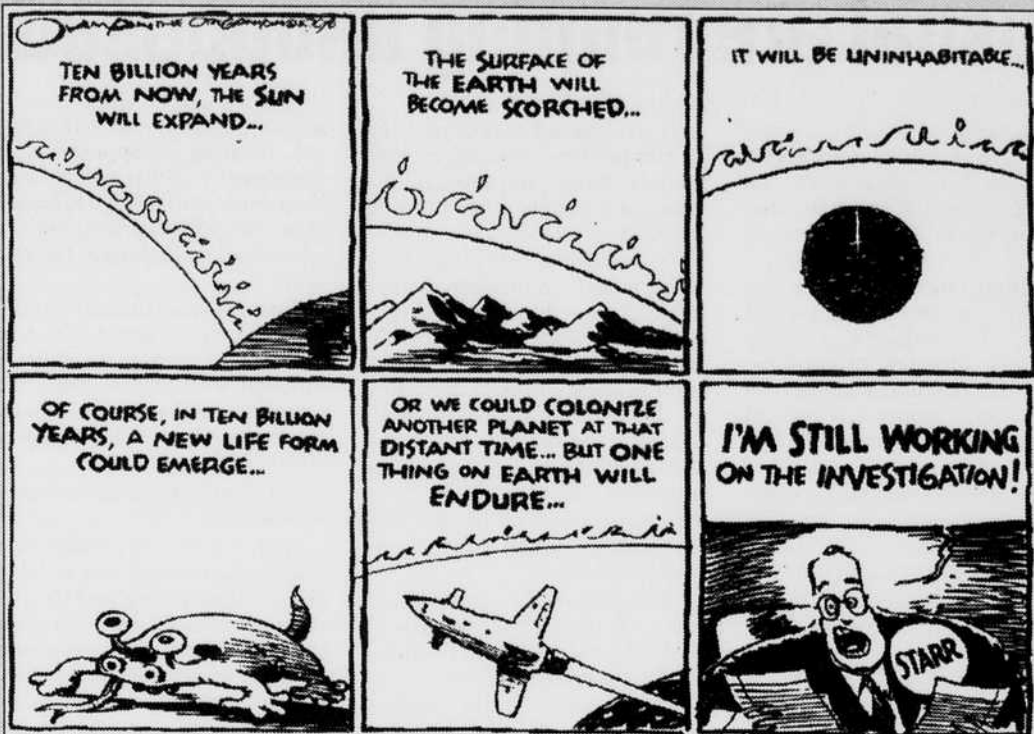


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taco Bell ads OK

I never really wanted to write a letter to the editor of the Oregon Daily Emerald, but Kamaron Cole's column on stereotypes (ODE, April 15) was such an insult to common sensibilities that I could not let it go by without a response. "The recent Taco Bell ads have received warranted criticism for exploiting Mexican stereotypes." Exactly which Mexican stereotypes? Are you referring to the common misconception that all Chihuahuas speak with a Mexican accent?

I find Dinky the Chihuahua a very reasonable choice for Taco Bell. As anyone living in Mexico would tell you, Taco Bell does not serve true Mexican cuisine. It does, however, serve Mexican-themed cuisine, so it is quite appropriate that their commercials would use Mexican-themed characters. Toucans and rabbits are used to sell cereal and bears are used to sell honey, so what is wrong with a dog being used to sell burritos — a dog, in fact, that originated in the Mexican state of Chihuahua?

Your telling us not to roll our eyes after you relayed the quotation by Gabriel Cazares saying in effect that the Chihuahua in the Taco Bell commercial represents Taco Bell's perception that all Mexicans are dogs implies that you know it was a ridiculous thing for him to say. You said, though, to consider the timing — amidst campaigns against bilingual education and the like — but you really didn't draw a connection between Cazares' quotation, the ad campaign and your "timing" hypothesis. If anything, this commercial supports the aims of diversity in a passive, non-threatening way. Think about it. This commercial is itself bilingual, with its Spanish catch phrase, "yo quiero Taco Bell." To Bob and Judy Suburbia, with no exposure to Spanish, watching TV at home, this phrase will stick in their minds enough to know that "yo quiero" means "I want."

The last paragraph said using stereotypes in advertising isn't new (although I maintain there is no use of a stereotype in the Dinky the Chihuahua commercials). And indeed the phenomenon isn't. I have a good friend from Switzerland who, on his first trip to America, commented on the false depictions of the Swiss in

the Ricola commercials — jolly yodelers blowing Alphorns. Also not true is the idea that all Swiss girls look like the Heidi character on the Swiss Miss hot chocolate box. Though these advertisements actively misrepresented his culture, he did not think it was that big of a deal. "Can something so culturally loaded really be dismissed as harmless?" you asked. Honestly, yes. If your view of Switzerland is people on mountains screaming "Ricola!" or your view of Ireland is a hapless leprechaun defending his "Box o' Lucky Charms" or your view of Mexico is a talking Chihuahua, maybe you should turn off your TV, take a vacation to these great places, and give the rest of us a break.

Dustin Preuitt
Political Science

Collier an alternative

With all the hoo-hah over coffee contracts, a misunderstanding has arisen. The coffee contract in question is for EMU food services only, not the entire University.

Collier House Cafe, the University restaurant at 13th Avenue and University Street, held a coffee competition several years ago. The winner, based solely on blind taste tests by customers, was Oregon's Allann Brothers Coffee. We also serve Oregon produce, meat, wines and beers, including the new organic Wolaver beer. Check out your campus food service alternative.

Joan MacDonald
Chef/Manager, Collier House

Leave Wonder alone

I have seen posters of Stevie Wonder all over campus denouncing OSPIRG. None of these posters had a name claiming who they were.

I grew up in lower east side Detroit and as a young child I watched in amazement as Wonder carried out miracles of the human spirit. You have desecrated an image that is very sacred to me by using him for your selfish political reasons.

I hope that you, whoever you are, reflect upon this violation. I have faith and confidence in student government to continue the work that OSPIRG has done for the University community.

Bryan Moore
Instructor, Romance Languages

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