

COMMENTARY

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

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

Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Editorial

ASUO must rethink solar panel plans

Apparently the Erb Memorial Union is so strapped for cash it can't afford \$10 to buy putty to fill the leaking ceiling in the breezeway when it rains. However, the University is still gung-ho about installing solar panels with money from the "overrealized fund." The solar panels are not immediately feasible, and the plan needs to be scrapped.

ASUO created a "Bucks for Ducks" contest last spring in an attempt to appropriate \$100,000 of over-realized funding for a purpose that would benefit all University students. Because of rising energy problems, the winners of the contest proposed to put solar panels on the EMU roof to save the University money, but progress on the project has been slow.

Money should be used for something more immediately beneficial to students. Although solar panels would be very cost-efficient in the long run, the logistical problems of the panels are too involved. The panels need more extensive planning before they will be efficient enough to cut back on energy costs in the EMU.

In the meantime, students have been stuck with \$30 energy fees, footing the electricity bill for the rest of the University. ASUO needs to be more vigilant in fighting the energy fee, because it is negatively affecting students, some of whom are already struggling to pay their own electricity bills this year. Instead of simply asking students to conserve, ASUO should file a lawsuit to stop the Oregon University System from levying the fee. A court in Washington recently found such fees unfair.

Action needs to be taken soon by ASUO on both accounts. There is no excuse for leaking ceilings when students have been charged with so many added fees this year, and the EMU Board has allocated substantial amounts of money specifically for building maintenance. Energy conservation and student fees are big issues on this campus, but spending more on solar panels that will not deliver immediate results is not financially sound.

Editorial Policy

This editorial represents 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.

NOT-SO-SWEET November

It's now well past the halfway mark of this term and soon we'll move into December. Life here on campus will slowly wind down to the eventual

release of winter break. Well, "slowly wind down" is a relative expression, as I know myself and many others will be frantically working to get all our work done as a result of a week's worth of procrastination.

Because we're nearing the end, it would be nice to take some



Andrew Adams
Columnist

time to see where we've been, and maybe where we are going.

The war on terrorism continues, even as some of the talking heads in the media are lamenting the fact that there haven't been any significant gains and the United States is losing momentum in this new war. Yet our "allies" in Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance, apparently took the key city of Mazar-e-Sharif, so that's encouraging. I'm not exactly sure if these radicals are any better than the radicals we're fighting, and it gets even more confusing when we realize that our other allies, the Pakistanis, hate the alliance fighters and vice versa. I say it's about time for us give up on the local boys and send in the Marines and Rangers to win this war properly on the ground.

In other national news, New York has suffered another jetliner crash, which just lays catastrophe upon catastrophe. It's shocking and utterly disgusting how things just keep getting worse.

Here in Oregon, people are screaming about assisted suicide and Attorney General John Ashcroft, who many folks see as the devil incarnate. This issue puts me in an awkward position as a conservative, and I can see both sides of the fence. I don't like a bloated federal government imposing its will on states, but I think giving peo-



Steve Baggs Emerald

ple this assisted suicide option could open a dangerous door that could lead to "mercy" killings where there's more killing than actual mercy. However, in the final analysis, we have to understand that federal law is the law of the land, and no state is above that — no matter how morally justified Oregonians may feel.

Ken Kesey died. While I'm a big fan of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (like millions of other college students), I'm not a big fan of a counterculture movement that "further" instilled a lasting legacy of disrespect toward the United States government and society. Let's hope that Kesey will be remembered for his literary brilliance and not drug use.

On campus, some allegations have found their way into print about dubi-

ous use of student fee money and a termination of an ASUO employee on highly questionable, if not downright illegitimate, grounds. I'll give 2-1 odds that most readers don't have a clue what I'm writing about because they don't care at all about their student government. It's downright pathetic that student government has so little affect on the people it represents that even scandals can't cut through the dense fog of apathy surrounding the ASUO.

There're a whole bunch of other stuff out there that irks, annoys and sometimes even encourages me, but I think I'll just save all that for another column.

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

Patriotic conduct important to U.S. prosperity

GUEST COMMENTARY

Tom Wheeler

What is patriotism? Should it mandate devotion to all things American, or heed acceptance of every governmental pronouncement? President Bush told us that the perpetrators of the horrors of Sept. 11 were motivated by a hatred of our freedoms. Maybe they were, but let's be honest. The circle of people who hate America extends far beyond deranged extremists, encompassing whole populations with deep intellectual traditions and rich cultures. To pretend otherwise is not only irrational but also dangerous to our long-term security.

I was born at West Point and raised in a military family. We didn't talk a lot about patriotism. We just lived it. My dad and my mom survived Pearl Harbor. We teach our children about people like them — not just military people but Americans from across the spectrum who in countless ways have rallied to noble causes and endured un-

speakable suffering all so others could remain free. This is what we teach in our history books, and indeed we should.

But how clear-eyed is our patriotism? Does it embrace the courage to also acknowledge America's involvement in the overthrow of democratically elected governments, our support of oppressive dictators (so long as they professed to be anti-Communist), or our propping up of commercial interests to the detriment of indigenous peoples? Are we sufficiently resolute in our commitment to democracy to demand of our leaders that they support it not only in word but in deed?

I love this country and condemn any America-bashers who justify the atrocities of Sept. 11 as payback for past misdeeds or moral failure, whether their voices come from the right or the left. But if our goal is to preserve peace and security for our children, then I hope our hearts are big enough to look beyond the motivations of murderers, to attempt at long last to come to grips with the deep-seated anti-American sentiments of so many people worldwide. Such an effort could be a crucial step toward promoting an understanding among peoples of the world that among other benefits, might

help diminish environments in which terrorism thrives.

We can take the easy path and pretend that anyone who hates us must be an evil extremist. Or, we can make the courageous commitment to at least try to see ourselves as much of the rest of the world sees us. Such an effort would take nothing away from our grief, would in no way diminish our profound gratitude for our heroes, and need not weaken our resolve to bring to justice the murderers of September. Patriotism should not require the wearing of blinders. If anything, it is a deeper and more meaningful kind of patriotism that does not mandate a head-in-the-sand view of our own history.

Let us never forget the heroes and victims of Sept. 11. As we wave our flags with justifiable pride, let us also avoid confusing honest and sometimes painful self-reflection with unpatriotic behavior. Our long-term peace depends on adjustments to international policy grounded in more informed assessments of our own past, as much as it depends on our military might.

Tom Wheeler is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication and the father of three sons approaching draft age.

Letter to the editor

Patriotism equals support

Patriotism is rallying around your country's most noble ideals and qualities, with others, during times of adversity.

The fact that so many in our self-absorbed culture bemoan patriotism, especially at the University, deeply disturbs me. This is surely a sign of how incredibly spoiled Americans have become, appreciating neither our liberties nor the blood that was spilled to preserve them.

Patriotism is not chauvinistically sweeping the sins of our country under the rug.

In the United States, we are freer than any other country to critically examine our misadventures of the past and learn from them with genuine remorse.

Dismissing patriotism has proved to be a fatal mistake in the past. Even worse, failing to stand up for our country, as imperfect as it is, is tantamount to forgetting the victims of Sept. 11.

The greatest threat to our country's viability is not terrorism, but the rejection of patriotism.

Chris Turek
Sweet Home, Ore.