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Don't scrutinize Clinton's sex life

Americans need to worry about policy issues, not personal affairs

This is none of your business. It's none of mine, either. For that matter, Bill Clinton's sex life is not the business of anyone other than the president and his wife.

For weeks, we've heard about the president's alleged affairs and how the government should not attempt to hide them. We've heard how Bill Clinton should be a role model. We've heard how the president should just come clean and resign.

With all these "shoulds," many people have failed to notice what President Clinton is: a married man and leader of this country.

As a married man, it is Clinton's duty to handle extramarital affairs with his spouse, not the public. As a married man, the president's respect for his wife comes into question, not his ability to run a nation. As a married man, Clinton is expected to be honest with his family, not just his drinking buddies.

OPINION



Jonas Allen

Clinton's job as Commander-in-Chief is not much different from his familial one. But these unproven domestic delinquencies must not tarnish his presidential proficiency.

Critics have charged that recent White House feats are attempts to divert the public from the media blitz surrounding Monica Lewinsky. Republicans have labeled threats of striking Iraq as a smoke screen to distract Americans from the controversy. And the balanced budget proposed earlier this week has not received the credit it deserves for the simple reason that it came on the high heels of a White House crisis.

But this is not an administration in danger of losing respect. That's illustrated by some of the highest approval ratings since Clinton was elected president. According to an Associated Press article, some conservatives blame this high support on public presumption of Clinton's innocence.

And that's wrong?
 The American justice system

prides itself on finding defendants innocent until proven guilty. If conservative guesses are correct, that's exactly what the public is doing. More importantly, Americans are focusing on the promises and accomplishments of the Clinton administration.

Although critics claim the balanced budget proposal and threats to Iraq are distractions, those issues have been around much longer than the recent controversy. A balanced budget has been on Clinton's agenda since day one of his administration. Military strikes against Iraq have been at the back of everyone's mind since late 1997.

Clinton has proved himself to be a capable leader. He has proposed a balanced budget for 1999, the first time that's been done in three decades. He has steered this country through international crises and led America to one of its strongest economic periods in years. The man even saw us through the O.J. Simpson trial, for goodness sakes.

Several days after the accusations arose, Clinton looked the media straight in the eye and said he did not have sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. He concluded by saying he was "going to go back to work for the American people."

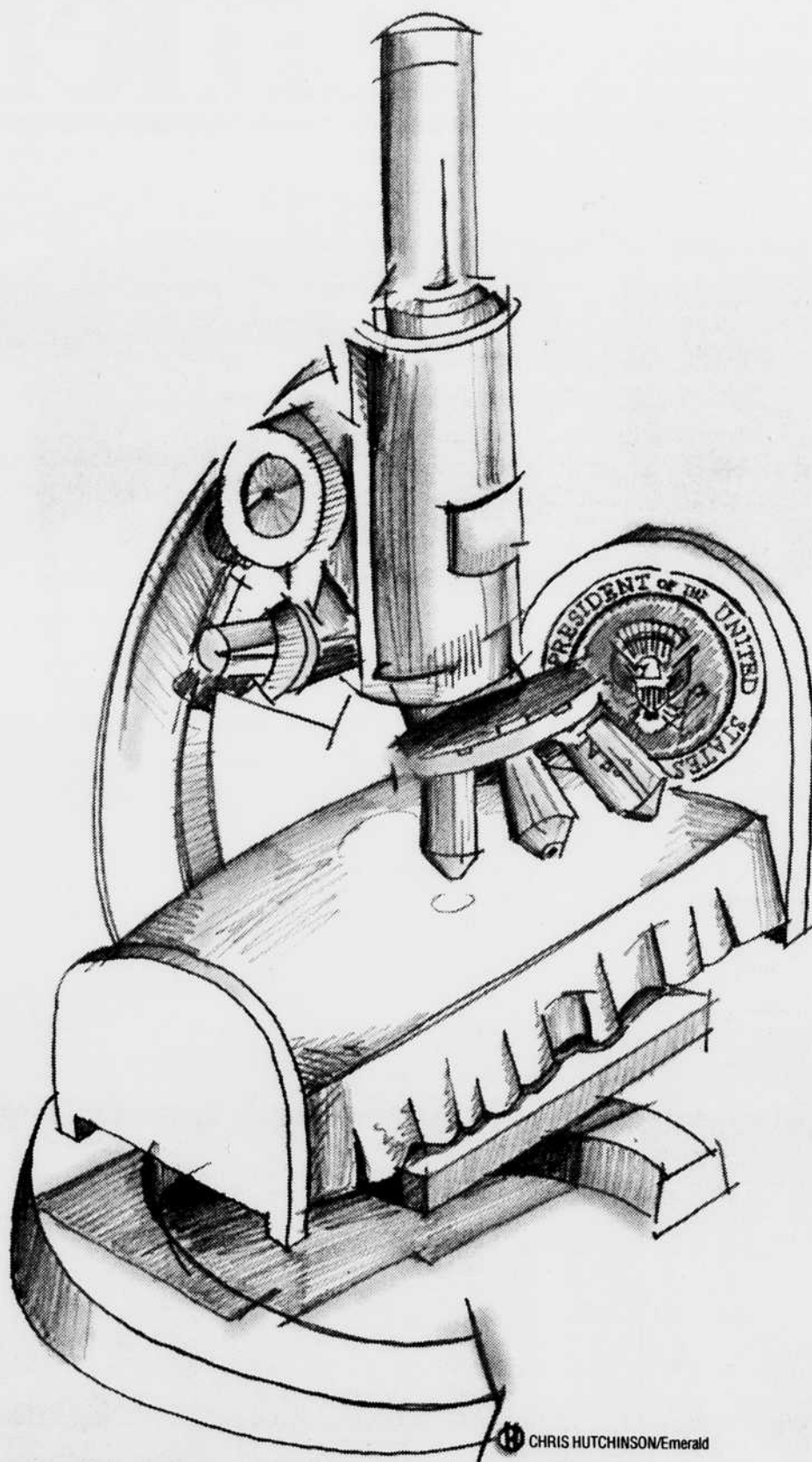
Bill Clinton has never stopped working for the American people.

