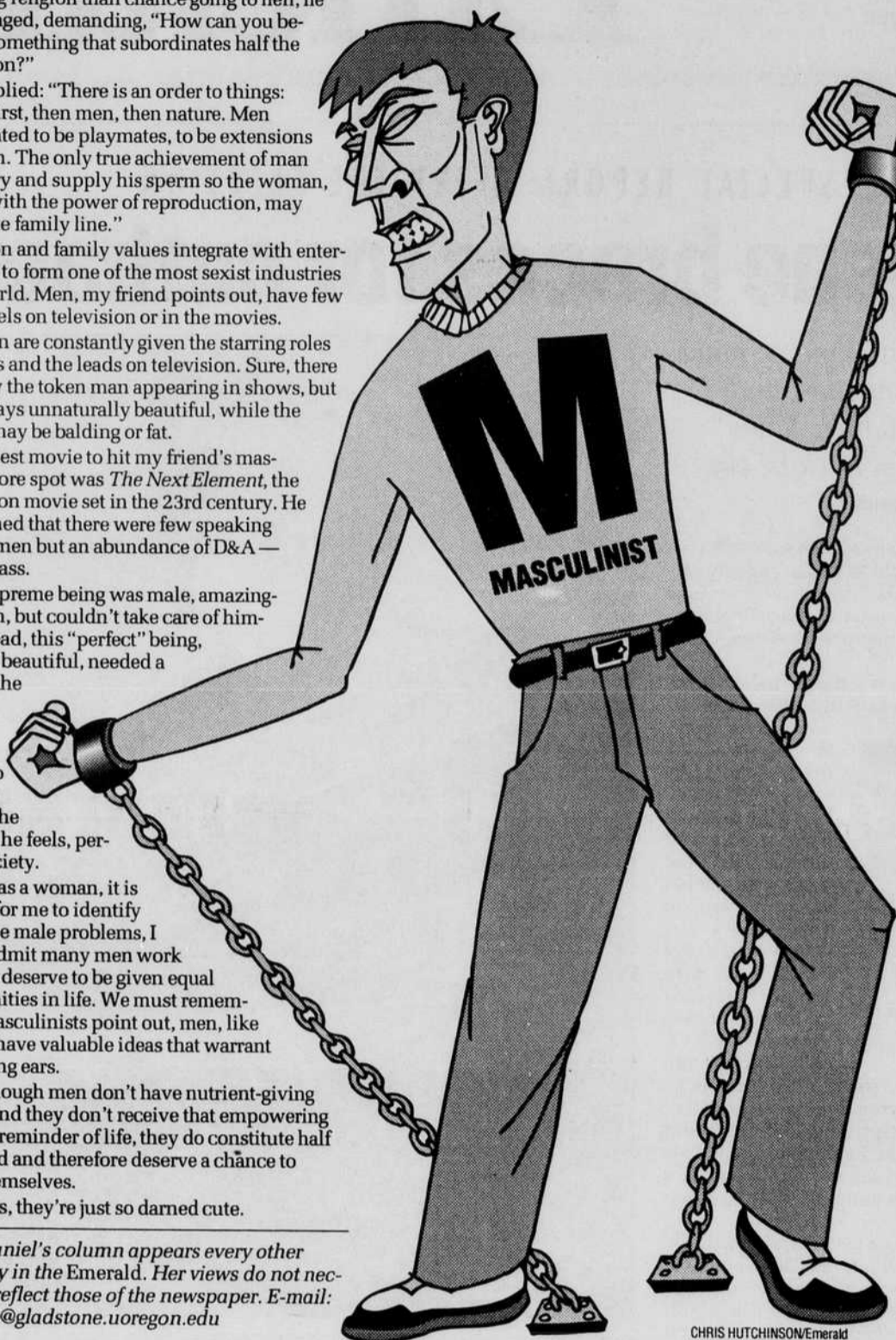
The supreme being was male, amazingly enough, but couldn't take care of himself. Instead, this "perfect" being, built and beautiful, needed a woman, the only character with a brain, to take care of him. The message, he feels, pervades society.

