

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511  
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union  
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403  
 E-mail: editor@dailyemerald.com  
 Online Edition:  
 www.dailyemerald.com

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# COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:  
 Jessica Blanchard  
 Editorial Editor:  
 Julie Lauderbaugh  
 Assistant Editorial Editor:  
 Jacquelyn Lewis

Monday, September 21, 2001

## UO needs to apologize for donation scandal

The State of Oregon Audits Division released its audit of selected University operations this month, covering spending between March and July 2000, and revealed some unfortunate and embarrassing department spending. Auditors reported that money given through donations was meant for academic improvements in individual departments. Instead, donations intended to benefit students were wasted on birthday cakes, office parties, alcohol, airline tickets and a car insurance premium for the dean of the law school.

Not only is this bad public and donor relations, it may put the spendthrift University in a negative light when the Oregon Legislature decides to delegate funds to higher education. At a time when the campus is debating academic vs. athletic funding, maintaining academic donor confidence should naturally be a high priority.

The audit said the sum for questionable and prohibited use of donor funds totaled \$26,694, while department procurement spending totaled \$13,835. The audit also found that during the 1999 calendar year, the University made more than 9,000 transactions on procurement cards — University credit cards — totaling about \$1.23 million. Eighteen percent of those transactions were prohibited by law, according to the audit. Equally disturbing was a report that 83 of

the 90 procurement card statements under scrutiny did not have an authorized signature.

Addressing concerns about spending in the Sept. 17 issue of the Emerald, University Vice President of Administration Dan Williams said that "those are not expenses that have been to the personal benefit of any of the individuals. Those expenses are incurred for the purpose of attracting donors." It's hard to believe that about a car insurance premium.

To his credit, Williams has been taking careful steps to resolve the situation, including teaching about the use of procurement cards and revising policies and procedures. These are good first steps, but there has been no effort to reassure donors the situation will not repeat itself.

The University Foundation raised \$35 million last year, and the money is supposed to be used in congruence with donor intent. Donors are not likely giving money to support personal monthly bills, birthday cakes or flower arrangements, which all benefited the individuals who abused their authority.

It is time the departments come clean about their spending habits, apologize to donors and return the money. In this time of economic uncertainty, the University cannot afford to play bait-and-switch games with coveted donation money.

## Students short on cash can still offer assistance

The recent tragedies of the terrorist attacks on the East Coast have had a heavy toll both physically and emotionally on all Americans. A time of national crisis warrants all citizens to come together and fulfill our civic duty to help those devastated by the tragedy.

The Emerald firmly believes each individual can make a positive difference in the lives of those who have lost so much. Students are often on a tight budget, and many may feel there is little they can do without the cash to make donations. Here are a few suggestions:

- The bloodmobile, an extension of Lane Memorial Blood Bank, will be on campus in October for students to contribute blood. More details will be forthcoming. The Blood Bank is booked with donor appointments through October, but we urge you to flood the bloodmobile with donations.

- The American Red Cross is taking donations of food, clothing and money to help with disaster relief efforts. Join with other students and hold a canned food

or clothing drive.

- Lighting candles, holding vigils and remembering spirits of fallen heroes are important ways to cope with the tragedy, while bringing the community together.

- Talking with peers about the situation is a healthy way to gain perspective, comprehend the issues and cope with the tragedy. Open forums such as the one held in the EMU Amphitheater following President George W. Bush's Sept. 21 speech are imperative for the community to discuss America's response to the attacks. The Student Activities Resource Office is offering another opportunity for peers to talk — from noon to 1 p.m. Monday through Wednesday in the Ben Linder Room of the EMU. Students can share their experiences, ask questions, learn about resources and connect with others.

Volunteering time and energy to each other may be the most difficult accomplishment in our country's period of mourning, but it is necessary so that we may unite as a community to help those in pain and devastation.

### Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to editor@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

## Sept. 11 changed everything

A child's birthday is a time for celebration and happiness. Birthdays mean cake, presents and having fun with family and friends. This year my sister didn't have a birthday. On Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, my sister Kari turned 13, but there was no celebration. Instead of blowing out the candles on her birthday cake, she was left wondering why people would attack the country she calls home. The meaning of my sister's birthday has now forever changed, and so has America.

