

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:
Jeremy Lang
Editorial Editor:
Julie Lauderbaugh
Assistant Editorial Editor:
Jacquelyn Lewis

Tuesday, January 15, 2002

Editorial

ASUO has the 'ride' solution

The discrimination issues that have hounded Project Saferide for more than a year can finally be put to rest. The wait for a co-ed shuttle service has been arduous, and the new transportation service for men and women — called Night Ride — will have to prove its worth after such a long battle.

Saferide is an important service to the University and women on campus. Time and again, the sexual assault prevention service has proved its worth. In fact, the project is so popular, it is often difficult for female students to get a ride. However, many male students have safety concerns similar to those of women and should have had a service available long before a gender discrimination complaint was filed against Saferide last year.

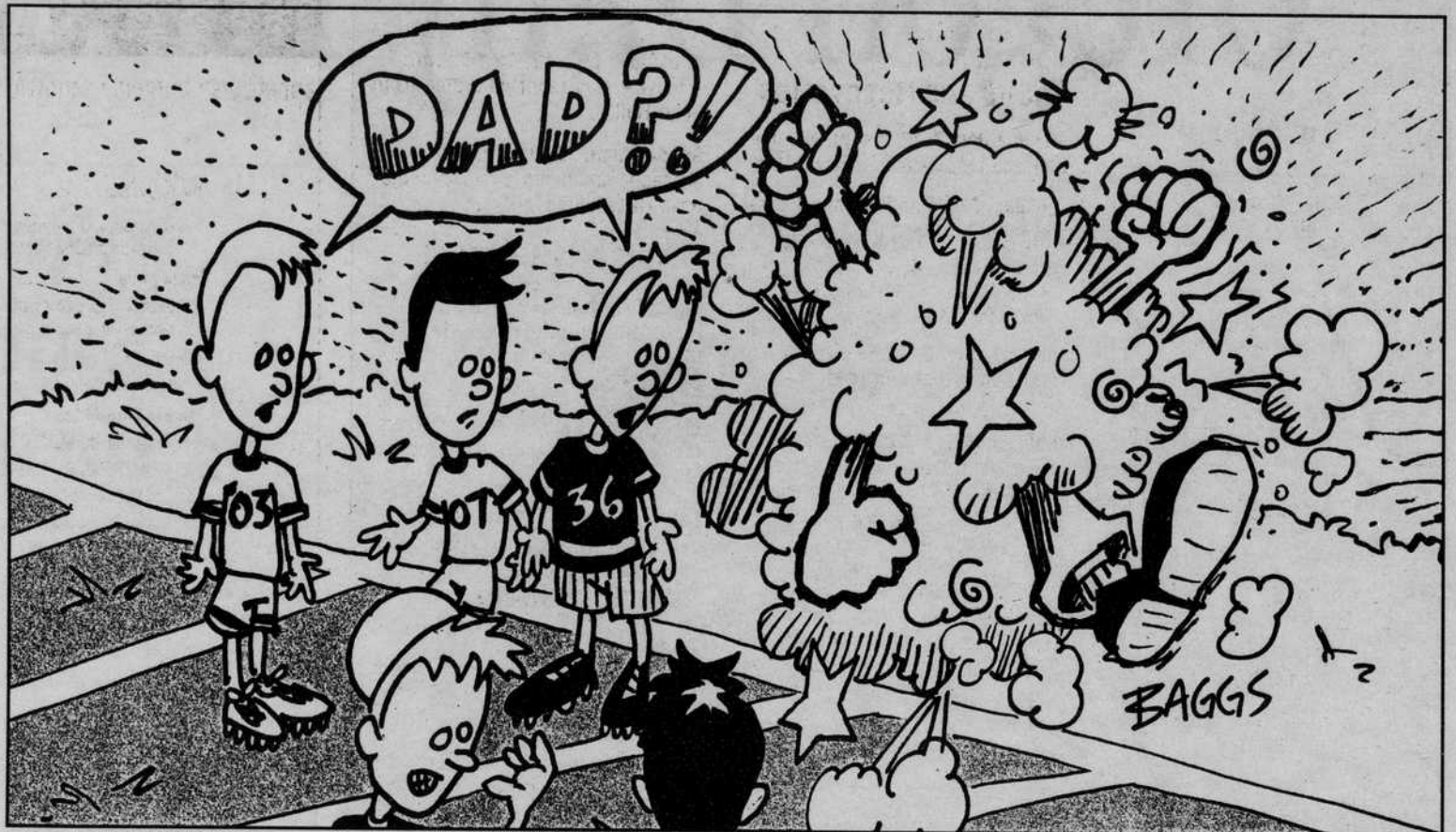
The complaint, filed by an anonymous University student, claimed the University was in direct violation of Title IX of the Education Acts of 1972 because Saferide prohibits men from driving or riding in its vans. After much debate, the new coed service, Night Ride, is slated to be implemented as early as this summer, according to Saferide co-director Nikki Fancher.

The new service is a good idea, but time will tell if Saferide's naysayers will utilize Night Ride after so much discussion. Male students have complained in the past that they pay student fees for a Saferide service they can't use. Will the alternative silence the criticism? Or has the criticism been more about paying fees than hitching a ride? All that will depend on the frequency of male riders.

