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COMMENTARY

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Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Letters to the editor

Life should not be a drag

I thought the article "Life's not a drag: Queens, kings strut their stuff in EMU fishbowl," printed in the April 18 Emerald, was completely inappropriate.

I usually just ignore and bite my lip at most of the things that I may find offensive and all the crap that I consider inappropriate behavior. But I find this article lacking in any morals or ethics, and it disregards all those who may still have some.

I do not care what kind of lifestyle someone may lead. But I am sick of this kind of crap being thrown at me in every direction and the funds being wasted on it.

John Kostick

EMU accountant/payroll administrator

I am more than Scottish

In response to John Muir O'Brien's letter ("Many mascots are demeaning," ODE 4/17), I am a lot of things besides my Scottish heritage. And unlike Mr. O'Brien's view that the University and Notre Dame should change their mascots, I really can't be bothered with being the center of the universe anymore. His pleas are frigid in the icy mountain of political correctness or cultural diversity or whatever the buzz phrase is this year.

I am not just a Scotsman. I am also an alcoholic and addict (recovering 19 years). I'm a veteran, native Eugenean, diabetic, cancer survivor, divorced, over 50, heterosexual male and frankly, O'Brien, I get a little irritated at the logo of a guy in a quilt playing a bagpipe.

I get irritated when television or real movies have to have a recovering alcoholic character as a "regular guy" and exploit the 12-step programs. We are not "regular guys." I really get irritated at exploited tokenism. Every cancer patient, portrayed in a movie has to wear a puffy hat — more ignorant portrayals.

Should we change the names of some dog breeds? Like blue heeler? That insults physicians of color. As does black Lab insult our friends to the northeast and African Americans? And those male bastards at Sears — they should change the name on their signature tools to "Craftsperson."

As for mascot name-changing, go Ducks! Kick the crap out of those Fighting Irish — with a bagpipe or something.

Colin Campbell
 Eugene

Retail employees deserve more

It could be a long, hot summer if the major Lane County retail grocers (Albertson's, Fred Meyer and Safeway) continue down the path of their current demands.

They talk about the need of financial relief in the form of two-tier employment benefits and work conditions. They need to realize that the

reality is they are already enjoying an unfair two-tier system.

The retail employees of Lane County are hard working, dedicated employees, providing superior customer service to the citizens of this community. The companies are extremely profitable. They owe their employees more than what they are demanding.

They currently compensate their Lane County employees less than Portland, Vancouver, Longview and other major metropolitan areas. The health insurance is a lesser plan. But, the cost of living is higher in Lane County. So why?

No reason they can offer is credible. If so, then their management staff would also be on a lower tier.

Next time you shop at your union Lane County grocer, tell the staff that assists you that you do care and you'll be there for them.

Gene Pronovost

UFCW Local 555 president

Mascot issue appeals to crybabies

This is a response to the sensitive, non-violent, non-alcoholic, Irish guy who wrote, "Many mascots are demeaning" (ODE, 04/17).

In John Muir O'Brien's letter, he states he has to "put up with the Notre Dame's culturally insensitive 'Fighting Irish'" and that he wants "the Athletic Department to take a stance for our Irish students by not playing Notre Dame."

A mascot is a representation of a team. It doesn't represent any other group of people and definitely not you as an individual. I would assume a logically thinking human being knows that a mascot does not represent an entire group of individuals.

You could say it is not the Irish people that are being represented, just the violent drunk Irish people. This technically could be considered the lower class, and how dare you be so insensitive to the underprivileged? They need representation and heroes, too.

O'Brien even wants the Duck mascot to be taken away because land developers and hunters systematically destroyed wetlands and duck populations. Does that have anything to do with us being Ducks? Maybe if we were the University Land Developers, I could sort of see his point.

This whole culturally sensitive issue has been blown out of proportion by a few supposedly sensitive people who in no way represent the entire population's opinion. Thank God (or should I say 'a higher power,' just to be politically correct) only the strong survive, because these sensitive people make America sound like a nation of crybabies.

Kristina Crandell
 sophomore
 accounting

BLOOD

— the gift you should keep on giving

GUEST COMMENTARY

Matthew Alford

Amere six months ago, it seemed that giving blood was the thing to do. In immediate response to the events of Sept. 11, the numbers of blood donations skyrocketed. In September, lines to give blood often lasted more than three hours. The interest and impact was enormous and crucially important in a time of uncertainty and concern.

I specifically remember a conversation I had with an employee of the American Red Cross Donor Services department in early October. She informed me that the way in which this country donates blood was going to be permanently changed by the events of Sept. 11 and the heightened awareness of the need of constant blood donations.

