

# COMMENTARY

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## Editorial

### Consumers should avoid exploitation of Sept. 11 tragedy

Since the Sept. 11 attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, Americans across the country have lived in utter shock. Mourners tried to cope with the reality of the terror, while relief workers began the arduous task of picking through the remains of the World Trade Center towers. Shortly after the event unfolded, many American merchants reacted in the spirit of capitalism: They churned out some star-spangled merchandise.

The opportunity to exploit the situation was evidently too good to pass up. Marketers capitalized on our newfound patriotism by slapping "The Pledge of Allegiance" on a T-shirt and selling it for "only" \$9.95. American flags of every size disappeared from stores. Car manufacturers such as Ford and General Motors created ads with a patriotic angle as part of their pitch. General Motors urged consumers to "Keep America Rolling," presumably by buying one of its cars.

Despite the stumbling economy, the public has been eager to buy anything and everything if the colors red, white and blue are featured. Citizens have reveled in the opportunity to prove — through purchasing material goods — that we are proud to be Americans.

Corporate marketers are not the only ones to capitalize on the recent tragedy. E-mail solicitations have reportedly been sent out to ask for donations to the Red Cross and other relief organizations. These e-mails, which often are sent by con artists, direct donors to private Web sites, which are ostensibly designed to obtain credit card numbers that criminals can later use for fraudulent purposes. In a time when our nation is still mourning the events of Sept. 11, it is sickening that there are some people who are attempting to exploit this tragedy for their own personal gains.

And it is even more unfortunate that Americans who have been bombarded with these messages to "show solidarity" by buying products are apparently responding in exactly the way the advertisers hoped.

Instead of falling for these ploys, why not actually do something to help the victims of the national tragedy? Donations of money, food or blood are still needed, and would be a more appropriate way to show your support. Having your fingernails airbrushed with stars and stripes or wearing a "We Remember" T-shirt is Yankee Doodle dandy, but we fail to see how it helps victims and their families.

### Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to [letters@dailyemerald.com](mailto:letters@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.

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## Britney Spears: the hypocritical role model

She is an adolescent boy's wet dream and a feminist's nightmare. Britney Spears has a fan base of millions around the globe, the majority of whom are girls under the age of 12. Admittedly, this 19-year-old pop priestess is just another pretty face in a music industry full of talentless Barbie-doll carbon copies, where image is held in higher regard than actual talent. But her fans have been following this virgin-cum-naughty-sex-kitten since she was in pigtails and coveralls.

Spears is bumping and grinding on dangerous ground, contradicting everything she says she stands for, including the sanctity of abstinence and a wholesome Christian lifestyle. As a role model, she should realize the implications of her actions on children instead of compromising her integrity as a woman by becoming the convoluted ideal of womanhood for our patriarchal society.



Julie Lauderbaugh  
editorial editor

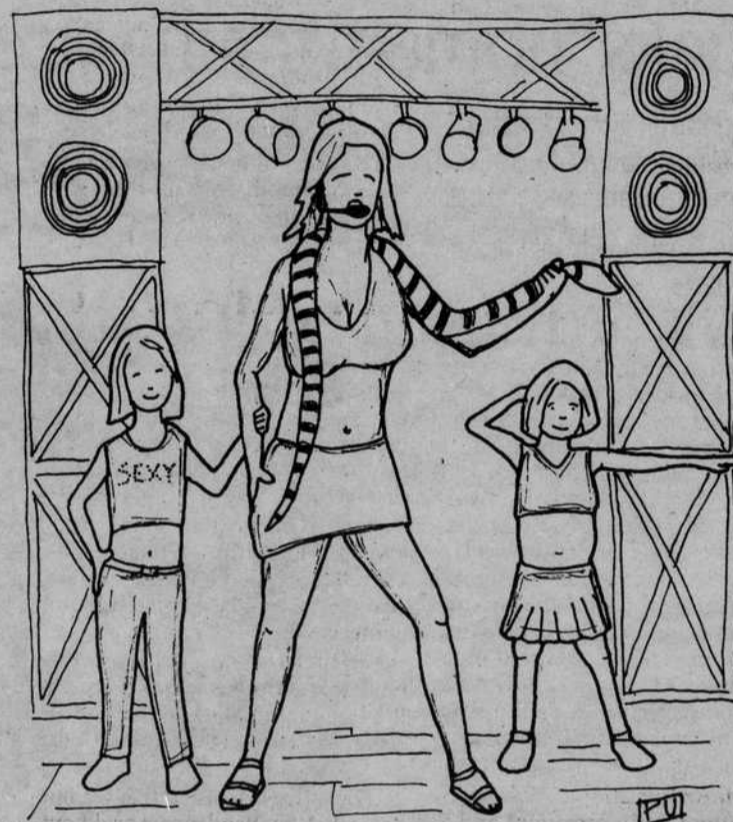
So how does a former Mickey Mouse Club regular transform herself from the girl next door to sex fiend à la Madonna circa 1992? Spears has been criticized for her sexpot persona and penchant for bikini-clad gyration in front of audiences of pre-pubescent girls. Although many pop stars of this new MTV generation are just as guilty of selling sex instead of music, Spears represents an entire classification of white, middle-class American girls who have no recourse in our consumer-bound society but to rely on sex appeal to be considered somebody.

