

## CONTACTING US

NEWSROOM:  
(541) 346-5511  
E-MAIL:  
ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

ADDRESS:  
Oregon Daily Emerald  
P.O. BOX 3159  
Eugene, Oregon 97403

ONLINE EDITION: www.uoregon.edu/~ode

## PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Sarah Kickler  
EDITORIAL EDITOR  
Mike Schmierbach  
NIGHT EDITOR  
Holly Sanders

## Spreading blame for lack of access

*The ongoing disagreement about building an elevator in the EMU was caused by errors on the part of several groups*

**T**his article is about blame. And there's a lot of blame to go around. The blame could start with a great many people. To be fair, however, let's start with ourselves.

If you are in a wheelchair, you cannot make it into the Emerald offices. This has been the case since last spring, when the wheelchair lift by our offices broke.

This isn't the only place in the EMU that is inaccessible to some people with disabilities. Other student groups' offices and the International Student Lounge are also unreachable. There is something upsetting about the fact that our own facilities do not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As a renter, we are not legally bound to tackle this problem; the responsibility for making sure building facilities meet the law lies with the EMU board. Morally, however, we ought to be concerned about the problem and take action to fix it.

Having taken the first step by admitting we have a problem, there is still a lot of blame to distribute. The EMU has been in violation of the act since spring, and until the end of January, no one had taken clearly visible action to fix the situation.

The problem, as we mentioned, came about when a lift located upstairs broke. That was last spring. This is February. Between last spring and February, the EMU has been undergoing major renovations. The problem should have been mentioned earlier.

To that extent, a lot of blame rests with the EMU board. Late last month, the board petitioned the Student Senate for \$300,000 to pay for an elevator that would bring the building into compliance with the act.

The amount has been reduced to \$250,000, but the request still raises a number of concerns.

## AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

As members of the Senate have noted, this request should have been made earlier. The EMU board insists it was seeking alternate funding, but that process could have taken place a while ago and probably should have been more effective.

Additionally, the board has requested that the money come out of the Overrealized Fund — an account that contains student fees in excess of those budgeted for. Theoretically, this money ought to be in place for emergencies, but like the more egregious decision by last year's ASUO Executive to spend some of the fund on an amphitheater, this would seriously deplete available resources.

Troubled by this possibility, the Senate refused to consider the request until a clarification of policy regarding the Overrealized Fund had taken place and more information about the elevator and possible options was made available. This is understandable, but also troubling because of the possibility that the EMU — supposedly dedicated to the

service of students — will remain inaccessible to a portion of the student body.

Therefore, some blame must lie with the Senate. This delay would have been unnecessary if the Senate had clarified use of the fund last year during the amphitheater fiasco or earlier this year. Moreover, if the fund isn't the proper source of money for the elevator — which is certainly a logical claim — the Senate should work with the EMU board to find an appropriate source of funding.

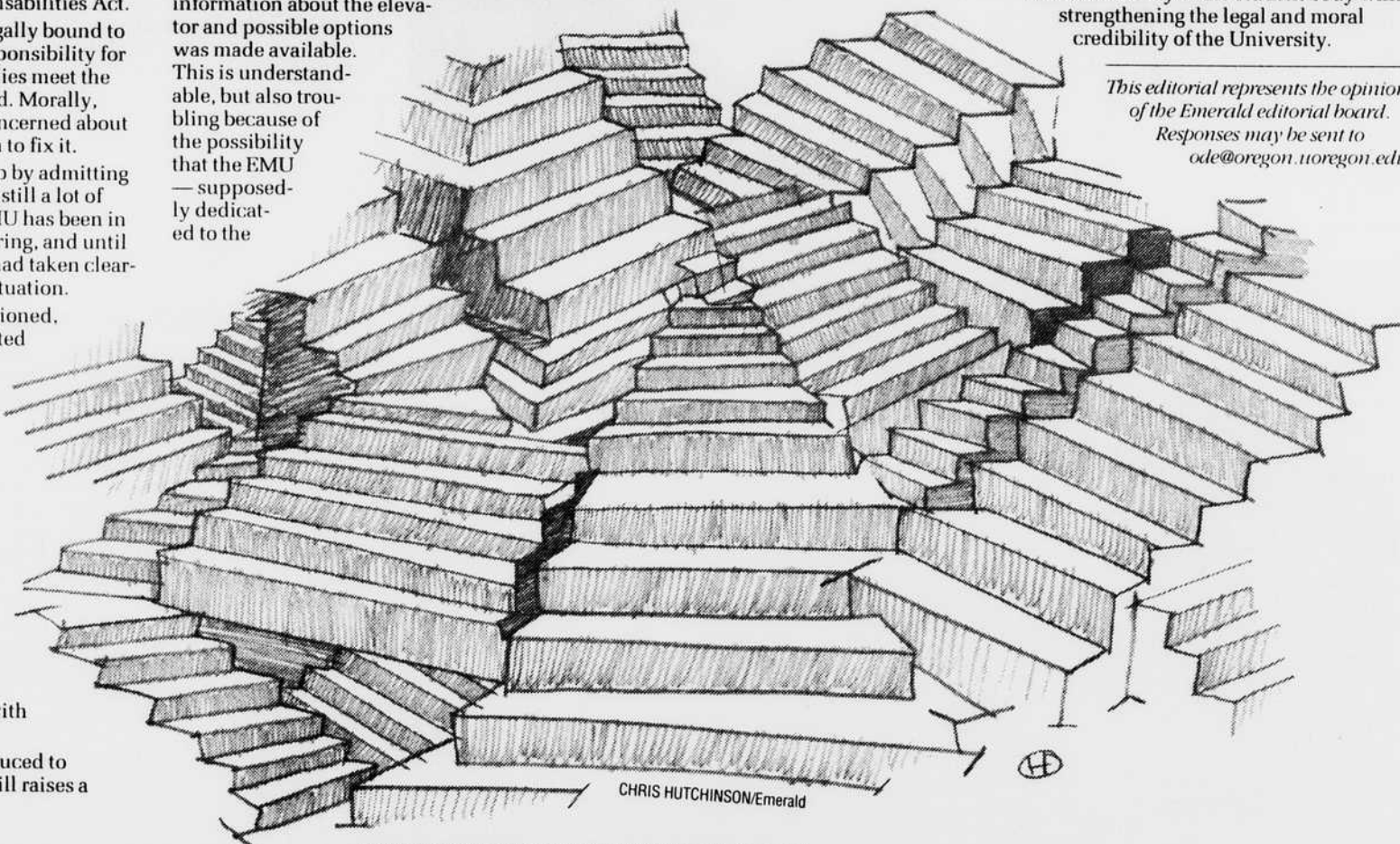
After all, this situation ought to be a source of concern for everyone at the University. This means, of course, that some blame also lies with an administration that continues to manage buildings that don't meet ADA requirements.

