

PERSPECTIVES

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Celebrating SAFECO

Regardless of the cost controversies surrounding its opening, Safeco Field is definitely worth it

Even with the pitching-poor Seattle Mariners as tenants, Safeco Field is the real deal.

Emphasis on "real," as in a natural-grass playing surface — something every professional athlete in an outdoor sport and, of course, every fan willing and able to foot the ever-expanding attendance bill deserves.

And so the era of genuine major league baseball the way it has always been meant to be played — the natural way — is finally upon us here in the Pacific Northwest.

It may be less than a month old, but it's here.

Despite all of the controversy about cost

overruns and the possible departures of Mariner stars Ken Griffey Jr. and Alex Rodriguez if Seattle doesn't improve and quick, one cannot help but be overjoyed when riding one of six escalators into Safeco Field for the first time.

Opinion



Tim Pyle

And that's not just your legs talking.

Even if the retractable roof is closed, like it was when I entered the stadium for a Yankees-Mariners tilt last

Friday, the air is still fresh, thanks to the ingenious open-air siding.

That may be the best feature of the ballpark because we all know the roof will need to be in action a lot.

I don't care if detractors claim that swirling winds will take advantage of the opportunity and turn Safeco into Candlestick — er, 3-Com — north upon occasion.

I'll take real air and a view of the Seattle skyline over the Kingdome's recycled, regulated oxygen any time.

By the way, the Kingdome is part of that view, frowning beyond center field like a gigantic, forgotten golf ball.

Not to worry, however. The Kingdome is to be removed via demolition soon after a Dec. 26 Seattle Seahawks home game marks its last hosting.

But let's get back to the Emerald City's latest and greatest pearl.

Once you navigate your way through more than 110 refreshment stands and carts, past some of the almost 80 restrooms and finally manage to find the one of 47,000 seats that your stub steers you to, you'll see the prime attraction.

That would be Griffey, ARod and company playing America's revisited pastime on a beautiful, natural surface.

And then if you're still hesitant to fully embrace Safeco Field, you're either a Seattle resident really pissed about your taxes or somebody without even the slightest knowledge of and care for baseball, in specific, and sport, in general.

To the true or even casual fan, the intoxicating scent of freshly cut grass, Northwest air and the intermittent hot dog passing by you is a wonderful concoction indeed.

Especially when you witness a bench-clearing brawl and another Yankees win.

Or spot the beer man heading your way as that lost drop of your \$5.50 beer disappears without a trace.

My advice?

Drink as much as you can before game time.

Oh yeah — and check out Safeco Field as soon as you possibly can.

Tim Pyle is the Emerald's editor in chief. He can be reached via e-mail at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



THE SAFECO ALL-NATURAL TURF FIELD



THE TEXACO PETROLEUM BY-PRODUCTS FIELD



THE DUPONT TEFLON FIELD

Andrew Dennis for the Emerald

Letters to the Editor

OPEU disrespected

The Oregon University System's failure to extend its contract with the Oregon Public Employees Union, while negotiations continue, is a blatant act of disrespect for its lowest-paid classified workers. The OPEU has done this in contrast with the Department of Administrative Services, which did grant an extension to its classified staff. As one of the 3,000-plus University employees impacted by this callous administrative behavior, I am far from alone in my displeasure.

As though we are second-class state employees, we're told that the contract will only be extended if we accept the current OUS offer. This is not bargaining in good faith but rather bargaining at gunpoint. How ironic, given that large numbers of us, from clerical workers to grounds keepers, joined with students, faculty and administrators on the steps of the capitol last March 31 for a higher education rally. Now we hear that funding for the cause has been granted, and yet we are not being treated as worthy recipients.

It's no wonder that nearly 96 percent of vot-

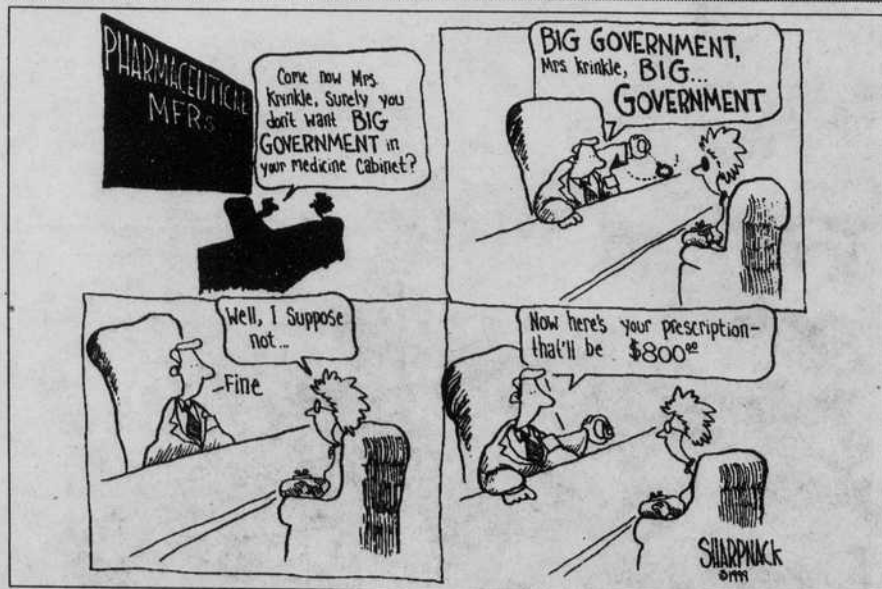
ing OPEU members from all seven state universities have authorized strike preparation. We deserve wage parity with our DAS counterparts and a lot more consideration from Chancellor Joe Cox, the alleged perpetrator of this unfair bargaining ploy. With an annual wage exceeding \$141,000, more than five times my own, Joe must be smart enough to realize the error of his ways. But will he do so in time to avert a strike?

Star Holmberg
Office Specialist 2

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The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words.

Editorial Cartoons



Oregon Emerald

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