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PERSPECTIVES

WHAT IS THE REAL QUESTION *in the* WHITE HOUSE SCANDAL?

The media should be focusing on whether the president is a felon instead of digging up irrelevant dirt

Did he or didn't he? Yes, we are talking about President Clinton and the scandal that has been the focus of many conversations in the nation this week. But we aren't asking if Clinton had a relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, because that is not the heart of the issue. We are asking whether the president suggested Lewinsky lie under oath — whether the President of the United States committed a federal offense.

Ah, yes. The perjury issue. Remember that one? It seems to have gotten lost in the rage of headlines like "Classmates recall boast of earlier affair" (Oregonian, Jan. 25) and "Lewinsky may have forged letter, college says" (Oregonian, Jan. 26) and interviews on the local news with Lewinsky's neighbors and former classmates at

Lewis and Clark College.

Scandal always seems to get the attention of the media and of the people, and this is a scandal with massive implications if it is found that Clinton did indeed suggest that Lewinsky lie under oath. But it seems that the media have been following the road of the tabloids, digging up dirt on everyone involved under the guise of seeking the truth, burying the issue of perjury in the meantime.

What is getting buried concurrently while all this is going on? Perjury and obstruction of justice are federal, and thus impeachable, offenses. The implications of impeachment or resignation are far more important to the day-to-day functioning of the United States than whether the president had an affair. (Not that we are condoning that sort of behavior.) Where are the examinations of how the country will function in the event that Clinton is removed or steps down from office?

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

Other issues are also getting overshadowed by the large headlines and head shots of Clinton, Lewinsky, Kenneth Starr, Vernon Jordan and Linda Tripp.

In the story in the bottom left corner of Sunday's Register-Guard, we find the following: "White House officials said a countdown to a military strike could begin as soon as Ramadan — the Muslim holy month of fasting — ends Friday."

In a twist that makes the writers of the film "Wag the Dog" look psychic, a potential military situation starts brewing. Clinton would probably like to see real life follow the plot a bit more and have rumors of war obliterate reports of the sex scandal. But, unlike in the movie, reports of the possibility of war have not knocked the sex scandal off the front page. Rather, the opposite seems to have happened.

The article goes on, "The White House meeting came as a consensus emerged in the president's national security staff that Iraq would never

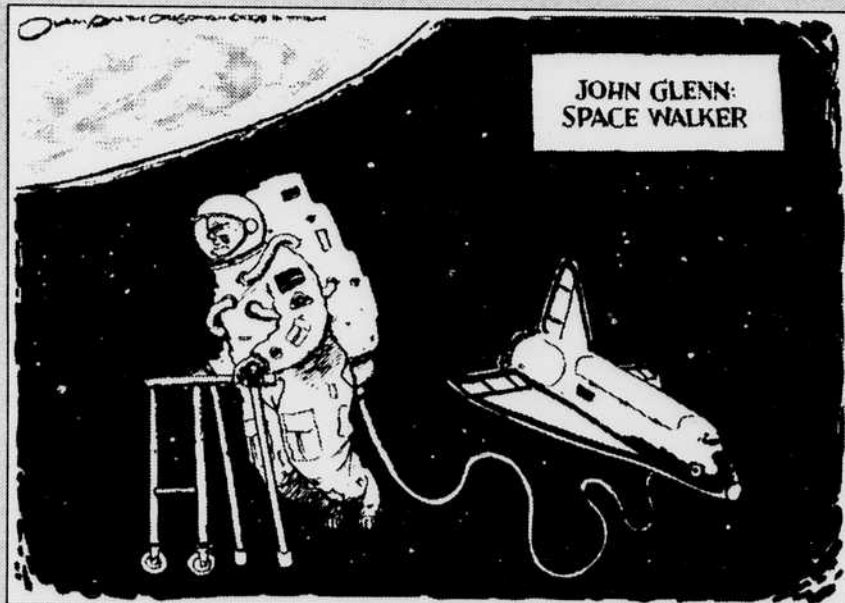
comply with the U.N. inspectors, and that smart bombs and cruise missiles may be needed to destroy Saddam's hidden potential to build crude weapons of mass destruction."

Another casualty of the scandal was Clinton's discussion of his proposal to crack down on Medicare fraud. The main point of his plan is to prevent overcharging "of everything from drugs to wheelchairs by medical suppliers" (Register-Guard, Jan. 25). He says his steps will save Medicare \$2 billion over five years. This, too, seems pretty significant, but in the most packed news week in recent history, it got lost.

No one knows what really happened between Lewinsky and Clinton except for Lewinsky and Clinton. While the media will continue to speculate until the truth comes out, remember the real question to ask: Is he or isn't he ... a felon?

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

DRAWING BOARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Uphold decision

Editor's note: This is an open letter to University President Dave Frohnmayer.

With respect to the recent decision by the Appeals Committee to uphold the finding in the Danta Graham-Preston case that he was in violation of the Student Conduct Code, we would like to encourage you to stand by these decisions and findings which have essentially been made four times now. We believe in the process which has been established by students and faculty, and we believe that the process has been followed thoroughly to the end with the results essentially being the same every time.

The sanctions ultimately handed down need to be strengthened now by your signature. We feel that anything less than categorical acceptance of these sanctions would seriously undermine the integrity of the system that we have in place and would put into question the importance that the administration puts on the safety of women on this campus and ultimately the safety of students in general. The process is what needs to be upheld now, and that is what falls onto your shoulders with this appeal.

We urge you to take this appeal and place your endorsement on the final decision that was already made. This will send a clear message to the campus community that feeling comfortable and safe on this campus is of utmost importance to you and the administration. Any other decision which might lessen any aspect of these decisions would be a mistake and would seriously damage student/administration relations.

**ASUO President Bill Miner,
 Vice President Ben Unger and staff**

University should accept ASL

I was pleased to see the front page article on the University's lack of acceptance of American Sign Language as a second/foreign language requirement (ODE, Jan. 27). I have been both disturbed and surprised by this since arriving at the

University. After doing some research on this subject, I found that many universities and colleges across the country (at least 85) accept ASL as a second/foreign language for purposes of a degree. Some of these include Harvard, Yale, NYU, BYU, USC, Purdue and the entire University of California system, just to name a few. A full list is available at: <http://www.unm.edu/~wilcox/ASLFL/univlist.html>.

Often the misconception is that ASL is English on the hands. Not so; that is another signing language called Signed Exact English. There is substantial research in the area of ASL showing that it is indeed a distinct language. Its syntax is not the same as spoken English. ASL has its own rhythm and meaning. Additionally, the argument is the ASL is not a "foreign" language. In some universities, Native-American languages such as Navajo are accepted as "foreign" languages. I guess we need to define "foreign," whether this means a foreign country's language or a foreign, unfamiliar language.

Finally, ASL is thought to not have its own literature or culture. In fact, with the statistic of 500,000 native signers in America, the deaf culture may be the third largest non-English speaking group in our country. The literature of ASL includes poetry, plays, narratives, films, etc.

Hopefully soon, the University of Oregon will join the ranks of the other 85 progressive universities in the United States by accepting ASL as a foreign/second language. I have chosen ASL as my second language; I am in good company. And, with instructors like Jo Larson-Muhr, we have a wonderful opportunity to learn from a tremendously talented native signer. We at the U of O have a very diverse offering of foreign dialects. I think it only proper to add the third most used language to them. I urge anyone interested in an appeal of the foreign language requirement to include ASL, or for more information to contact the Office of Student Advocacy.

**Donna M. Oakes
 Psychology**