While as a woman, it is difficult for me to identify with these male problems, I have to admit many men work hard and deserve to be given equal opportunities in life. We must remember, as masculinists point out, men, like women, have valuable ideas that warrant welcoming ears.

And though men don't have nutrient-giving breasts, and they don't receive that empowering monthly reminder of life, they do constitute half this world and therefore deserve a chance to prove themselves.

Besides, they're just so darned cute.

Laura Daniel's column appears every other Thursday in the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper. E-mail: moonpie@gladstone.uoregon.edu



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

All thumbs



UNIVERSITY DAY
Yippee! The campus is clean. After the University-wide cleanup day on May 15, fresh barkdust and flowers were in the gardens, and we even had a new drinking fountain. Just in time for Parents' Weekend.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION
The Oregon Judicial Fitness and Disability Commission recommended on May 15 that Oregon Supreme Court Justice Edward Fadeley should be suspended. Considering he sexually harassed his employees and slept with his judicial assistant, Fadeley's suspension should be quickly implemented and slow to expire.



THE GLOBE
This isn't the first time a supermarket tabloid has graced this section. This time, the *Globe* paid a woman to entice ABC sportscaster Frank Gifford to sleep with her. His wife, of course, is Kathie Lee Gifford. This is called creating the news, not reporting it, *Globe* people. Even your fellow tabloids are leaving you high and dry on this one.

ANNETTE SORENSEN
The 30-year-old Danish woman left her baby outside a New York restaurant while she ate dinner inside. It may be a Danish custom, but we're talking about New York City. What was she thinking?

LETTERS

March together

A year ago, hundreds of women, and quite a few men, gathered to protest violent crimes against women at the annual "Take Back the Night" march. Women shared their personal stories about being assaulted, and those who were angry that they couldn't walk alone at night had an opportunity to express their frustration. Overall, it was a very supportive environment, if you were a woman.

As a woman, I hate that I can't enjoy the night alone. I understand the frustration, but so do my male friends who over the years have walked miles out of their way, concerned that I might be attacked or raped if left alone. I was surprised to hear the announcement, as we started the march, that men would

be segregated from the women they supported and forced to walk behind them.

While men are not victims of rape nearly as often as women, many of them are just as furious. If I were male I would be hurt and offended at being pushed to the back because of my gender. As a woman, I was hurt and offended to see the men treated that way.

I called the ASUO Women's Center recently to see if this year's march would be different and I was told that men "can march, but they have to be in back." This year I will boycott the "Take Back the Night" march and I urge anyone else that objects to sexual discrimination to do the same.

There will be no progress until we learn that we cannot fight

sexual assault by dividing our supporters. I agree with the goals of the rally, but I cannot participate until women and men can fill Eugene's streets together screaming a new catch phrase: "Let's all take back the night."

Amie Corbin
Biochemistry

What I know

Before people race to the defense of Jesikah Allen and public nudity, they should be aware of some of the facts that were left unmentioned in last Thursday's article (*ODE*, May 15).

Here's what I know: several news sources and friends of mine have mentioned that Allen was arrested because she was "gyrating her chest at passers-by." Moreover, the topless young woman that I saw

downtown two Fridays ago was wearing a leather collar that had a chain leash attached to it. And a young man was holding the other end of the leash as they walked together. This woman may have been Allen. I don't know. Are these descriptions of "political statements"? It would not appear so.

I agree wholeheartedly that women should not be forced to "be ashamed of their bodies" nor to keep their breasts covered, as Allen suggests they have been. However, I find it ironic that someone favoring these liberties would place herself in such an obviously submissive or sexual position. Let's not lose sight of the real reason that Allen was arrested.

Sean Williams
Music Education

What do you think?

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