

COMMENTARY

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Editorials

Let the sun shine on EMU's new solar energy plan

Kudos are in order to the Erb Memorial Union Board and the Ecological Design Center for their forward thinking in regard to the proposed solar panels. The project has been on the docket for nearly a year and was on hold while the logistical and aesthetic problems concerning the placement of the panels were resolved. But with the new plan to place the panels atop poles on the EMU's south balcony, the vision for a more energy efficient power source will soon become a reality — and it's about time.

The proposed trio of vaulted panels may not be the most aesthetically pleasing design for the EMU, it is a good start for the building. Because the panels will be so visible — students can literally walk underneath them — the solar energy project will serve as a great educational tool for both University students and visitors.

The project started last year when ASUO allocated \$100,000 from the its over-realized fund specifically for solar energy. The cost of the three panels on the EMU's south balcony adjacent to the Skylight Lounge and an educational kiosk explaining how they work will be nearly \$20,000, according to EMU Director Dusty Miller. The remaining \$80,000 is earmarked solely for the solar energy project and will be used to purchase and maintain more panels.

Originally, planners wanted to put flat solar panels atop the EMU Ballroom's roof, however, further investigation revealed the edifice was not properly reinforced to hold the weight. Thankfully, the EMU is planning to renovate various roofs to advance the solar panel project and keep the ecologically friendly master plan in mind.

The EMU should be commended for keeping the long-term benefits of solar energy in mind during its planning. Although monetary breaks on the EMU's energy bills may not appear for some time because of fluctuating rates, it should prove lucrative in the future — especially if the EMU can sell the energy back to the Eugene Water and Electric Board.

Now, if only the sun would shine ...

Campus residents should take proper safety precautions

Friday's incident at H.P. Barnhart, where almost \$3,000 worth of women's clothing and personal effects was stolen, only proves something we should already know: Residence hall inhabitants should lock their doors.

After a series of recent attacks and masturbation incidents on campus, residence hall dwellers (and the campus community, in general) should already be on alert for shady characters and take reasonable safety precautions. Residence halls should be a place where students feel comfortable and safe, but students who live in residence halls must also be aware of their responsibility to protect themselves.

Locking doors is a simple precaution that can help avoid events like Friday's underwear theft incident. Although police believe the thief was a Barnhart resident, if neighbors had remembered to lock their doors, the suspect would have had a significant problem entering any room but his or her own. While the University has an important responsibility to keep residents safe, residents also share a personal obligation to take reasonable safety precautions themselves.

Take me far from the ballgame



Steve Baggs Emerald

Four hours and twelve minutes, 408 pitches, 23 runs, 27 hits, 2 errors, 15 strikeouts and 19 walks. No, that's not my last visit to a singles bar — it's this season's opening day baseball game between Toronto and Boston, a 12-11 exercise in tedium.

Another baseball season is here, and the sport is in trouble. I don't mean labor relations, contraction, competitive balance or any of that stuff — I mean the game itself. Like Bernie Mac's niece, the game of baseball is boring. Dull. Dull as a rock. The games take too long, there are too many home runs, and there isn't enough action on the base paths. The NBA's slogan was "I love this game!" Major League Baseball's slogan should be "This game needs help!" I have a few suggestions to offer. Baseball is pretty messed up, but it's nothing that couldn't be fixed with shotguns, nudity and horses.

There are too many home runs in today's games. Home runs used to be exciting, but they just don't mean much anymore. Before 1998, only two players had ever hit 60 home runs in a season; since then, it's been done six times, and according to stats available at the Major League Baseball's official Web site, overall home runs have increased approximately 1.3 gazillion percent since 1995. Utilizing a Designated Sket Shooter (DSS) would make home runs meaningful again. The DSS is a fourth outfielder, but in-

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Christopher Hirth

stead of a glove, he carries a shotgun. His job is to shoot at fly balls that he thinks are going for home runs. Any ball he hits becomes a ground-rule double. To ensure that the DSS is careful where he aims his weapon, his team will forfeit the game if he accidentally or intentionally shoots a league official, umpire, member of the opposing team or fan (except on souvenir flak jacket night). Unless he shoots Bud Selig, his team automatically wins the game.

Baseball needs to do something to encourage better fielding. Just when you think an inning is going to end, some player makes an error and the game drags on and on. Numerous scientific studies have shown that the best way to get peak performance out of anyone is public humiliation. While it's already embarrassing for a shortstop when he sees "E-6" flash on the scoreboard after he makes an error, clearly it's just not embarrassing enough to prevent mistakes. Better fielding can be ensured by borrowing from that other great American pastime: strip poker. Under Strip Fielding rules, any time a fielder makes an error, he would have to remove one item of clothing and play subsequent

games that way. After having to play in front of 30,000 fans in nothing but spikes, a glove and cap (so we can tell which team they're on), I think fielders would tend to concentrate a little more next time.

Some people think baserunning is the most exciting part of the game, but really, what's the big deal about some guy running around the sides of a square? Baseball players usually aren't in such great shape, so half the time it's some slow, fat guy doing the running. Not only that, there are also double plays to worry about. Just when something interesting starts happening, two guys get out, and the inning is over. How boring. Now, the chariot race in the movie *Ben Hur*, that was actually exciting. Baseball needs that kind of action. Baserunners should be able to use chariots. Then they'd be able to get around the bases a lot faster, and if the chariots were the kind with swords sticking out of the wheels, I bet that would really reduce the number of double plays.

Baseball used to be a beautiful game, America's pastime, a microcosm of everything that's good about this country. It can be that way again, if only Major League Baseball will follow my suggestions. One can only hope.

E-mail columnist Christopher Hirth at christopherhirth@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

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