

PERSPECTIVES

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Thumbs



TO JAILHOUSE ATMS:

Santa Clara (Calif.) County now offers a kiosk to crime suspects so they can post small bail amounts on their credit cards. The machines may help reduce jail overcrowding, but they don't take American Express.

TO CRANKY POLICE:

A 16 year-old was charged with pointing a toy gun at a Bend police officer. The arresting officer was responding to a call about a car full of armed teens. When the police are in hot pursuit, pulling out a toy gun isn't going to be the wisest prank.



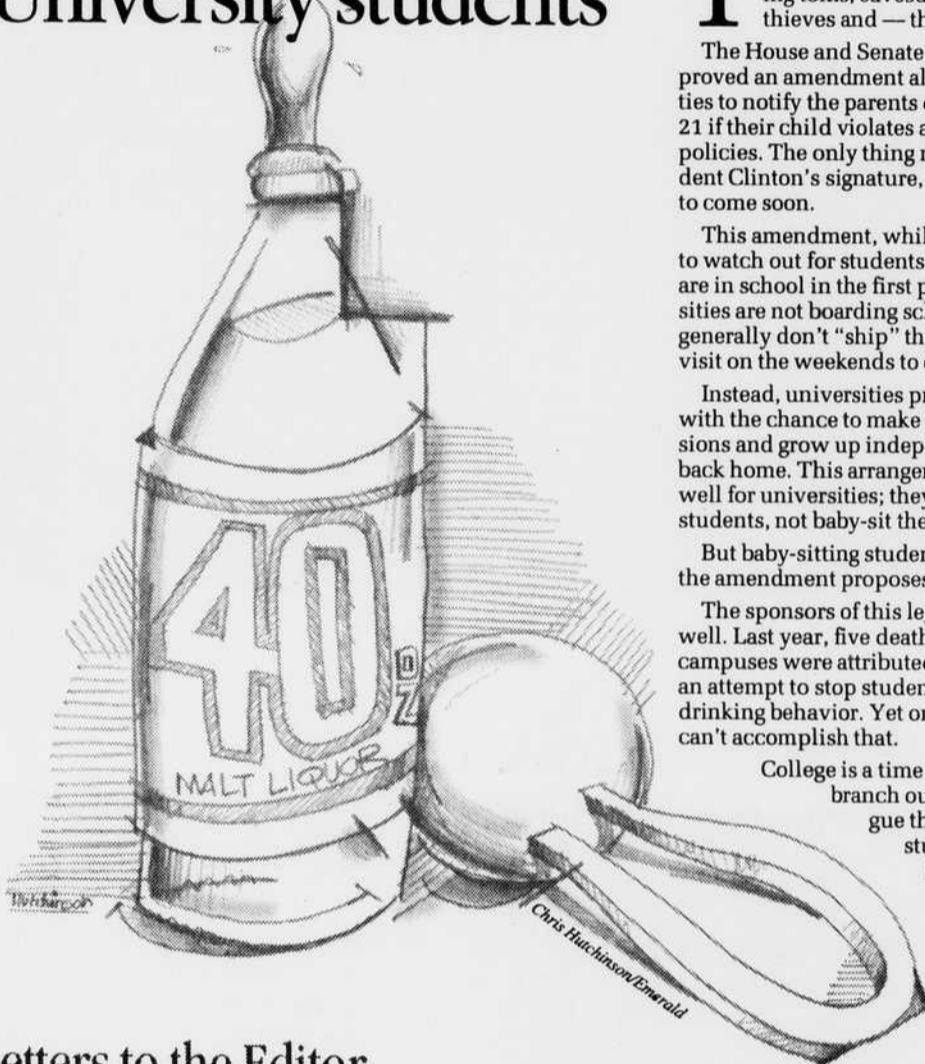
TO BRAZILIAN VOTERS:

Despite government efforts before the election, some poor citizens in Brazil voted for political candidates who could do them financial favors. Shoes and refrigerators were popular items, but cement and plastic surgery also won voters' support.

TO BIG MAC ADDICTS:

A group designed to find out what Oregonians want from health care released a report suggesting that citizens who smoke, drink alcohol — and regularly eat at fast food restaurants — should pay more for health care. So much for "your way, right away."

Educate, don't baby-sit, University students



Notifying parents of alcohol and drug use invades students' privacy and limits their freedom

This country has its share of people who invade others' privacy: peeping toms, eavesdroppers, mail thieves and — the U.S. Congress?

The House and Senate recently approved an amendment allowing universities to notify the parents of students under 21 if their child violates alcohol or drug policies. The only thing missing is President Clinton's signature, which is expected to come soon.

This amendment, while a noble attempt to watch out for students, ignores why they are in school in the first place. Most universities are not boarding schools. Parents generally don't "ship" their kids away and visit on the weekends to check up on them.

Instead, universities provide students with the chance to make their own decisions and grow up independent of the rules back home. This arrangement works just as well for universities; they are here to teach students, not baby-sit them.

But baby-sitting students is exactly what the amendment proposes.

The sponsors of this legislation mean well. Last year, five deaths on Virginia campuses were attributed to alcohol; this is an attempt to stop students' irresponsible drinking behavior. Yet one amendment can't accomplish that.

