

# COMMENTARY

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## Editorial

### Skating judges illustrate well the Olympic art of the screw-job

(U-WIRE) DEKALB, Ill. —

By this time, all talk of pairs skating, pairs of gold medal winners and pairs of scandals deserves at least a pair of sighs.

After all, in the throes of a slow news week in which the world's attention is on Utah of all places, the controversy involving Russians, Canadians and crooked judges everywhere has received more ink and airtime than an O.J. Simpson-Mike Tyson celebrity golf outing.

But, please forgive all those hard-working reporters sent out with liberal expense reports and visions of gold medals in their eyes. The case of Russians Elena Bereznina and Anton Sikharulidze and former silver-medalists Jamie Sale and David Pelletier of Canada taps into one universal appeal: the art of the screw-job.

With each regretful judging revelation and smooth interview, it's easy to forget even what started the whole thing. With Americans out of the running for anything resembling a medal, the crowd and the continent backed the Canadians. However, despite what experts called a clearly superior performance, the Russian team sat atop the medals podium.

The case of the pairs skating situation captures conversation just as the cases of the 1972 men's basketball team and Roy Jones Jr. in 1988 continue to confound sports historians. In both cases, the clear winners had victory firmly grasped, only to lose the gold medal through official intervention.

Everyone can identify with those Canadians, even those few Antarctic humans at the other end of the world. Who hasn't felt robbed and empty-handed? This isn't a case of being the bridesmaid and never the bride. This is a case of silver looking more like fool's gold.

Unfortunately, the whole sad trend will continue as country loyalties and deals dominate any sport that demands judging. And as long as people continue to care about such sports, the outrage will remain. The only solution, a pipe dream even for the most radical International Olympic Committee members, would be independent judges — if there is such a thing.

The IOC, still wishing these games will end without a memory after the placement process featured a nice American dose of corrupt electioneering, needs another black eye like pairs skating needs more than one gold-medal-winning team. And, just as Jones Jr. and those 1972 hoopsters know, the memory remains far after the rings leave town.

This editorial was taken courtesy of the Northern State Illinois newspaper, the Northern Star.

### 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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## The world needs Truman's honesty now

"Some of the presidents were great, and some of them weren't. I can say that because I wasn't one of the great presidents, but I had a good time trying to be one, I can tell you that."

— Harry S. Truman, 33rd president of the United States.

That may have been Truman's assessment of his own presidency, but history in some ways has proved him wrong. He had all the hallmarks of being a caretaker president: He was short-tempered, had little rhetorical flourish and had been inserted into the presidency after his predecessor, one of the most popular presidents of his time, died unexpectedly. No wonder it seemed Truman was destined to keep



Pat Payne  
Columnist

the Oval Office occupied only until more suitable material came along. He was suitable enough on his own. With the way history's been unfolding lately, we could use "Give-'em-hell Harry" right about now. We are in a period of time that Truman would have felt at home in. Enron is threatening to bring instability to the government at the same time we are prosecuting a war we hadn't wanted. Truman was in the same boat — twice. As a senator from Missouri, he had been disgusted with the extravagant waste and fraud that contractors and labor unions were committing during the massive buildup of military forces after the attack on Pearl Harbor. These included building Army camps with extremely cheap materials for exorbitant prices and "featherbedding" union workers by having them on the job so that extra labor costs would go into union coffers.

These excesses were smokescreened by the usual gang of lobbyists, company Ken Lay would feel comfortable in. Truman never bowed to the lobbyists.

### Letters to the editor

#### Dreier creates racist environment

The University hosts many students from Russia, China and Vietnam, and although Tim Dreier's ASUO candidate Q&A in Friday's Emerald was a joke, as an international student, I didn't find it amusing at all ("ASUO ticket vows to eliminate 'Red threat' on campus," ODE, Feb. 15).

