

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

ASUO lowers fee; more work awaits

ASUO President Nilda Brooklyn and Vice President Joy Nair have succeeded in reaching one of their campaign goals by successfully having the energy fee lowered to \$20 per student per term, down \$10 from a fall projection by the administration.

They persuaded Provost John Moseley to cut the controversial fee by one-third, mainly because of successful conservation efforts by students — a campaign that was largely promoted by the ASUO.

The advertising campaign promoting conservation was well-received, although most of the ASUO-sponsored events publicizing energy preservation were not popular among students. Open forums to discuss the fee and the ASUO's efforts to have it removed were not well attended, and a conservation dance in the EMU Ballroom was canceled at the end of fall term.

But in the face of drooping student enthusiasm, Brooklyn and Nair achieved a specific, tangible goal, a feat too few previous executives have accomplished. During each election, candidates propose broad, ambiguous reforms, such as "improved diversity," "increased safety" and "better lighting." This year's pair are guilty of nebulous campaign promises as well; however, the measurable success of the lowered energy fee should be lauded.

The executives are finally doing something positive that students can see both on tuition bills and in their wallets. Brooklyn and Nair have done an excellent job of setting a goal and accomplishing it despite resounding apathy among their constituents.

They have also created a working relationship with Moseley instead of pitting students against the University. Now that the provost has been convinced students are committed to lowering overall energy consumption on campus, the possibility of lowering or even eliminating the energy fee in the future is conceivable.

The ASUO's campaign to conserve energy has worked well enough to lower the fee. But Brooklyn and Nair need to continue to make similar progress and make good on their original promise to completely eliminate the fee. If students continue to take energy-saving cues from the ASUO's campaign, their work will be that much easier.

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.

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Bunglers can boil in their own stew

Sigh... so much stupidity, so little time. This year's field for the second Baka Awards (baka means "fool" in Japanese) was large, but I've found the cream of the crop of last year's foibles and fumbles.

The "Foot-in-Mouth Disease" Award goes to Mel Lastman, mayor of Toronto, who may have single-handedly lost any chance his city had of hosting the 2008 Olympics by alienating the entire African continent. How does one offend an entire continent? Easy. You pass off some bigoted comment as a joke. This gold-medal moron thought he had made a funny when, before going to an international mayors conference in Mombasa, Kenya, he said, "Why the hell would I want to go to a place like Mombasa? I just see myself in a pot of boiling water with all these natives dancing around me." If you're the gambling type, don't bet on his winning re-election.

The "Al Capone's Tomb" Award is

awarded to the journalist or journalists who set our profession back through sheer carelessness. This year, Lisa Verch, you're my winner. Last Halloween, KEZI ran a report on Wicca in the Oregon Youth Authority. Verch needed quotes from some real live Wiccans to round out the story (after six minutes of the anti-Wiccan viewpoint). So she found a couple who are both in prison for multiple homicide. Instead of talking with a high druid, she apparently was only able to locate two men convicted of ritualistic murder. As if that wasn't bad enough, Verch, or her producer, decided it would be cute to put the men's portraits in front of an upside-down pentagram graphic. It might have been salvageable. But Verch went that extra mile from poor judgment to out-and-out, over-the-top stupidity when she decided to subtitle the felons' words in that "horror-show" font — you know, the one that makes the words look like they were written in blood. Lisa, might I suggest you take a remedial course in journalism ethics? For a couple of centuries?

The "And He Thinks He Has A Chance?" Award for Perseverance in The Face of Overwhelming Scorn has got to go to none other than Modesto, Calif., Democratic Rep. Gary Condit.

Although he has not been linked by any means to the disappearance of Chandra Levy, an intern who allegedly had an affair with him, the Levy case has hung around him like an albatross. In the last few elections, Condit had been a lock with his district. Now, he may actually have to pony up a sizable \$1,500 fee to enter the race after failing to scare up enough signatures to get on the ballot. Keep on truckin' Gary, whatever your next job may be.

Finally, we have the "A Shot in the Dark" award, for best performance of partisan loyalty where it's least needed. Attorney General John Ashcroft, is the proud (?) winner of this award for showing that even one of the worst tragedies in American history shouldn't stop the handing of political favors to the National Rifle Association. Ashcroft, whose job, if I'm not mistaken, is to keep the American public safe, has decided that almost every record is fair game for anti-terrorist probes — except gun purchase records. OK, John-John, but surely you and Charleton Heston are aware that al-Qaida murderers also come with opposable thumbs?

E-mail columnist Pat Payne at patpayne@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



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Letter to the editor

Civil War columnist needs writing classes

Carole Chase can sure dish it out ("Eugeneans Are Smoking Quack," ODE, 11/30). Can she take it? What was the point of her asinine article? Oh yes! Beavers are better than Ducks. Honestly, could Chase think of anything more ignorant to write about? Any half-witted English major could take her comparison and reverse it so Ducks are "super-duper" and

Beavers stink.

I'm an English major. Many of my classmates have contacted me to review rough drafts before turning in final papers. Maybe Chase and I should talk before she submits another article to the Emerald. Gee, do I sound pompous and ignorant? I hope so.

I suppose Chase expected people to refute her argument. I refute her ignorant, uneducated manner of writing. Her barbs were blasé, and her wit was nonexistent. Her writing style is frenzied and below par for an English major.

It's hard enough for women to earn the respect of their male colleagues in the writing world. Chase should stop giving us a bad name. It's one thing to give an opinion and quite another to do what Chase did. She made herself into an opinionated jerk. This will affect other female authors in the future who wish to be taken seriously by the Emerald — not only by their colleagues, but by their male audience as well.

Shame on Chase, and shame on the editor who allowed her obvious lack of intuition and better judgment to be splashed

all over the Emerald.

Jenny L. Hansen
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Editor's note: Carole Chase is an Oregon State University student. Her column was requested by the Emerald in a Civil War exchange and was not edited by the Emerald prior to publication. Emerald editorial editor Julie Lauderbaugh wrote a column published in The Daily Barometer, OSU's student paper, the same day. Both Civil War columns can be found online in the Emerald's archives at www.dailyemerald.com.