Students who were denied service by Saferide in years past can take solace in the knowledge that their transportation alternative is coming. It has been a long time in the making, but Night Ride should solve the gender discrimination problems surrounding Saferide by creating a separate, but equal, alternative.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

This editorial is the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. 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.



Steve Baggs Emerald

Fanatical soccer parents are all right

All the hoopla surrounding the trial of Thomas Junta, the Massachusetts truck driver who beat to death another "hockey dad" at his son's practice in the summer of 2000, has called into question the role parents should play in children's sports.

Some people are crying for a screening process on all coaches and referees hired (Junta's victim, who supposedly started the fight, was supervising the practice); others want parents off the ice, field, diamond and court all together. As a former child athlete, I'd like to throw in my two cents.

I played soccer in Lufkin, Texas, from the time I was 3 years old through my sophomore year in high school. Most people I saw playing soccer were of Tejano heritage, not American. We were a dedicated bunch, even though some years we only had enough players for one or two teams. We'd spend our Saturdays and Sundays packed into

minivans like sardines, driving to any town we could find with a team willing to play us. When all else failed, we would challenge the Mexicans who lived adjacent to the fields. The rotating squad of males aged 5 to 50 would beat us every time, but at least we were playing.

I digress. During my soccer experience, one woman — the mother of one of my teammates — never missed a game.

She was a tyrant, 90 pounds of Ralph Lauren-clad, Lexus-driving piss and vinegar. "I'm getting the spoon" she would yell to her son from the sidelines whenever he botched a shot, or got the ball taken from him. She was referring to a wooden cooking spoon she used for corporal punishment. But everyone on the team heard the threats of getting the spoon. No one — not the ref, not the opposing team nor their parents, not even I — was safe when she was on the warpath, which was quite often, as we were a terrible team.

She was an overbearing little woman, but at least she was there. Game after game, weekend after weekend, she was there for us, all of us, especially those whose mothers couldn't make it because they had to work a double shift in the emergency room and whose fathers lived clear across the country.

"I've got a spoon for you, too, Aaron! Get your butt in gear!" became something of a comfort to me and some of my friends in the same situation.

So here's to her, and to all the other parents across America who provide us with jugs of Gatorade, Dixie cups and orange slices at half-time, and Cokes and candy bars after the game, win or lose. Without you, as mentally unstable as you were, there would be no children's sports.

I'm not excusing the brutish behavior displayed by Junta. No child's game, let alone practice, is worth descending to physical violence — especially in front of a group of kids. But sports, at heart, are war play. It is only natural that an organized display of aggression toward a group of people wearing different uniforms should arouse those more primal instincts in the people watching.

Besides, obsessive parent coaches have made the likes of Tiger Woods and Venus and Serena Williams into multi-millionaires. The athletes may be scarred for life and forever socially stunted, but at least they will be able to afford their medication. Looking forward to a life in journalism, that's more than I can say.

Email Aaron Rorick at aaronrorick@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Aaron Rorick
Columnist

Letters to the editor

Bramwell lacking logic

I was disappointed after reading Richard Bramwell's letter to the editor ("Same God, different logic," ODE, 1/9). It should have been titled "Richard Bramwell's faulty logic." His first error is to equate religious devoutness with a rejection of reason. It should go without saying that some of the greatest minds of all time were extremely devout men and women of faith. Many of the pioneers of science were devout — and were motivated to study nature by a deep-seated belief that this world is filled with both meaning and order by a higher power. Sure, some religious people reject logic, but I've met atheists who have seemed to reject logic, too.

Secondly, Bramwell's letter makes it sound as if the rejection

of religion is a giant step in eliminating violence, but this is hardly the case. Look at Cambodia under Pol Pot, China under Mao Tse-Tung, or the USSR under Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, and it is obvious that those leaders who have ignored or rejected religion can do as much or more damage than religious folk.

Third, Bramwell asserts that Christians, Jews and Muslims all worship the same god. As a Christian, I worship the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, not Allah. And I'm fairly sure my Muslim friends have never worshipped the Holy Trinity. Important differences exist between Christianity and Islam, and if Bramwell feels that either faith should be condemned for their "contradictions," he should do his homework.

Brian Stubbs
graduate student
physics

Advocating for more parties

The current ASUO executives are being fiscally irresponsible and prejudiced by hiring a "Greek Advocate." This paid position will only serve students who pay to be in the exclusive greek system.

The position will serve only to pad a fraternity or sorority member's resume. It is a travesty. When I spoke to Joy Nair about this, she said the position was created because there was a greater need for sorority girls' safety. What about other women's safety? The ASUO has a "Safety Advocate," so why is there a need for a paid Greek Advocate? If being a sorority girl is so "unsafe," wouldn't it make sense to not be in a sorority? Isn't Greek Life one giant Greek Advocate located next door to the ASUO? What more could they possibly need?

People choose to be in the greek system; they are not a protected class, nor should they ever be treated as such. Do they need advocating for more parties? There is no need for this useless position. Where is the marching band advocate? Did the marching band not donate enough to the Brooklyn and Nair campaign or not hang enough banners?

While the current executives complained about energy fees, they have created a paid position that will cost the students even more. They are causing distrust in their ability to make fiscally responsible and rational decisions with student money. Even worse, they are supporting an exclusive membership whose roots lie in discrimination and prejudice and are paying for it with student money.

Autumn DePoe
Eugene