

One last round of 'congrats' and 'shame'

Here's our final, last-minute, down-to-the-wire roundup of opinions about stuff. The Emerald editorial board has been opinionated about stuff all year long, and so have our readers. We appreciate that, and we appreciate the feedback we received all year, both good and bad. When you interact with the media sources that inform you about your world, everyone is better for it. The world isn't objectively waiting to be reported on; subjective people write stories about it. So stay involved, keep the media honest and keep sending us feedback.

Congrats to the Athletic Department for releasing some of the report about problems in the women's basketball program. The part they released was all the gossipy "I didn't like her," or "I didn't like him" stuff that we already knew. Now live up to the congrats and release the real dirt — the details of the 31 NCAA violations that the law firm found while it was here. If everyone in the athletic administration is truly clean and honest and doing his or her job correctly, then more information is better, especially at a public university.

Shame on the grass seed pollen for blowing the community's collective sinuses out of its mind. Sneezing, hacking, wheezing, crying — a body needs time to adjust to increased pollen. Leaping from 15 grains per cubic meter on May 28 to 502 grains per cubic meter on June 1, the pollen level made the student phlegm level leap from 2 sneezes/coughs per minute in classes to 18 sneezes/coughs per second. We can barely hear our professors now. For shame.

Congrats to the state of Nevada for becoming the ninth state to legalize the use of marijuana for medical purposes. State lawmakers voted Monday to approve medical marijuana and to lessen penalties for possession, thus making it easier for those seeking medical relief to possess plants for their own use. Arizona, Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Washington, Hawaii and Oregon are the other states with similar laws. It is perhaps telling that denizens of the West can show caring and compassion for those suffering from debilitating illnesses. The only problem is, the Supreme Court's ruling last month may threaten that compassion. Well, the federal laws should be changed, and congrats to Nevada anyway.

Shame on the Oregon University System for beginning a round of union contract renegotiations with proposals to increase layoffs, hire temporary workers and decrease overtime. The Service Employees International Union/Oregon Public Employees Union represents tens of thousands of university workers all over the state. These people keep Oregon's institutions of higher education running. They deserve job security and adequate pay and benefits. Some of the problem comes from taxpayers, however. Budget cuts to the OUS because of tax-cutting measures of years past have contributed to the standoff. Given that, let's spread the shame to the taxpayers, the state and the OUS. The citizens of Oregon need to pony up some money if they expect to have any sort of functioning government.

Congrats to the U.S. Supreme Court for stopping the execution of Johnny Paul Penry, who has the mind

of a 7-year-old. Texas was making a second attempt to execute Penry when the ruling came down. In 1989, Penry was sentenced to death for murder. The Supreme Court ruled then that Texas juries were not adequately accounting for the mental ability of defendants, and it overturned Penry's sentence. But was Texas done with him? Oh, no. The state tried Penry again, convicted him again and sentenced him to death again. Luckily, the rules for juries have been changed since the first Court ruling, so if Texas wants to try one more time, Penry's life is pretty much safe. Thank goodness. But...

Shame on The Register-Guard, The Washington Post, The Associated Press and other sources that described Penry as a "retarded man." Excuse us? Get with the program. That demeaning label was shelved years ago. Call us idealistic young journalists or overly P.C. liberals, but it's rude to label people with terms infused with harshly negative connotations, especially in 54-point type on the front page of a newspaper. The Arc of the United States, "a national organization on mental retardation" and the official voice of people with mental retardation, offers on its Web site (thearc.org) plenty of examples of how to use the phrase "people with mental retardation" easily and efficiently in sentences instead of that other label. Please, news sources, think before you go to press next time. Using that label would be like calling a black person a "coon." It's unacceptable.

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



CORRECTION

In the June 1 article "Workers take on the Oregon University System," the article should have said:

The Service Employees International Union/Oregon Public Employees Union Local 503 represents 25,000 classified workers throughout Oregon.

Pro-ELF views are pure idiocy

GUEST COMMENTARY

Brandon Oberlin

In response to Aaron McKenzie's morally and intellectually flawed column ("May the force be with you," ODE, June 7), I have only one question: How does the Oregon Daily Emerald hope to preserve what little credibility it has left by running garbage like this?

McKenzie's stated premise is that property destruction is a morally acceptable methodology for causing political/social change. In paragraph four, he asserts, "To achieve political change ... a person or group must target some infrastructure." To his credit, McKenzie does mention that violence against individuals should be avoided. He goes on to justify the ELF's local and national terrorism with typical eco-propaganda. I'm sure the title of McKenzie's column, "A Cauldron of Idiocy," is purely coincidental.

