



CAPTAIN SENSIBLE

PAT PAYNE

how
low
can
you
go?

Ah, MTV. Purveyor of low-brow pseudo-music since 1991 (when to me, most music officially died) and low-brow television entertainment since 1992. That was when the idiotic Mike Judge creation "Beavis and Butthead" began airing on the network, once hailed for launching new wave and other pop-music forms to the masses. Martha Quinn, Elvis Costello and MTV Live concerts have been supplanted by Pink, Eminem and "Jackass."

This low-brow content has gotten MTV in trouble once again. The MTV show "Jackass" showcases what the producers lovingly term "professionals and/or total idiots" performing extremely dangerous and imbecilic stunts, such as falling off of shopping carts at full speed, being inside an over-used Port-a-Potty as it is turned upside down, and being set on fire with a flamethrower.

It was this last stunt, as well as a recent episode in which stuntman/show creator Johnny Knoxville donned a flame-resistant suit covered in meat to become a "human barbecue," that put MTV in the hot seat, pun intended.

Jason Lind, a 13-year-old from Connecticut, apparently found this last stunt too good to be done only on TV. The kid, after the performance, went outside with a friend. There, at Lind's prompting, he sprayed gasoline on Lind's feet and legs. Lind was admitted to a local hospital with third degree burns over parts of his lower body.

This comes almost a decade after another MTV show, the infamous "Beavis and Butthead," was accused of being responsible for an almost identical incident. There were reports of a few arson attempts after an episode in which the dysfunctional duo found it was great fun to set fire to all manner of things. Kids in the real world appar-

ently discovered the joy of pyromania, too, and as a result, at least three burned their homes down.

Now, yet again, they're under fire, pun again intended. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a long-time crusader for lessening TV violence, has lambasted the show for this incident and the fact that the show made it so imitable.

MTV thinks it has an out on the whole thing. It thinks that in both cases, just putting a tongue-in-cheek, irreverent disclaimer before the show will get the message across. Wrong. I love humor and laugh as loudly as the next person. However, this is deadly serious and needs to be treated that way.

What MTV and Johnny Knoxville have to do is make it unmistakably clear that these people are professionals and that every reasonable guarantee for their safety has been taken. They need to state seriously, soberly and unequivocally to children and anyone else watching that "These stunts can kill you" if tried outside a controlled environment. They need to show viewers both the precautions the stuntmen take and the tragic results of trying such stunts at home.

I don't think that "Jackass" should be pulled off the air. It is stupid and moronic, but if those were the criteria for canning a show, the major networks would have long swaths of static between "Frasier," "The Simpsons," "Malcolm in the Middle" and "The West Wing." The WB would be put out of business entirely.

However, the higher-ups at MTV must, in light of this incident, consider strongly the notion of ordering Knoxville to retool the show. A necessary part of this retooling would be moving the show from its current 10 p.m. time slot to something much later, perhaps midnight, where young eyes will be less likely to watch.

But MTV won't make such a rational decision. The more eyes glued to the show means the more people buy the advertisers' products. And they know that young teens, such as Jason Lind, want to watch grown men behaving like ... you know.

The show's title is certainly fitting. You could apply it to Knoxville and the higher-ups at MTV.

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Red-light special: \$135 bike tickets on sale now

GUEST COMMENTARY

Carla Reitan

Is anyone actually paying taxes anymore? For whatever reason, it certainly seems like the Eugene Police Department is finding innovative ways to raise funds for the city of Eugene.

Instead of investigating violent crimes and patrolling the more notorious sections of town for drug

traffic and the other forms of vice that pervade Eugene, a rather large section of the police department spends time camping out by the University Bookstore and Starbucks targeting students for such insidious crimes as not having the proper kind of bike light. The punishment: \$135 in reparations and a fun trip to court.

Certainly Eugene is not L.A., and bicycle equipment mandates should be enforced. But it seems utterly ridiculous for the EPD to enforce them to such an extent that

students are forced to walk to work and other nighttime destinations because they are afraid to break some mysterious traffic code.

Perhaps the EPD should concentrate on making the area around campus less dangerous, so that students with wrongly colored or broken bike lights will feel comfortable walking alone after sunset rather than risk getting slapped with a traffic citation. That goal has certainly not been reached yet.

As a music student, a worker and a woman, I hesitate to walk past the

graveyard or down Hilyard Street after 10 p.m. when heading to the residence halls after practicing or work. Is this so much safer than riding a bicycle with a functioning set of reflectors and a red (oops, not white) light?

And just how well-advertised are the bicycle traffic rules in Eugene? A large number of University students come from towns other than Eugene where the traffic codes are different. For example, in many towns, bicyclists are required to wear helmets. In Eugene, they are not.

Given the bicycle-riding culture of this town, maybe incoming students should have local traffic laws drilled into their heads at orientation, lest they find themselves caught up in the ridiculous bicycle war that seems to have started.

If any reader feels compelled by this article to participate in this war, cruise down Hilyard Street after 8 p.m. I'm sure there'll be a cop there eager to recruit you.

Carla Reitan is a junior music and biology major.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Are you planning to vote in the ASUO primary elections?

on the web
www.dailymerald.com



“Yes. It's important to me because as a student of color, it's important to make my voice heard.”

Brandy Alexander
 junior,
 public relations



“No. I don't really know anything about the candidates, and they all seem the same.”

Sarah Friedman
 senior,
 history



“Probably not. I'm pretty entrenched in school, and I tend to do just that. I know it affects my education. ... I'll put it on my list of things to do.”

Andy Meakins
 sophomore,
 architecture



“I haven't really thought about it too hard. I don't consider the ASUO an organization that has too much direct effect on my life as a student.”

Michael Washington
 sophomore,
 psychology