This message is as confusing as it is potentially dangerous for the psyches of the young girls and boys who adore the pop star. When Spears begins undressing on stage, she's telling little girls that success, respect and female empowerment are equated to bare skin. Similarly, she is telling them they don't

have to understand the ramifications and values of virginity or abstinence to start stripping. Little boys understand that females like to take off their clothes under the guise of liberation.

However, how liberating is it to simply become a poster girl of a male-dominated music industry while fulfilling the sexual fantasies of the likes of men like Bob Dole, as demonstrated in her infamous Pepsi Superbowl ad?

Spears has cited Madonna as one of her biggest influences. However, Spears' newfound sexuality is different than the material girl's success-with-a-sexy-image because it's fake. Before Madonna became a mommy, a wife and a wannabe Briton, she was out to prove that she was in control of her sexuality as an independent woman and free from the constraints of a male-dominant



Peter Utsey Emerald

ed society. Spears is doing the opposite by submitting to market demands and pretending she has sexual prowess when she has publicly chosen to abstain from intercourse.

These ideals of women as sexual objects have always existed, but their reiteration upon future generations is both backward and sexist. Although it is up to the parents of Spears' fans to invest their own values into their children, we should realize that childrearing is now a job taken over by MTV. Just because these psychologically harmful stereotypes of women have always been the norm doesn't justify continuing to instill them in a modern society.

Julie Lauderbaugh is the editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. She can be reached at [julielauderbaugh@dailyemerald.com](mailto:julielauderbaugh@dailyemerald.com).

### Letter to the editor

#### Peace activists are hypocrites

The peace activists who hold American policies and culture responsible for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks are attempting to decorate an atrocity with artificial political significance. These peace activists are incapable of differentiating between the shortcomings of their own nation, in which freedom and democracy are fundamental principles, and acts of lunacy committed by a gang of murderous psychopaths who are harbored and supported by one of the most barbaric and repressive regimes on the planet.

These peace activists admonish us to try to understand what motivates Osama bin Laden and his associates, and to somehow appease

these monsters because (apparently) no principle is worth fighting, killing or dying for. These peace activists worship the notion of "peace" above all else, and would rather give up everyone's freedom to preserve "peace" than lift a finger — much less a weapon — in defense of the principles we as a nation hold dear.

These peace activists are hypocritical and intellectually dishonest because they take advantage of the very freedoms others have paid the ultimate price for, only to diminish that sacrifice with their ideological arrogance. The peace activists' attempts to create moral equivalency between America's policies and what happened on Sept. 11 are outrageous, indefensible and worthy only of contempt.

Sean Walston  
graduate physics

### Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, [www.dailyemerald.com](http://www.dailyemerald.com). We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

#### Last week's poll question:

What would you add to the ASUO Street Fair?  
Results: 122 total votes  
Minstrels, mimes and jugglers — 4 votes, or 3.3 percent  
Evil clowns on stilts — 13 votes, or 10.7 percent  
Meals under \$5 — 25 votes, or 20.5 percent  
Beer garden — 33 votes, or 27.0 percent

Karaoke — 3 votes, or 2.5 percent  
Toby's Tofu Palace — 42 votes, or 34.4 percent  
Don't know — 2 votes, or 1.6 percent  
Incredibly, tofu is more popular on this campus than beer. Perhaps Toby will consider combining the two for the spring street fair?

#### This week's poll question:

What are your plans for Halloween?  
The choices:  
Trick-or-treat  
Study  
Drink  
Participate in the Pulse costume contest  
Play with Ouija board  
Go to a party  
Don't know