

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

# COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:  
 Jessica Blanchard  
 Managing Editor:  
 Michael J. Kleckner  
 Editorial Editor:  
 Julie Lauderbaugh  
 Assistant Editorial Editor:  
 Jacquelyn Lewis

Monday, October 29, 2001

## Editorial

### Don't publicize HIV test results

The Oregon Health Division is doing a disservice to the community by requiring health care providers to report names of all people who test positive for HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS. The state should drop this requirement and allow complete anonymity.

As of Oct. 1, the Oregon Department of Human Services began its new reporting system, which keeps the names of patients in a database until their case report has been completed. DHS will then assign a unique identification number to each case, which begs the question: Why not simply use a number in the first place? The threat of possibly being identified when testing for HIV and AIDS may deter people who fear they have the virus from being tested.

The University Health Center is also required to submit names of those who test positive, and the fear factor of being revealed as having HIV or AIDS, especially on such a small campus, is detrimental to the success of student health care.

Unfortunately, there is still a stigma attached to having HIV or AIDS, and that makes it insensitive of the Oregon Health Division to require identification. Although the reasoning behind the new policy is to provide state health officials with more accurate numbers, the bottom line is that officials can just as easily track patients anonymously.

### Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to 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.

### 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. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

Last week's poll question: What are your plans for Halloween?

Results: 62 total votes

Trick-or-treat — 5 votes, or 8.1 percent

Study — 6 votes, or 9.7 percent

Drink — 29 votes, or 46.8 percent

Participate in Pulse costume contest — 4 votes, or 6.5 percent

Play with Ouija board — 0 votes, or 0 percent

Go to a party — 11 votes, or 17.7 percent

Don't know — 7 votes, or 11.3 percent

It appears as though drinking is the option of choice this Halloween among online voters. And unfortunately for Parker Brothers, it looks as though voters have outgrown the novelty of Ouija boards.

This week's poll question: How are you changing your holiday travel plans because of terrorism?

The choices:

Taking the train

Staying home

Hitchhiking

Renting a car

Taking the bus

Keeping plans the same

Don't know/Haven't thought about it

## Awakening America

The human race is not necessarily a violent species, as a whole. It is our relatively peaceful nature that makes society possible. However, we do have a violent potential that emerges from time to time. Even sensible people can become feverishly aggressive when discussing the urgent need to end aggression. It is this ability to produce violent anger that has enabled us to progress and survive. But uninhibited, it has also caused much suffering and death.

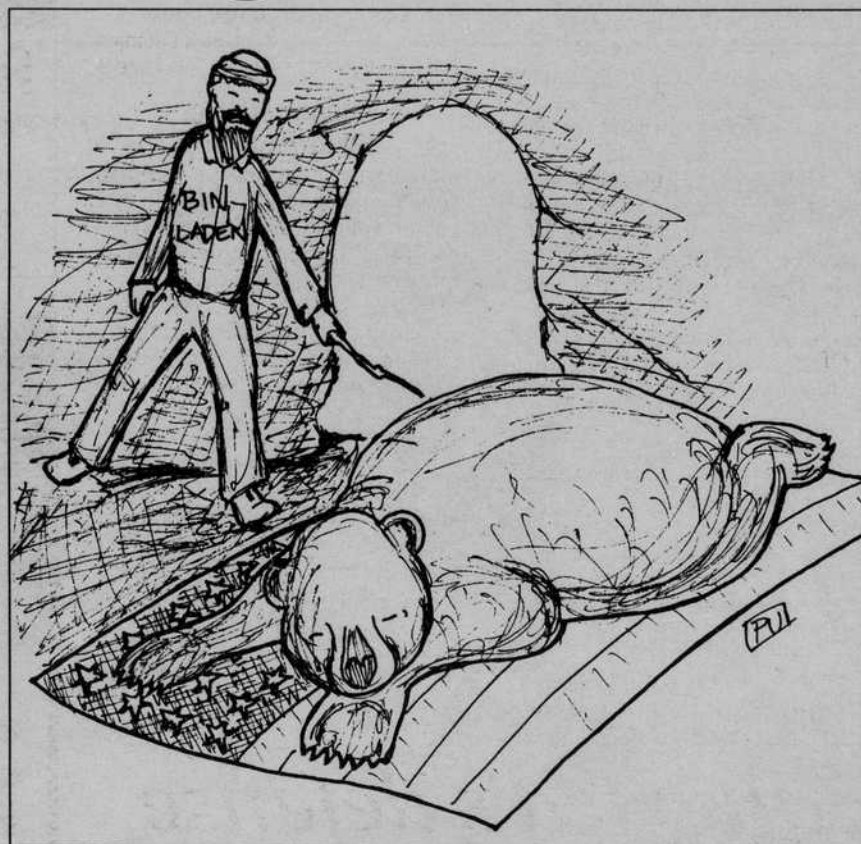


Tara Debenham  
Columnist

The question then becomes, when is violence justified? Some may say that violence is never justified, but there is a problem with that attitude, because we are not a passive species. And if everyone were always submissive, there would be no progress. It is because each individual strives to exceed that so much advancement has occurred. It is because people stand up for what they value that values are instilled.

