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COMMENTARY

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Thursday, April 11, 2002

Editorial

Campus news offers good, bad, offensive

The Emerald editorial board presents, for your reading pleasure, our latest collection of cheers and jeers:

■ **Cheers** for students running for public office. Nilda Brooklyn is running for the State Board of Higher Education, Greg McNeill is running for the Oregon House and Maco Stewart is a candidate for Eugene City Council. All are representing the University well by becoming involved in the political realm.

■ **Jeers** to the International Students Association's spring newsletter for printing a highly offensive "Crash course in speaking Chinese." Some of the lowlights included "Wan bum lung — a person with tuberculosis" and "Chin tu fat — you need a face lift." If the ISA wants support from both American and international students, they should avoid reinforcing ignorant stereotypes — especially when there is a large constituency of Chinese students in their own organization.

■ **Cheers** to the Department of Public Safety for holding a campus safety forum tonight and starting a "yellow jacket" walking program this spring. DPS is showing a commitment to campus safety with their interest in hearing student concerns. Cheers are also in order for DPS for nixing the proposed bicycle registration fee — an idea that was bound to fail from the get-go.

■ **Jeers** to Lane Transit District for cutting bus routes. Although the service claims to be losing money, they certainly aren't losing it from University students. We're LTD's best-paying customers, forking out \$375,000 for the 2001-02 school year alone to ride the bus. Bus routes servicing the University shouldn't suffer just because LTD needs to downsize.

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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CORRECTION

In the article "Victim voices need for awareness on campus" (ODE, March 10), the date of the attack on student Gwynne Engelking should have been identified as March 16, 2001.

The Emerald regrets the error.



Steve Baggs Emerald

Fear of a drug-free world

Privacy for teenagers is a fallacy. And if you disagree, you must have something to hide.

That's the new reality in Oregon. Well, not exactly new. Such fanatical, paranoid theorizing has existed as long as teenagers have. Only recently has such madness been reinforced by Oregon courts.

But we'll get to that in a moment. For now, let's don our rose-colored ski goggles and take a trip with the "Ghost of High School Injustices Past."

If you stood up to your varsity football coach when he asked you to sign a pledge to not drink or do drugs during the season, it couldn't possibly have been because you objected to promising not to do something he had no reason to assume you'd ever do in the first place. Oh no.

It's because you were a junkie, undoubtedly sneaking off to your car to "ride the black pony" before that crucial third period health quiz.

Same thing goes for the contemporary practice of drug screening.

Most parents summarily reject the notion of idealism for its own sake among their teenage children.

However, this was not the case in Oakridge, where Ginelle Weber's parents supported her in her genuinely good fight against Oakridge High School and its mandatory drug testing policy for all stu-

dent athletes, which resulted in her being dropped from the volleyball team.

Last month, a Lane County judge ruled that Weber's rights were violated when she was expelled from the sports program, but the ruling upheld the basic constitutionality of such random drug testing.

Not exactly a resounding victory for student rights. Especially when you take into consideration that Oakridge is but one of 13 high schools around Oregon currently utilizing such invasive and unjustifiable drug testing policies.

Luckily for us civil libertarians, the rest of the nation seems to be making more headway in the fight against anti-student rights fanaticism.

Recently, a Denver appeals court judge struck down an Oklahoma school's policy of mandatory urine testing for all students involved in non-athletic extracurricular activities. In Texas, a high school attempting to implement similar policy for all students met with an identical fate.

What does this recent turn of events tell

us? First of all, that the American Civil Liberties Union is working overtime to protect all students from being punished for a crime they aren't even being tried for, and second, that at least in other states, the courts are listening.

More important is the fact that parents are continuing to wage this losing battle against their kids.

And it is a losing battle. Not just because the courts are, for the most part, siding with the students, but rather because there is simply no victory to be had from excluding kids from activities based on experimental or recreational drug use.

Take away a teenager's ability to play volleyball, football or even to work on the school paper or yearbook, and what do you leave them with? A newly freed-up chunk of time to get high and stare at the television.

Take away a teenager's ability to get accepted to college by preventing them from taking part in extracurricular activities and you've freed up the rest of his or her life to find new and more efficient ways to get high.

Take away a teenager's hopes for the future, and you may as well get high yourself. You'll need something to ease the pain of the perfect, drug-free world you've created.

E-mail columnist Jacob TenPas at jacobtenpas@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Jacob
 TenPas
 Columnist

Letters to the editor

Pledge is symbolic responsibility

In response to the April 9 commentary titled "University shouldn't hop onto pledge bandwagon," the writers were slanted and uneven-handed in their stance. The editorial board hardly considered true reasons for supporting the pledge. Instead, the editorial board hung out a laundry list of reasons for not pledging symbolic support for social and environmental responsibility.

The primary reasons for discouraging the pledge were lack of student interest, the political bias of the pledge and the dampening of diversity.

The truth of the matter is that students have interest in the pledge, which is why it is being promoted by them. Now that the issue is before us, to not support the pledge is political bias of another kind, that of inexplicably supporting social and environmental irresponsibility. Lastly, not every

university is jumping on the "bandwagon." Only a few universities have agreed to proceed with the pledge. The University of Oregon failing to support the pledge is, in a sense, defeating diversity because the minority idea is being discouraged.

Whether students understand their social and environmental responsibilities or not is a whole different issue. Students can choose or not choose to sign the pledge. Those that do sign the pledge will symbolically support social and environmental responsibility and be promoting diversity.

Javier Ayala
 Eugene

EWEB board needs to listen to ratepayers

On March 19, I attended the Eugene Water and Electric Board public hearing regarding rate hikes and have the following observations:

1. The three members who voted for the increase (led by board President Dorothy Anderson) had apparently already made

up their minds as to how they were going to vote, prior to any public input.

2. Public input is supposed to be weighed and carefully considered. Clearly it was not.

3. Many excellent cost-cutting ideas were given during public testimony. The board patently chose to ignore them.

4. Anderson told the audience that they were "spoiled" by the low power prices EWEB charges. This is not only an insulting comment to make, but it is arrogant as well.

It is also important to note that during public testimony, it was suggested that the rate hike decision be delayed by two weeks. If the board had done this, it would have at least given the appearance that they had given some consideration to public input.

The board has clearly shown how much contempt they have for the ratepayers by not even listening to them. EWEB needs to scour its budget for additional cost savings and clean its own house before they dip further into the ratepayer's wallet.

Mark Hudson
 Eugene