

COMMENTARY

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Monday, February 18, 2002

Editorial

Eugene police are listening, but students aren't talking

University students are known for voicing their opinions on a variety of campus and community-based issues, including drug and alcohol policies and whether police officers should be allowed to carry weapons on campus. However, students have shown surprisingly little interest in campus programs about Eugene policing policies. Despite the Eugene Police Department's efforts to gain student feedback regarding its policies, turnout for its campus forums has been extremely low. In fact, no students at all attended the first workshop, which reviewed "use of force" policies. Lack of interest in this area is cause for concern, since EPD's policies affect college students in many ways.

Kudos to EPD for attempting to educate students and get them involved. The department's outreach program has held a series of workshops on campus this year, aimed at collecting student suggestions about community-based programs and police policies. EPD said students could reduce the number of beat patrols on campus by supporting the community programs.

The Eugene Police Commission, EPD's public outreach service, is also preparing its programming recommendations for the department's upcoming budget and could use student input in deciding on programs and policies.

Many students have cited concerns about law enforcement issues on campus, such as drug and alcohol policies and the possible return of Party Patrol, a program that boosted weekend night patrols in the University neighborhood. However, those who really want their voices heard should actually attend the workshops designed to let them do just that.

It's imperative to speak out, but the only way to institute change is to use the services available and channel suggestions to the right people. EPD has made an effort to listen to students, and it's time students take advantage of that opportunity.

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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HOLIDAY gone wrong

Open the window, and take a good whiff of the air this morning. Don't smell anything other than the cool, crisp air of a February morning? Try again. Smell it now? Yes, there it is, the smell of yet another national holiday gone wrong.

Today is Presidents Day — a nationally recognized holiday set aside each year to officially honor the birth of George Washington, but also the other 42 men who have led our country. Across the nation, the youth of America will spend the remainder of the

week learning about our famous, and also infamous, presidents. Our parents are enjoying a rare three-day weekend, but for those of us here at the University, the holiday doesn't even warrant a day off from school.

This is a shame. We are missing out on all that Presidents Day has become. While we are sitting in class today, many of our fellow Americans

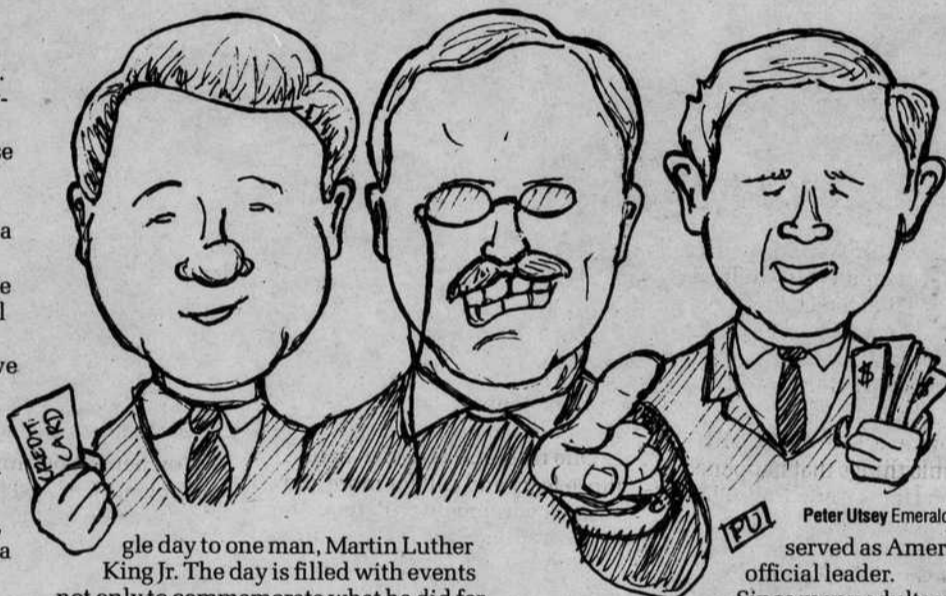
are spending their day working the plastic of their credit cards. I don't know about you, but there is nothing that says, "Thank you, Mr. President," better than a new pair of shoes.

