

Letters to the editor

Cartoon places blame in wrong place

We recognize the importance and legitimacy of cartoon editorials to educate readers on a myriad of issues. However, the cartoon by Steve Baggs in your Wednesday, March 6 edition entitled "Logic in Israel" was misleading, biased and uninformed.

By presenting Israel as strong and militant and the Palestinians as innocent and unarmed, Baggs places the sole responsibility for the current Middle East situation in Israel's lap. The terrorist war being waged on Israel is the result of a strategy adopted by Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority even before Ariel Sharon's election as Prime Minister.

Israel is not targeting civilians, but rather being forced into a war of self-defense against terrorists and suicide bombers. Laying blame on Israel might be fashionable, but it ignores the larger complex realities of the situation.

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U.S. citizens need to examine U.S. violence

I strongly agree with Jason Stein's comment, "Violence is the last resort of the incompetent" ("Cartoon found not so humorous," ODE, 3/08/02). It's a poignant sentiment that is, today more than ever, worth further consideration.

Regarding the situation in Israel, Stein says, "When you have a population in your midst that is trying to literally kill you, action must be taken." This could be a description of Yugoslavia as the Kosovo conflict arose — and many countries are beginning to feel the same about the United States.

If violence is the last resort of the incompetent, we should re-examine our current administration. The slaughter we're committing in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the Yugoslavian conflict, is horrifying.

Articles regarding the U.S. "Nuclear Posture Review" describe further insanity. The review states nuclear bombs "could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack," and "in the event of surprising military developments." This means making nuclear weapons tools of war, not war deterrents. The countries in the "Nuclear Posture Review" are all but threatened with attack. However, if they attempt to defend themselves in any way, including building nuclear weapons as a deterrent, our government understands this as grounds for war.

The rest of the world has gone from chuckling to fearing our government. Unfortunately, the responsibility lies in American citizens' hands to attempt what seems impossible and to bring about a policy "for the people," not for war. The question is: Where does one begin?

William Moglia
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Carleton misguided

Tara Carleton's Emerald commentary March 11 ("Welcome to the land of forgotten purpose") is yet another example of the hilarious misconception about American society: the belief that Christianity defines our culture.

In her commentary, Carleton asserts that non-Christians are anti-American because former presidents would be upset to see the Bible ignored. Freedom of religion, however, has been accepted for more than 200 years. Isn't it fair to assume former presidents respected the constitutional right for Americans to ignore the Bible?

Furthermore, anybody who reads

the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights will find a distinct lack of Christian integration. Both the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights mention religion only in defining freedoms. The Declaration of Independence only contains vague references, such as "Nature's God" and "divine Providence." I challenge Carleton to effectively argue that the forefathers used these words to represent Christianity.

Finally, Carleton ends her diatribe with pro-Christian quotes from great American leaders. In rebuttal, I also have a quote from a great leader, Thomas Jefferson, who once said: "Question with boldness even the existence of a god." I believe this idea speaks for itself.

Jan Montry
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journalism

Living in a 'whine culture'

Diane Huber's March 8 article contends the Designated Driver Shuttle can be an uncomfortable environment for female riders (ODE, "Shuttle criticized for unsafe climate"). It cites an example of one occasion in which a woman was actually "hit on" and asserts that drivers should protect her from such uncomfortable situations.

How can anyone expect to live anywhere if they are so devoid of social skills and confidence as to be unable to deal with being "hit on" by a drunk guy. Maybe the woman who lodged this complaint should develop the basic social skills that help the rest of the world deal with these situations without having to call for help.

The drivers of DDS do a great job and contribute more to campus than the much-touted but totally laughable Saferide and Night Ride programs. In fact, I don't know of any campus program that directly contributes to the safety and livability of both the campus and the community besides DDS.

Why would anyone attack such a clearly valuable program? It seems apparent that, in trying to make everyone believe we live in a "rape culture," what has been created is a "whine culture" of people who have been misled into believing they should never have to deal with uncomfortable situations in their lives. The Emerald has certainly done its part to convince people the real answer is to find someone to blame, rather than taking the time to learn how to deal with these situations yourself.

Walker Hanlon
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Let's be careful with our toys

Some toys are dangerous. As ultra-light as an airplane is, it is more or less a toy. It has different pilot licensing requirements from regular aircraft and different allowed flight paths. It will glide well if the engine fails and can even employ a parachute in an emergency. Nevertheless, people have been killed in them.

Take model rockets: Permissible launches are different from those of full fledged military, commercial or NASA rockets. The little guys have their own inherent dangers. But if a launch of a model rocket caused a military alert, the rocketmen might have cause to complain, saying it was only a toy, why the fuss?

An amateur radio operator unplugs his high voltage power supply and shorts out the filter capacitor before working on his transmitter. At dinner, his wife complains he spends too much money on toys.

Douglas Termans novel, "Free Flight," set in a post-Holocaust America, tells of the tribulation of the survivors: "Trade off the coffee. He wouldn't need the .22 caliber. Roberts would sell his old lady for three boxes of shells and the toy pistol."

In circumstances where firearms are actually needed, a .22 pistol

might be considered a toy, and a BB gun a joke. We just need to remember that some toys are more dangerous than others.

Earl Gosnell
Eugene

Cartoon depicts the truth

I'm writing in response to Jason Stein ("Cartoon found not so humorous," ODE 3/8). He was upset over an Emerald cartoon that depicted Israeli artillery firing into a Palestinian refugee camp. He stated, "There is violence in Israel, a lot of it, but nothing like what the cartoon shows."

Unfortunately the cartoon was all too true. It depicted a face of the Israel-Palestine conflict that most Americans are unaware of because mainstream American media downplays or often omits Israeli atrocities while focusing on those committed by Palestinians. According to Robert Fisk, perhaps the world's leading journalist on Middle East affairs, "When the Israeli army goes on a shooting spree in the refugee camps and kills 16 Palestinians, among them two children, the U.S. calls for 'restraint.' When a Palestinian suicide bomber murders a crowd of Israelis in Jerusalem, including two babies and a 10-year-old, the U.S. boldly blames Yasser Arafat for not 'stopping terrorism' by locking up the bad guys."

Neither Israeli nor Palestinian atrocities are defensible. Yet somehow Palestinian violence is part of the "Axis of Evil" while Israeli violence is self-defense. Never mind that Israel has continually annexed Palestinian land over the past 30 years, or that they give Palestinians a minuscule weekly water allotment, while Israeli lawns on formerly Palestinian land are kept green with sprinklers. I'm not defending the actions of suicide bombers, I'm just pointing out that Israel's hands are far from clean in this affair.

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