I submit that with this line of logic, virtually any type of terrorism can be justified. If we accept that arson and bombings are an acceptable means of political expression, then how can one argue against abortion-clinic bombings? How about burning "mom and pop" stores that don't carry environmentally friendly packaging? Extend the logic to its final conclusion, and terrorism against individuals can also be rectified. This type of thinking is abhorrent to

any thinking mind and has no place in a civilized society. This is plain ol' criminality and should be treated as such.

Personally, I am delighted with this genre of wannabe pundit trash because of the damage it does to the causes that these idiots embrace. If they had any common sense at all, these folks would realize that the public at large doesn't tolerate terrorism no matter how worthy the cause.

Although McKenzie never had any credibility to damage, the Emerald does — or used to. Students and faculty assume that the campus newspaper has some type of standard for determining what is morally and intellectually acceptable. Columns like this call that assumption into question. You guys can do better than this.

Brandon Oberlin is a junior biology major.

Editor's note: The Emerald made the judgment that discussing opinions such as McKenzie's is morally and intellectually acceptable. Oberlin surely agrees with us, as he engages McKenzie's arguments on an intellectual level. Additionally, while the Emerald does not endorse McKenzie's opinions or the actions of the ELF, similar acts of property damage were undertaken on Dec. 16, 1773, in Boston, during some sort of "Tea Party." The outcome of this "eco-terrorism" was the eventual establishment of America as an independent country. Those acts of vandalism are written down in history books as "heroic acts." It's just food for thought.

Dievendorf deserves support

GUEST COMMENTARY

Scott Michael Perey

The University of Oregon's misguided decision to remove Linda Dievendorf as director of the EMU Cultural Forum smacks of all the elements of the Jody Runge drama. Only in this case, Dievendorf has the full support and glowing admiration of everyone that she has ever worked with. Unfortunately, she is being pushed out by supervisors who either think they can micromanage her program better than she, or who hold an outright animosity toward what she has successfully built over the last 17 years.

For more than two decades, the student-funded and student-run Cultural Forum has treated the community to performances by an incredible myriad of world-class musicians. The quality and professionalism that have characterized the "modus operandi" of the Cultural Forum office are something to be praised for, not fired over! If the university really valued efficiency over nepotism, they'd promote her and make her the director of the whole EMU.

Larger than the issue of removing someone who is the best at what she does, there looms the fact that this is a radical move cast upon an organization that is entirely funded by the students, and yet students have had absolutely no involvement in the decision. This is an issue of control. Linda has succeeded with the Cultural Forum because she runs it by consensus, which means that decisions have everyone's support. Reportedly, her supervisors prefer more of a top-down, "do what you're told" approach to management, and Linda has found herself in the position of being an obstacle to greater control of

students by the administration.

I encourage everyone to stop by the Cultural Forum to meet the people and check out the huge list of productions put on by this incredibly vital and undeniably successful student program. Even if the Willamette Valley Folk Festival is the only fruit of their labors you enjoy, beware: It could very well be the first event cut if administrators are able to replace Linda. This bodes terribly! In the 12 years that I've been a Eugene resident, the Folk Fest has become a spring ritual, the beginning of the outdoor music season and a revisiting of old friends. To lose it would be a shame.

Please support Dievendorf by calling either of the administrators involved with her termination: EMU Director Dusty Miller, at 346-6063, or EMU Student Activities Director Gregg Lobisser, 346-1143. More importantly, please share your concerns with their immediate supervisor, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt, at 346-1129. They are currently refusing to divulge any specifics, ostensibly hiding behind the mantra of how "inappropriate" it would be to discuss the details of such a crucial personnel decision, because it's a decision involving "personnel." This bit of Alice-in-Wonderland logic is a lame but not wholly unexpected excuse for protecting the administration's true agenda. The more we make them parrot that tired line, the more obviously thin it will become.

If every person who realized how many of their best-ever local musical "moments" were brought to them courtesy of the fine folks at the EMU Cultural Forum, if every one of them actually made their voices heard over this, the outcry would be overwhelming and Linda's job will be saved, for the good of all of us.

Scott Michael Perey graduated with honors from the University's music school in 1994 and has been a keyboardist with The Sugar Beets for more than 10 years.