While the EMU doesn't fall directly under administrative control, other equally inaccessible buildings on campus do. This is an issue people at Johnson Hall should have been worrying about and working on solving for a while.

If University fund-raisers had been working to get money to update existing buildings instead of striving to build new ones, perhaps a fund would exist for contingencies such as this. Few things reflect worse on a University than facilities that exclude some of the students.

Mistakes were made by numerous parties. Mistakes had to be made by numerous parties in order for such an egregious violation of code to continue for so long. In order to end that violation, however, it will take the cooperation of the various parties who are to blame; all involved groups must work for a solution that maintains the financial stability of the student body while strengthening the legal and moral credibility of the University.

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



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Avoid judgement

As a Catholic Christian in favor of gay rights, I was saddened and angered by Barry Williams' letter attacking homosexuality.

To use the Bible to justify hatred toward and discrimination against gays should be unthinkable for any practicing Christian. Jesus spoke of love and non-judgmental attitudes toward others. Sadly, my fellow Christians are often the first in line to endorse discriminatory attitudes.

Regardless of any moral opinion of homosexuality, however, arguments over gay rights initiatives should remain on the legal level. In other words, is it ethical under the law to fire an employee or refuse a person housing only on the basis that he or she is gay? Common sense tells us that it is not.

In response to Williams' comment regarding homosexual marriage, one must consider the purpose of marriage. Is procreation the sole reason to get married? If so, how does Williams justify the

marriage of infertile couples? It strikes me as ironic that gays are often lambasted for their alleged promiscuity, but then are subsequently denied the opportunity of monogamous marriage.

Perhaps in matters such as these, Williams should look to Mother Teresa, the "most admired individual of this decade," who said: "People often ask me what I think about homosexuals ... and I always answer that I don't judge people. It isn't what anyone may or may not have done, but what you have done that matters to God. ... If you judge others, then you are not giving love."

Annie Abiner  
Psychology/sociology

## Williams prejudiced

Regarding Barry Williams's letter to the editor (e.g., "Homosexuality is unnatural," ODE, Feb. 25), the Bible has, alas, been made to say a great many things. Sometimes, as when Williams juxtaposes so-called biblical evidence ("The emotion God feels [toward

gay and lesbian people] is fierce, burning anger") with forecasts of the imminent deaths of young men and women from AIDS, we learn rather more about one person's uncharitable opinions and desires than about the Bible and its relationship to a viable Christian faith.

Although few among my fellow students can be persuaded by the predictable claims of the OCA to adopt Williams' fierce brand of morality, this doesn't relieve us of the necessity of responding to his point of view, particularly when it appears in our newspaper. I hope others will make their thoughts known whenever Williams and those of his persuasion choose to subject us to their prejudices.

Brian Whaley  
English

## Group offered subsidy

According to Sal Piazza, sales director at the Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County, both his agency and the University of Oregon have at-

tempted to subsidize the Promise Keepers' Autzen Stadium male supremacy rallies (Register-Guard, Feb. 20).

Presumably, both the association and the University would offer the same preferential treatment to any group of Moonies, Scientologists or secular humanists wanting to converge in Eugene.

Ron Black  
Junction City

## Higher ed is priority

Thanks to Michael Burnham for a good Emerald article on my recent announcement of candidacy for state Legislature. I knew I could count on a UO reporter to do better than the rest of the media community at catching the highlight of my speech: the critical need for restoring state funds to the higher ed system.

A generation ago, I served my turn as an Emerald reporter on my way to a journalism degree at the University, so I know how tough it is to keep up with a

rapid-fire speaker. Thus, no criticism is intended when I offer the following clarification of my key statistic.

Burnham writes that I said, "the state has reduced funding for colleges and universities by 6.4 percent since 1990." The sad truth, as I described it, is actually much worse than that. In 1990, 15 percent of the state's budget went to higher ed. Now the percentage has fallen to 6.4 percent. Math majors won't be the only ones to perceive that such a decline is not marginal; it's precipitous. Your 80 percent increase in tuition since 1990 is just one consequence of that defunding.

I am offering to be a voice within the Legislature's majority part (a rare phenomenon from a Eugene district) for improved funding of higher education in the coming session. Call me with questions or suggestions. I'm in the phone book.

Norm Fox, candidate  
House District 41  
UO Class of '68