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COMMENTARY

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Thursday, November 1, 2001

Editorial Tobacco ban imprudent, patronizing

Biology professor V. Pat Lombardi is on a personal crusade to save the campus from the ill effects of tobacco smoke. Lombardi's concern for the health of students and faculty is endearing, although his attack on the tobacco sales in the Erb Essentials convenience store may be futile.

Lombardi told the Emerald that money earned from tobacco sales is tainted because it is made at the expense of people's health. This is true; however, if the professor is adamant about health issues, he should also advocate for the removal of candy bars, soda pop, coffee, hot dogs and virtually every other junk food snack that is sold alongside the cigarettes in the store.

Even if Lombardi gets his way, students will not be deterred from buying tobacco or smoking. It will simply be an inconvenience for students who will be forced to spend their money elsewhere, which would take money away from the EMU.

Last year the Erb Essentials store made more than \$100,000 from tobacco sales, making up 7.5 percent of total EMU food service sales. If these sales ceased, the EMU would lose a large chunk of its annual revenue and more student fees would have to be allocated to keep the building running.

Lombardi presents us with paternalistic garbage by suggesting smokers should be stripped of their rights to buy cigarettes on campus. Erb Essentials has been selling tobacco products for years with little or no bellyaching. Why Lombardi is bringing this issue up now is unclear.

Students are adults and should be trusted to act and behave responsibly. Because Erb Essentials is a convenience store, perhaps students should lobby for putting beer and wine onto store shelves. After all, it is as inconvenient for drinkers as it would be for smokers to have to go off campus for drinks. And if Clancy Thurber's sells alcohol, why not allow Erb Essentials the same freedom?

If Lombardi truly wants to help with the smoking epidemic on campus, he should propose a more plausible suggestion. Perhaps if we add a dime or nickel on tobacco sales from Erb Essentials, that money could be used to create an anti-smoking advertising campaign.

Barring cigarette sales from campus is both financially unsound and patronizing to smokers. There are better causes to be preoccupied with than cigarette sales.

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.

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Creating a bland, colorless culture

Shortly after the terrorist attacks Sept. 11, I noticed an interesting chain reaction. Billboards and advertisements containing images of the World Trade Center began to disappear. Then I heard news that the twin towers would be digitally removed from upcoming movies, including "Zoolander" and "Serendipity." Not long after, a group of station directors from Clear Channel Communications, a media conglomerate owning radio stations that reach millions of listeners, sent member stations a list of 150 songs they "requested" not be played, out of respect for victims of the terrorist attacks. Now Aaron McGruder's famous "Boondocks" comic strip has been removed from New York's Daily News after McGruder focused on politics surrounding the attacks. In its place? A crossword puzzle.



Jacquelyn Lewis
Assistant Editorial Editor

So what do all these things add up to? Artistic license falling by the wayside in favor of a blander, more "politically correct" media. In the Oct. 5 issue of Entertainment Weekly, reporters mused, "Since Sept. 11, the industry's been agonizing over questions of sensitivity: What sorts of movies, TV shows and songs are appropriate for an angry nation in mourning?" Call me crazy, but all this time I was thinking I lived in a democracy, where as soon as I turned 18, it was up to me to choose what was "appropriate" for me to watch, read or listen to. If I didn't like what was presented, I simply walked away.

I'm not suggesting the intent behind any of these omissions was blatant censorship. The point was to pay homage to the victims by avoiding material that may remind the victims' friends and families of the attacks (and possibly lead to a plunge in ratings). While the digital erasing of the towers from media im-

ages, not airing certain songs and removing heavy political cartoons from comic pages may be well-intentioned, none of these things will help people forget what happened Sept. 11. They won't do anything to ease our nation's pain or anger. These decisions are an utter waste of time that only open the floodgates for more serious forms of censorship and infuriate those of us who want to make our own choices as to what we read, watch or listen to.