We might ask ourselves whether the terrorist attacks were justified. In the eyes of many Americans, they certainly weren't. But what about in the eyes of the terrorists? Bush thinks he has a clear idea of who is good and who is evil, and he declares this openly in his speeches. But evil is not so clearly defined. What is evil, and where does it come from? Who creates it, and why? I believe the human race is inherently aggressive, but assuredly not evil. Perhaps it is time we looked closer at this term so easily prescribed.

Certainly these violent attacks were cruel and devastating. But would we have listened to a peaceful approach? And will we listen now? Extreme violence does have a cause, a foundation, and we need to question what it is and how we can change it. Killing the terrorists will not stop them, because we are



Peter Utsey Emerald

not getting to the root of the problem.

We often think of the United States as wealthy, great and free. We say that the rest of the world hates us because we stand for these things. But is it really so black and white? Perhaps we need to consider how our country could have invited these attacks. It is time to give up some of our national ego. America may be great and wealthy, but our wealth has made us self-absorbed isolationists.

The problem is, you aren't going to wake a bear out of hibernation by slipping a note next to its snoring head, asking to talk things over, especially when the bear's den is soft and comfortable and protected. Maybe we, the American society, are that bear — thirsty for oil, hungry for power and craving the expansion of our commercial regime. In-

deed, we have been so captivated by our own satisfying dreams that it took crashing airplanes to wake us up.

But instead of coming out with a reverberating roar and a thrash of our yellow teeth, we should question the reason we've been awakened. We can't eat everything we see without thinking, or we're bound to get ourselves poisoned. The United States has already eaten too many bad berries and rotten fish. Is it not natural that we should have a stomachache?

The world in which we reside is not a passive one, and unfortunately sometimes it takes violence to create change. Now that we're awake, we should take the time to learn why.

Tara Debenham is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. She can be reached at taradebenham@dailyemerald.com.

### Letters to the editor

#### Fossilized dung is better than fresh

It's common sense that: The University supporting a service that refuses to hire people because of gender is a violation of the University's own non-discrimination policies. Losing three to six residential blocks or losing the downtown hospital site to a Coburg/Crescent site is preferable to losing the hospital altogether.

A traffic-filled downtown mall is preferable to an abandoned pedestrian one.

When you make downtown a historic district, you drive new businesses away and eventually kill downtown by limiting its development. Look at Albany, Corvallis, Lebanon, etc.

A student-funded organization that doesn't undergo an annual budget approval process is wide open to charges of fraud and abuse, regardless of whether there's impropriety or not.

Any California team that's having a good season will be ranked higher than any Oregon team, even though we're better.

The odds of you catching Anthrax are infinitesimally low.

Not all war is bad. Without the Amer-

ican Revolution, there would be no America (as we know it), no Bill of Rights, no Constitution, no freedom anywhere — the American Revolution helped to inspire the European and Latin American ones.

Dissent and disagreement aren't disloyalty.

Not all partisanship is bad. Without dissent, disagreement and discussion, we'd all be boring carbon copies.

Not all partisanship is good, either. Without compromise, we'd never get anything done.

Even a coprolitic daily newspaper like the Emerald, which has all of the vigor and enthusiasm of a lobotomized sloth, is better than a fecal publication like the Commentator.

Derek Ian Jones  
sophomore  
undeclared

#### Smoking marijuana should be your choice

I am 45 years old and capable to make my own choices on how to raise my own family. The interpretation of what marijuana does and how it does it doesn't even figure in my life ("There's no hope with dope," ODE, 10/15). I'm aware marijuana affects different people

in different ways, but the issue here is still choice.

Human nature is always looking for escape — whether its coffee, tobacco, alcohol, food, money, sex, whatever. With the shape the nation's in, it might help everyone to sit back and burn one just to think about what happened and how we're going to deal with it.

I hate the thought of having to kill another human being, whether in war or peace, and not having a choice on how to deal with it myself. Marijuana is a minute issue. I have children and am dealing with issues of drugs, alcohol, violence, war and now terrorism. I have to teach them how to make their own choices on all of these subjects, and all I have to do it with is sheer determination, help from God, a strong (weakening) back and good friends and family.

Marijuana has strengthened my life in all of these areas. But now I've had to give up pot because of drug testing in the workplace. I've had the same job for 20 years. Pot has never interfered with anything until this testing started. I thought the Fourth Amendment meant what it said. Apparently I was wrong.

Dale Covington  
Cross Plains, Tenn.