Many students from these Communist countries will vote, but not for someone who creates a hostile and racist environment. Dreier says he wants to eliminate subversives, which would include students from these countries. International students are an asset to the University no matter what country they come from.

Shun Yanagishita  
junior  
anthropology

#### Dreier seeks leadership through fear

I don't often take an interest in campus politics, but the article about Tim Dreier in the Emerald ("ASUO ticket vows to eliminate 'Red threat' on campus," ODE, Feb. 15) caught my eye and left me with a question — is this a joke?

I could barely believe that someone would actually make statements like these, and to be running for a student government office. Tim Dreier's state-



Steve Baggs Emerald

In the Senate, he headed a committee that succeeded in ending many of these practices.

With the Enron mess the way it is, we could use a Harry Truman to look into the shady business of the Senate. Sadly, we don't have any Trumans left. While we have people who have stepped up to the plate, their effort no doubt is a Band-Aid meant to reassure voters, not the hard political road to hoe.

After Truman's ascendancy into the presidency in April 1945, Nazism had receded as the bogeyman of Europe. Instead, our erstwhile allies, the Soviet Union, were the major threat that loomed in the minds of Americans. Truman didn't want war with the Soviets. Again, it was thrust upon him when North Korea attacked United Nations forces across the 38th Parallel in 1950. The United States was at war.

Truman, once again, had a tough political decision. The immensely popular General Douglas MacArthur was agitating for an expansion of the war into Chi-

na, which would have brought them and the Soviet Union into what by then could have become a nuclear war, and worse, for sending diplomatic threats to the Chinese, which was the purview solely of the state department and the president. Truman did the only thing open to him: He recalled MacArthur from his position as the commander in Korea in 1951. Sen. Joe McCarthy, the Red-baiter from Wisconsin, as well as a large part of the American public exoriated Truman as being a Communist sympathizer, and this scorn may have been the major cause of his decision not to run in 1952. Still, Truman braved public anger and did the right thing.

As he himself said, he may not have been one of the great presidents. He was something better: one of the honest presidents.

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

ments and policies are the kind of paranoid ignorance that we can only pray can be healed.

"Subversives?" Who are they? What are they subversive to? What's "un-American?" What's the threat posed by Communism? I don't see Dreier clarifying any of these. And dueling pistols to solve differences? If that's not a joke, I sincerely would believe him to be mad. Because I know that it will be the instant reaction of anyone sympathetic to Dreier to label me as a left-wing subversive, I must say that I am not. I have never in my life considered myself political at all and do not hold allegiance or sympathies to any political group.

Tim Dreier is running on buzzwords and paranoia. He wants to gain leadership over other students by playing off of vague fears and enforced conformity. He will not be getting my vote.

Nathan Edwards  
junior  
english

#### Don't judge Olympics coverage

I was amazed and baffled by the guest editorial "Olympics not the place for patriotic zealots" (ODE, Feb. 13). The claim that "NBC is trying to show that America is still the best" is both naive and ridiculous. The only support for this claim is a passing reference to "medal counts and

human interest stories about American athletes." Medal counts are statistics that are compiled for every Olympics, regardless of whether the United States is in the lead. And NBC does not speak for the Olympics and is not affiliated with them in any way; NBC is simply the network that happens to be covering the Games this year, and for an overwhelmingly American demographic.

They have every right to give their audience what it wants to see: information about the athletes representing their country — just as I am sure the networks covering the Games in other nations are doing. Our Olympic athletes are vastly underappreciated in this country anyway, as compared to athletes in many other nations, where they are often regarded as heroes. It is certainly true that "The Olympics should be a showcase of the athleticism of the greatest athletes of all nations," and this is exactly what they are this year and every Olympic year, regardless of the television coverage.

Finally, as a side note, I found it utterly disgusting that the editorial chose to compare a relatively mild increase in American patriotism during these Games with the fascist ideals of the Adolph Hitler-run 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin.

Brian Stutzman  
junior  
general science