There really isn't anything wrong with corporate America taking advantage of Presidents Day, because it happens for every other holiday as well. What sets Presidents Day apart is that other than the big sales at the shopping mall, there isn't much more behind it.

On Veterans Day and Memorial Day, we hold public events to faithfully honor those who have served to protect our country. Independence Day is a full day of celebrations concluding with picturesque fireworks. Christmas holds many different meanings to different people, but combined with Thanksgiving, it is generally used to spend with family.

Each January we rightfully devote a sin-

WE WANT YOU...
 TO SHOP 'TILL YOU DROP!



gle day to one man, Martin Luther King Jr. The day is filled with events not only to commemorate what he did for civil rights in the country, but also to learn about what he stood for. This is what Presidents Day should be. Instead, it is just a day to buy one and get one free.

There are no ceremonies in front of City Hall, or parades down Main Street or festivals in the town square. Love them or hate them, all of our American presidents should be respected or honored in a manner much more meaningful than advertisements that carry a red, white and blue theme. Instead of receiving a day off from school, children up through high school should spend the day in their classrooms learning about the office of the President — what it means and the men who have

Peter Utsey Emerald served as America's official leader.

Since many adults would balk at the idea of going back to school, much less open a book and read from it, for them Presidents Day should be an opportunity to give back to the society they live in. Imagine a day where instead of going to a mega store, Americans take the time to give the community center a much-needed coat of paint, spruce up the city park or repair the playground at the local school.

Our presidents have unselfishly given up years of their lives to protect the American way of life. Giving one day back only seems fair.

E-mail columnist Jeff Oliver at jeffoliver@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

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.

Last week's poll question:

How will you be celebrating Valentine's Day?

Results: 88 total votes

- Eating chocolate — 10.2 percent, or 9 votes
- Studying — 22.7 percent, or 20 votes
- Hanging out with friends — 4.5 percent, or 4 votes
- Buying Hallmark stock — 3.4 percent, or 3 votes
- Wondering where it all went wrong — 27.3 percent, or 24 votes
- Nothing — 31.8 percent, or 28 votes

This week's poll question:

What is your favorite Winter Olympics scandal?

The choices:

- French pairs figure skating judge/double gold-medal controversy in 2002
- Apolo Anton Ohno's gold-medal loss to Australia's Steven Bradbury because of a fall in 2002
- Canadian snowboarder Ross Rebagliati being stripped of gold medal in 1998
- The Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan debacle in 1994
- Don't know

Letter to the editor

Improving accessibility can increase voter turnout

If ASUO stopped wasting time promising to be more accessible and actually did something about it, voter turnout would increase.

Start by making elections more accessible.

ASUO can simply post a list of the positions and candidates in one of their big, scary office windows. Along those same lines, the ASUO Elections Board should actually update their Web site (<http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~asuoec>). They should include Web page addresses for candidates who have them, preferred contact information for each candidate (like an e-mail address), the schedule of debates and candidate fairs, and when the Emerald's elections special is being published. They could also include information about dates of the primary and general elections and directions for voting on DuckWeb.

Voter turnout is also about voter education. Voter education doesn't happen by candidates using up paper resources covering every inch of the campus with signs and leaflets. It doesn't happen by friends wearing shirts or signs telling people who to vote for, or by planting OSPIRG people every 30 feet, telling us whether to vote for their measure. It happens by getting the issues out there and then giving the candidates an opportunity to take a stand on them.

Students on this campus don't vote because they don't know or they don't care. The only ways you can get them to vote are by getting out the information and by making them care. It may be difficult, but it can be done.

Mindi Rice
 sophomore
 journalism