Letters to the editor

UU should conserve energy

I was walking by the EMU late Thursday night while doing security for the street fair, and I noticed a custodial worker cleaning the hallway floors near the Buzz. From far away, I immediately noticed how bright the Buzz and nearby hallways appeared. It was 3 a.m., and the Buzz could have been open from the brilliant light coming out of the EMU. Every light in the coffee shop was on. The hallway lights were shining radiantly. This is not only unnecessary but completely wasteful.

As a student from a campus renowned for its vast organizations, activism and environmentally friendly attitude, I find it quite ridiculous, if not embarrassing, that our campus wastes so much energy.

In light of the recent hikes in energy rates influencing the new energy surcharge, I hope that students would at least be motivated by the ever influential money-saving factor, if not pure energy conservation.

We as students have the most power to influence classroom conditions. We should be screaming, "Turn off the lights at night!



Steve Baggs Emerald

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As for Clear Channel's "suggestion" of not playing certain songs on the radio, such as the Dave Matthews Band's "Crash" and John Lennon's "Imaging," it's a notion that's ridiculous to the point of giggles. Most of the songs require a huge stretch of the imagination to connect them with terrorism. I doubt The Clash's "Rock the Casbah" will cause anyone to burst into tears while driving down the street. Clear Channel's "nod" to the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks reeks of ignorance and filiality.

Oh, and don't worry about the "Boondocks" disappearing from the

Daily News forever. Spokesman Ken Frydman told Entertainment Weekly the funny pages aren't for heavy political issues but assured readers the paper plans to reinstate the strip when it "returns to a milder line." Wait, isn't the point of a political cartoon to be political?

Please don't misunderstand me. Don't take my opinion for insensitivity. I'm aware our nation is in dire times right now. We need all the relief, solidarity and community we can muster. However, erasing images and music from the media is far from the answer. Even if the concern isn't censorship, it's frustrating that media authorities would waste their time mulling over what might be "inappropriate" for the nation. They can certainly find better ways to help victims, such as donating money to relief efforts. Benevolence can be a wonderful thing, but misguided, it can only lead to frustration.

Jacquelyn Lewis is assistant editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views may not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. She can be reached at jacquelynlewis@dailyemerald.com.

"Drop the heat a few degrees!" Small steps like these can make a campus our size save a great deal of energy and money.

My suggestion is simple. Let's turn off a few bulbs, wear an extra layer, turn off computers at night, socialize on the bus ride to school and bring Eugene back to the ideals it has been known for — a conscientious community — and make conservation not simply a passing fad, but a permanent lifestyle.

Carmen Stuewe
international studies

We must annihilate states that breed terrorists

Hatstat asks if the sweeping war of self-defense advocated in the advertisement "End states who sponsor terrorism" (ODE, 10/15) is terrorist itself ("Full page ad was shocking," ODE, 10/24). I have a question: Where have you been? The essence of actual terrorism was made perceptual in the events of Sept. 11, when death-seeking mystics smashed into those pursuing happy life on Earth. A war of self-defense against those who seek death is not an act of terrorism, but

justice in the name of our love of life.

Perhaps Hatstat questions the need for heavy civilian casualties in a war against terrorist states. But we cannot win a war where we furnish the enemy with a way to escape defeat: Does anyone doubt Taliban soldiers are now hiding amongst the neighborhoods, hospitals and mosques the Bush administration has promised not to bomb, and are going to shoot the first American soldiers who get close enough? Further, so long as our self-restraint keeps us from defeating the enemy, terrorist states are emboldened, which guarantees more American victims.

Civilians must die if our enemies are forced to surrender and American lives are to be saved. The culpability for this horror belongs to the terrorists and their supporters, not to those who would secure a world free from terror.

Indeed, the "friends of peace" opposing annihilation of states that breed terrorists are actually enemies of peace, because their pacifism paves the way for slaughter after slaughter of Americans.

Brad Williams
Portland, Oregon