

COMMENTARY

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Wednesday, October 3, 2001

Editorials

ASUO must fight for what's right

One of the duties of our student government, the ASUO, is to provide a voice for the students. We applaud the administration for attempting to do just that. We thank our elected leaders for their efforts to educate students about and eliminate the new energy fee added to tuition this year. Since the fee was announced, the student government has been working toward alternative solutions. The Sept. 27 rally events, which consisted of a media event and an open forum where students could ask questions, showed us just how hard the ASUO is actually willing to work in order to get rid of the energy fee.

However, a poor student turnout and a seeming lack of interest in this cause definitely makes one wonder if these efforts are perhaps misguided. Maybe students, especially those whose parents are footing the bill for school, don't care about the new energy charge. After all, it's only \$30 (which isn't much unless it's coming out of your own pocket). Or maybe the ASUO's efforts have been just a little short of gaining student attention. Either way, the student government needs to think about where its hard work and energy are going. While eliminating the new fee is definitely a worthy, important cause, perhaps it needs to think of new ways to approach the problem.

One thing the ASUO can do is appeal to the State Board of Higher Education. The State Board has the power to reject the energy surcharge — if we can convince them to do it. If our leaders truly speak for students and students are genuinely upset about the fee, then they need to stand up and demand that the board eliminate the fee.

The little things really do count

Hooray for Lane County! We're officially the No. 1 recycler in the state. Residents should be proud to live in a county that has as many recycling options as ours. Lane County boasts not only the University, which has one of the best university recycling programs in the country, but also a multitude of recycling options for everyone in the community. Lane County offers venues for recycling everything from soda cans to motor oil. As a direct effect of these options, the county has recovered and recycled 52 percent of its collected waste, truly earning the recognition it's received from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Another great service which makes it easier to recycle is the new curbside yard debris program in Eugene. We can also be proud of the Begin Recycling in Neighborhood Groups recycling service, or BRING, which recently celebrated its 30-year anniversary.

One of the best things about this achievement is that we have ourselves to thank. Everyone who recycles plays a part in reducing waste and making Lane County No. 1. Whether it's just soda cans or all of your household waste, you can be proud that you helped this happen and will continue to help it happen in the future.

While the bigger picture includes getting companies to use less packaging and waste in their manufacturing processes, Lane County's new recognition once again brings home the point that taking care of the environment starts with the little things we do as individuals.

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.

Always After the bottom line

So Phil Knight has returned, much to the glee of the University administration and Athletic Department.

And while most accounts of this return liken it to a welcome and surprise homecoming for a long-lost member of the family, I can not help but view it with nothing more than bemused ambivalence. This is simply because we should all have known this was bound to happen, and most likely sooner than later — which it did.

We should have been aware because the Knight/University dynamic is just one example of how public universities work these days.

It was somewhat amusing to see the Register-Guard publish fawning reports when the beloved Knight appeared at a few sports events last year and to hear the administration dramatically proclaim that it will heroically carry on even with the added burden of not having Knight's generous donations. But honestly, could we actually believe that Knight would not return in a year or two following the whole Worker Rights Consortium debacle?

It would be ridiculous not to believe it. Just like this University needs Knight's money, Knight's ego needs this University. Maybe Knight was not too popular when he was an undergraduate here and did not get too many dates, party invites or whatever and so now when he is a millionaire several times over he can use his largess to rebuild this University in his own image. Where else could Knight put his money — Lane Community College? I don't think so.

Knight likely always had an intention to return to the University, but likely just wanted to see the University squirm a bit to see how much his millions were needed.

Knight may have honestly become upset over University President Dave Frohnmayer's decision to sign on with the fledgling WRC. But what followed after Knight's initial proclamation was nothing short of high drama. Frohnmayer immediately started to supplicate to Knight for his reconsideration in the matter and at the same time the University set in motion the means to extricate itself through the letter of law from the WRC. The State Board of Higher



Steve Baggs Emerald

Education gave the University a means to escape from the WRC. And now since the University has distanced itself from the messy issue of foreign labor, our beloved "knight" in shiny armor has come to our school's rescue. Everything fell neatly into equilibrium.

One of the best, and most repeated, products of this summer's rumor mill — and so its truth is questionable — was that the jet carrying Joey "Heisman" Harrington, Athletic Department officials and key members of the media to New York City for the unveiling of the mammoth Harrington billboard was not sponsored by a group of well-endowed alumni, but in fact one well-known alumni who used the trip to signal his renewing affection for his alma mater.

Do not misunderstand this column, I am not against Knight and his money. I sincerely appreciate the tenured professors, renovated library, new law school and updated Autzen Stadium that athletic shoe money can buy. I am just, again, impressed by the steadfast re-

fusal of some people to not come to grips with the idea that higher education is a form of business financed by donations. This is even more true in a state like Oregon that is usually hard-pressed to fund all its state programs in a good year, and is even now considering an emergency session for further budget cuts. But when I see the outpouring of jubilation in Knight's return, and also those saying: "This just highlights the growing problem of private donors buying influence in public institutions," I see people who still have not realized how higher education works.

This institution has a bottom line and must consider that above all else. All these great educational programs are not funded by good will and respect for the common good — they are funded by money and those who have money.

Andrew Adams is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at andrewadams@dailyemerald.com.

Letter to the editor

Columnist's logic adds up to extremism

I was surprised at the highly unreasoned opinion piece by Aaron Rorick in Monday's Emerald ("the Greater evil," ODE, 10/01). From the statements of one caller to a radio talk show, he infers that the entire "working class" is uniformly consumed by murderous hate toward Islamic extremists. He then takes an extremist position by saying that some forms of murderous hate — like that of the "most venomous, hateful anti-Islamic American" — are morally better than other forms. But then he goes even farther

afraid by saying that the form of murderous hate that he supports does not at all make him, or anyone who holds it, a "bad guy." And finally, he wants all of us who support human rights to "rejoice" in the prospect of a coming war in Afghanistan.

This left me wondering who exactly Rorick wants to kill (does he really want to kill all Islamic extremists, no matter what they've done?), what evidence he has against these people to justify killing them (does he need any?), and why he expects me to rejoice at the current humanitarian crisis caused by U.S. military posturing, and at the prospect of thousands of civilians who will die if the United States pursues a dedicated air war. It

seems to me that sacrificing thousands of innocent civilians to achieve political aims — even U.S. political aims — is the logic of terrorism. So I can't rejoice with Rorick, or take part in his own brand of extremism.

Rev. Michael L. Spezio
 University Institute of Neuroscience

CORRECTION

The co-director of Saferide was misidentified in Monday's paper ("Campus provides options for safety," ODE, 10/01). Her name is Nikki Fancher.

The Emerald regrets the error.