

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

NBC: Cheers for running forbidden liquor ads

(U-WIRE) LOS ANGELES — NBC plans to break a network television ban on running hard liquor commercials this weekend by airing an ad from Guinness UDV's Smirnoff vodka during an episode of "Saturday Night Live." We'll drink to NBC for standing up to the unpopular idea of running these commercials in the face of other television networks' censorship.

TV networks have an immense influence over their viewing audiences, shaping public opinion and defining the boundaries of American values. As the dominant media source in the country, they have an obligation to ensure fairness in advertising and freedom of speech. Alcohol and tobacco companies are legal businesses in the United States, and, as such, they're entitled to the same treatment by the media as other corporations. Beer makers, for example, have been advertising on major TV networks for years without significant public backlash.

It's understandable that some may express reservations about having tobacco and alcohol advertised on TV, but NBC is doing this in a public-friendly manner. The ads are designed for programs airing after 9 p.m., and can extend to other shows that have an audience demographic of 85 percent aged 21 and older. The hard liquor companies must also run advertisements warning of alcohol's side-effects and dangers as a part of their contract. Also, ads making an effort to target younger, impressionable viewers will not be run by the network.

All other TV networks must follow suit with NBC and stop playing babysitter and censor with adult viewers.

Editor's note: This staff editorial is courtesy of the University of California Los Angeles campus newspaper, the Daily Bruin.



A more timely celebration ...

The New York New Year's Eve apple has dropped once again, and many of us probably watched its splendid fall while passionately embracing a special someone. That is, if you're one of the lucky ones.

I spent the evening with my most beloved, uh, cousin. Of course, I would like to have spent it with someone unrelated to me — there is only so much embracing you can do with even a male relative. But, alas, I have had no such luck at the start of this new year.

Doesn't it seem strange that the new year officially begins its cycle in January? The Babylonian New Year, in 2000 B.C., began with the first New Moon after the Vernal Equinox, which would make new year occur in March, the beginning of spring, which actually makes sense. But emperors continued to tamper with the calendar until it became out of synchronization with the sun. In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 B.C., declared Jan. 1 the start of the new year. And now, because of Julius Caesar's supposed all-knowing declaration, we celebrate New Year's in January.

Not that I don't respect Caesar, but per-

sonally I think the new year should be celebrated Sept. 1. After all, that's when students are gathering up their gear for school, making new promises concerning GPAs, friendships, jobs and activities to join or lead. Of course, the whole world is not in

school, but most families have kids who are involved in the school system. The end of summer seems to commemorate a new turn and change, pulling yourself out of the lazy, hazy days of summer sunbathing and into "beautiful" early mornings.

The new year is in the dead of winter! Nothing, at least as far as the weather goes, seems to be happening. At least at the end of August we have the gathering of the harvest. Everything is ripe and in its fullest condition to be plucked. It is the time to taste the sweet or bitter fruits from the year before.

Added to all this, the nice weather in September helps us to keep resolutions.

For example, more than half of us have probably vowed to lose five or more pounds this January or at least get in better shape. But what can we do when we open the door to a downpour of rain and foggy muck that sneers back at us, "Want to lose all that Christmas chocolate, eh? Ha! Try to do it in this!" And for all those lucky countries that actually have summer in January, well, I think, after 2000 years, it's about time we rotate who gets the warm weather.

Also, the new year comes directly after Christmas, the biggest holiday of the year. Everyone has kind of had enough of partying and they're completely broke. OK, we can never have enough of partying, but we are broke. I think it would be better if the two holidays were more evenly spaced out.

Now, considering all this, I am sure you will all resolve to make your resolutions in September. Hey, you could even consider this your innocent way of procrastinating. As for me, I have but one resolution this January: Have a hot date for next New Year's Eve.

E-mail columnist Tara Debenham at taradebenham@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Tara Debenham
 Columnist

Letters to the editor

Erb Essentials missed essential point

Now that the verdict is in on deciding whether or not to sell tobacco to young adults at this University, I must express my disappointment. I am in agreement with professor V. Pat Lombardi. I don't understand how an institution, designed and funded to help young adults prosper through education, could also promote a product that does the exact opposite! How is this not unethical? What's worse is the University actually benefits from causing this type of harm. My suggestion to the EMU is to formulate a new source of income through fundraising and the like. A lack of finances is not uncommon to the University and the setback can be dealt with.

Christa Shively was quoted as say-

ing that she doesn't think it to be "an issue of morals or ethics" but an "issue of choice." This is true in that students who make that choice to buy tobacco can do so off campus. The moral and ethical issue lies in the fact that the University is maintaining such a harmful choice.

That being said, I congratulate the University Bookstore for making the right decision. As for Erb Essentials, they have lost my business until the right and moral decision is made to discontinue selling tobacco products.

Emily Poulsen
 freshman
 pre-journalism

Harrington hype was too costly

The point is not whether Joey Harrington won the Heisman Trophy, which he didn't, but the frivolous spending of \$250,000. People were

laughing at the University for placing a billboard of Harrington in Manhattan at the very same time that the University needed to get out of the second and third tiers.

Just think about how many scholarships the money could have paid for. Please don't say it was private money. That excuse is quite short on fundamentals.

The University of Oregon is not Virginia, Wisconsin or North Carolina. Just check the Princeton Review or U.S. News & World Report. Do you want to know how Wisconsin promoted themselves a couple of years ago? They faxed and mailed their propaganda. They could not have justified spending \$250,000 on some jock!

Could you ever, ever envision Stanford doing that?

Robert McShane
 Scottsdale, Ariz.

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.

This week's poll question: Where should the city of Eugene put the Sprint PCS cell phone tower?

The choices:

On top of McArthur Court
 15th Avenue and Villard Street
 NIMBY: Not in My BackYard
 Don't know
 Don't care

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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.