This nation needs to focus on the president's proposals to improve the country, not the ones allegedly made to an intern. We need to focus on what this administration has achieved, not the scandals that have tried to bring it to its knees. This is especially important because none of the recent accusations has been proved.

Washington, D.C., has seen a whirlwind of White House developments in the past few weeks. Clinton's critics have blown by his accomplishments and labeled him as a man unfaithful to his wife and country. Unless the sexual accusations are actually confirmed, President Clinton has been faithful to his promises, both marital and political.

And that's what should matter to America.

Jonas Allen is a columnist for the Emerald. His columns appear on alternate Fridays. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

CORRECTION

In the campus brief "Senate postpones court appointment" (ODE, Feb. 5), Andrew Oberriter should have been identified as a former constitutional court justice. The Emerald regrets the error.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protect all women

Since I wrote an article last week for the Oregon Commentator regarding the Danta Graham-Preston case, I have been actively sought out by several members of the ASUO and complemented on a well-written and thought-out article regarding the sensitive issue of rape on campus.

While I want to pat myself on the back for a job well done, I can't. I must have done something wrong because not one of them appears to understand my article. If there was one fundamental theme that ran throughout the article it was crystal: Campus judicial systems do not provide rape victims with any real justice, let alone create a safe University community. I thought my logic was clear. But don't take my word for it:

"Indeed, a college or a university

should never undertake the adjudication of a felony or sexual violence without first reporting the incident to the local police and prosecutor. The duty of every citizen is to report serious crime when he or she becomes aware of it. Nor should schools allow crime victims to dictate whether a crime is reported to the local police and prosecutor. In the face of serious crime, the greater good must sometimes displace the preferences of the individual."

Who said this? None other than Eileen Wagner, an attorney and former college professor who works for Security on Campus, a non-profit organization that specializes in providing legal defense for victims of rape on college campuses.

But if the University wants to let a couple of students and administrators who think they can come up

with a court that is better than what a thousand years of common law tradition has previously dictated run rampant ... God forbid I get in the way.

If Graham-Preston is indeed guilty (and I might add that while it is obvious where my sympathy lies in this case, I am deeply concerned about the lack of protection for the accused in the campus court system), he should be in jail. Period. He should not be enrolling in the University of Washington next year, where there are even more available women, not the least of which are a few who happen to be friends of mine. If anything happens to them, the University won't just have blood on their hands, but by the time I'm done with those who are responsible for this abomination, it will be their own. Oh, I'm sorry. Did that sound like a

threat? Perhaps not as big a threat as turning an alleged rapist loose on the community.

So when the ASUO has a "candlelight vigil" at 9 a.m. today to "support the victims and the campus judicial system," forgive me if I get a little upset. First, it took anonymous posters saying, "Where is campus support for rape victims?" that made the ASUO look bad before they sprang into action. Second, you can't have it both ways — if you support the campus judicial system, you're not delivering any justice to the victims who have to go through the agony of another appeal, nor are you protecting the other women on campus and the community at large. The idea is about as incongruous as, well, a candlelight vigil at 9 a.m.

Mark Hemingway
 Editor, Oregon Commentator