College is a time for students to branch out; many would argue that it is a time for students to rebel.

One of the motivations behind the amendment is for students to know that their "rebel-

lious" weekend activities may be discovered by parents. Legislators believe that the threat of parents finding out about students' behavior will curb the number of alcohol-related injuries.

Current federal law prohibits universities from releasing the records of students over the age of 18. Once students have reached that age, it is not a university's legal responsibility to "report" home to parents. By allowing records to be released until students are 21, this amendment would violate the privacy of adults who just happen to still be in school.

Even if it is passed, this amendment would be only selectively effective. Universities could report documented alcohol and drug policy violations, but for the most part, those violations would come from the residence halls, where resident assistants can "supervise" students.

Once students get to bigger parties, where larger amounts of alcohol and drugs are consumed, "baby-sitting" those students is limited, at best, and people are left to watch out for themselves. Because officials only respond to the most out-of-hand parties, a majority of the violations would go unreported — meaning the university and parents would receive just the "highlights" of student habits.

No one will be helped by this amendment. Parents will only be informed when their children are caught at the loudest party. University officials will have to take the time to call parents more often than they already do. Students will be left with their privacy invaded, their feelings hurt because they can't be trusted and the belief that they will never be free from the watchful eyes of their parents.

And no one appreciates a peeping tom.

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

Letters to the Editor

Discriminating tastes?

I have been following the UO religious discrimination issue since it began early this summer, and I would like to point out a few insights I've had. In the article the Emerald ran on page 10 the other day (ODE, 9/30), in paragraph eight Computing Center Director Joanne Hugi said that the CC has no formal guidelines on which newsgroups they carry. In paragraph 13, she is quoted as saying these groups were removed because they "no longer fit the newsgroup management standards." These two statements are incompatible.

Hugi said that Joe St Sauver was implementing a new system to manage the newsfeed. St Sauver has given so many different stories that I don't know what to think.

This is a continuation of the evasive tactics CC officials Hugi and St Sauver have been using throughout the debate on this issue. They've been, in my opinion, consistently rude and unprofessional, either stonewalling or employing technical doubletalk and circular self-referential logic in a crude attempt to mystify students and concerned citizens from all over the country into believing that there is no discrimination occurring here. When cornered, St Sauver has been known to insult one's knowledge of computer systems or change the topic entirely.

Hugi refused to answer any of the e-mail I and many others sent her, and actually hung up the telephone on UO graduate student Dave Faux.

I have a sheaf of correspondence from St Sauver on my hard drive. As I look through it, I note the reasons St Sauver has given for this action. Among them, in order, technical difficulty, poor spelling, unfavorable hierarchical designation, bandwidth, duplicate topic, unconventional taxonomy, lack of programmatic requirement and now, "newsgroup management standards." While none of these reasons makes any sense whatsoever on its own, they are considerably more nonsensical taken as they came in, one at a time. In the end, it must be noted that the missing groups are: alt.pagan, alt.satanism, and the alt.magick hierarchy. A fairly narrow set of topics.

If you have a non-UO newsfeed, (not Eugene FreeNet: they get their news from the UO), check to see if they carry the groups in dispute. In almost every case, they do. If they do not, perform the following experiment: e-mail your news administration. Request any of the groups. They will add it. No questions asked.

Cody Yarbrough

Newsgroup questions

I have been following this case of blatant religious discrimination for

several months now. There are a few items that your article (ODE, 9/30) did not cover which I would like to bring to the attention of your readers:

1. St Sauver removed 33,000 of the 35,000 newsgroups a couple of weeks ago and returned 32,000 newsgroups the next day. He made sure to return the 50-some Christian newsgroups and other religious newsgroups but still did not return the pagan groups in question. He said this was at the request of the Office of Affirmative Action (OAA). The OAA said they requested nothing of the kind.

2. St Sauver recently added another 224 newsgroups, including tamu.religion.christian, which announces Christian events for Texas A&M University. None of the 224 was the pagan newsgroups in question.

3. The Computing Center compiled an investigative report on the two official complainants (Kerry Delf and Craig Hunt) in this case. This report gave information about complaints about Delf and Hunt resulting from a flame war in 1996. They were exonerated of the accusations that same year. While the Computing Center also submitted the exonerating evidence, this was clearly an attempt at character assassination. They have also suggested that any outside testimony is inadmissible if the person is not an official complainant. Of

course, this is not true — the OAA has confirmed its falsity.

4. Delf and Hunt requested that, since their main argument for not reactivating the pagan newsgroups is that there is reasonable access to them through other means, they remove all religious newsgroups from the main UO news server, at least until the case is decided. They refused to grant this request for equal access and gave no reason.

I believe that St Sauver has left the University open to possible litigation that could potentially cost the University many tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, which might better be spent improving the academic curriculum. Were I a student or a member of the faculty of your August institution of higher learning, I would most certainly be circulating a petition for St Sauver's immediate dismissal.

Alobar Greywalker
Pagan clergyman

Correction

In the Oct. 6 story "UO student faces incumbent Susan Castillo in candidates' forum" and the Oct. 7 story "Student runs in state senate race," Castillo should have been called a former KVAL-TV reporter. The Emerald regrets the error.