We may never be able to hear a plane fly overhead without stretching our necks to see where it is going. We can no longer comfortably sit on an airplane when it goes through a pocket of turbulence. Going up into a skyscraper now requires a second thought, as does walking underneath one. Checking in for a flight or crossing the border may now take hours instead of minutes. The phrase "Breaking News" now will send a shiver up our spine.

Fear, though, should not be the only change. Not long after the World Trade Center towers crumbled to the ground, America responded. People were risking their own lives just on the short hope they could help someone they had never met. In a time where family budgets were beginning to tighten, enough money was found to make that small donation that would mean so much. Then there were those who simply raised the American flag and said a prayer.

This is the America that the original patriots of our country fought for. Not the one where parents punch Little League umpires, frivolous lawsuits tie up the courts and the welfare system is abused. The way we heal from the wound created by the four hijacked airplanes is what being an American is all about.



Jeff Oliver  
 Columnist



Peter Utsey Emerald

For our generation, this is the first time our livelihood as Americans has been severely threatened. For us, America is now a country where "The Star-Spangled Banner" isn't immediately followed by the words "play ball," but rather a moment of reflection. The American flag is now much more than just a holiday decoration — it is a symbol of pride, respect and remembrance.

The easiest way to kill the giant is to attack it while it is already down. As Americans, we can never afford our freedom to look vulnerable. It isn't a coincidence that these acts of terrorism occurred on the brink of a recession, a national election that made us look like fools, and years upon years of members of Congress appearing to do nothing but bicker with each other. Our country must now put bipartisanship behind us. It doesn't matter if you voted for Al Gore, Ralph Nader or even Pat Buchanan last November. George W. Bush is our president now, and his decisions must be respected. America is a place where free expression is allowed and encouraged, but there is

a point when it begins to untie the strength of our country.

This is why the American flags that now cover our country must fly forever. We already fly flags at our schools, government buildings and stadiums, and they should remain on the backs of our favorite athletes, on the porches of our homes and on the antennae of our cars. Every day when we look at the flag, we should all be grateful for the simple things that we enjoy in this country, and we should do it together as one.

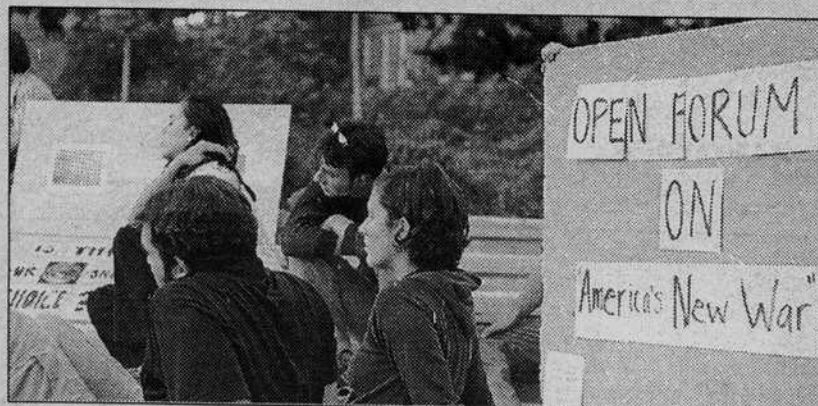
Sept. 11, 2001, will always be remembered as the day American freedom was threatened, but it will also be remembered as the day America grew stronger. What happened on Sept. 11 shouldn't be remembered just once a year. That is what birthdays are for. It should be remembered every day when we look at the American flag and think of those Americans who died when someone tried to take our freedom away.

Jeff Oliver is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached at jeffoliver@dailyemerald.com.

### ON OUR MINDS...

On Sept. 21, President George W. Bush addressed Congress about the terrorist attacks on the United States and the forthcoming American reaction.

After the speech, students gathered in the EMU Amphitheater in an impromptu open forum to discuss America's response. These are some of the comments:



Adam Jones Emerald

"I keep hearing that we all just want one world and one centralized government. But you look at a map, and there's borders. I've heard nationalism is bad — it's amazing to me how far we've gone, that loving your country is bad."

Jarrett White  
 sophomore, Business

"Loving your country for what they've done for you is one thing. I love this county because I have the right to dissent."

Sam Hahn  
 resident, Eugene

"I think it's also disgusting that if we do go to war and our armed forces do kill civilians, that Bush said they'll 'make us proud.'"

Theresa Cvenca  
 graduate student,  
 international studies  
 and French