Sadly, this has not been the case. As early as Christmas, the Red Cross had reached critical levels in the demand for blood. The demand has not ceased since. Needs are at a similar level as they were at this time a year ago. And as colleges and universities (considerable supporters of the blood donation program) near summer break, the Red Cross is scrambling to meet spring levels before the tough summer season arrives. Why is it that the act of giving blood, which was so prominent and crucial in the fall, has reached such low levels of participation?

While there is not a simple answer to this question, there are several relative facts. Primarily, the public is not aware of the continuous need for blood. While the Red Cross is a highly visible organization and community, campus and corporate blood drives are quite frequent, people are not aware of how often blood donations can occur and how frequent the need is.

People can donate every 56 days (approximately two months) and are encouraged to do so. Blood has a short shelf life, and the resources of the Red Cross need to be constantly replenished. Furthermore, it is important that blood donations

be staggered. This allows for a consistent flow of the resource to hospitals and people in need.

Second, there is a misconception that blood drives only occur after something happens. This was visible in the blood drives on and after Sept. 11. The blood that was collected on these days had to be tested, screened and packaged properly before it could be delivered. The blood that was of immediate assistance in the recovery efforts of Sept. 11 was most probably not collected in these drives, but rather was donated before Sept. 11.

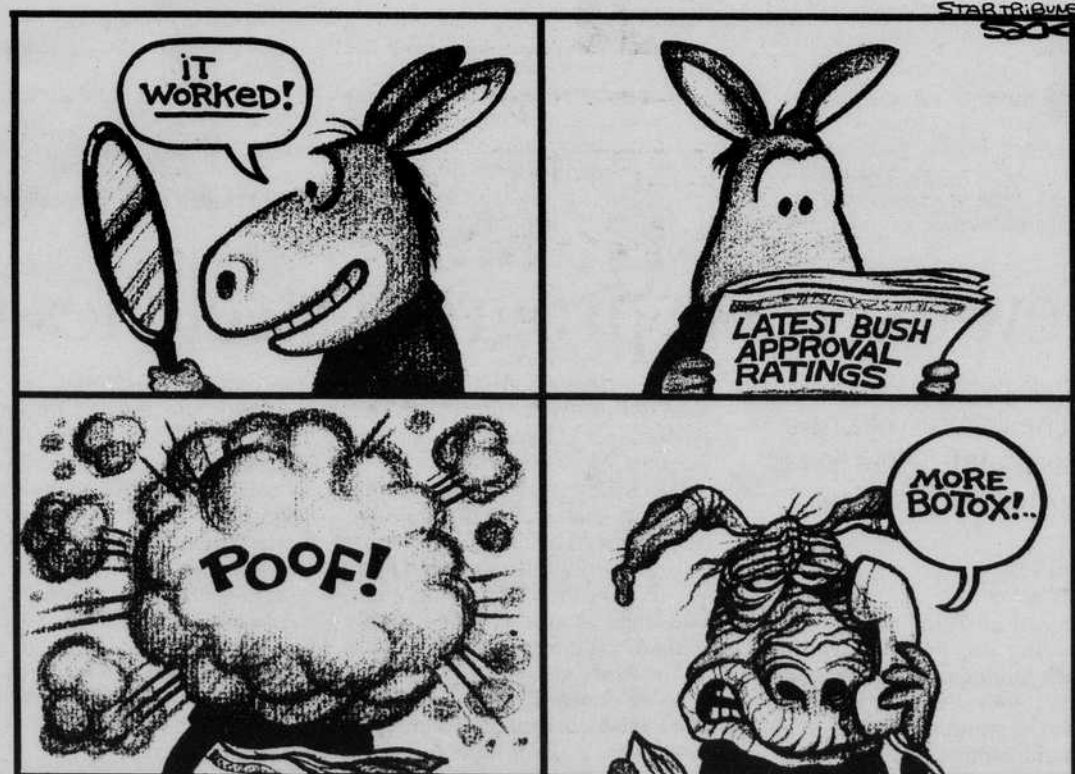
I agree that giving blood is a highly commendable way of serving one's duty to community. Also, I understand the patriotic and symbolic significance that now comes along with the process. However, the meaning behind the symbol has been lost.

For example, in a recent conversation with the Red Cross, I learned that blood drives for the one-year anniversary of Sept. 11 have been booked for several months now. At the same time, there is still a struggle and push to schedule more blood drives and increase blood donation during the months prior to Sept. 11. This indicates that blood drives have become a commemoration, not a consistent action for support of the blood program's everyday demands.

Individuals need to realize that the need persists and the best way to help is to be a consistent and continual donor.

Matthew Alford is a columnist for Tufts Daily (Tufts U.), courtesy of U-WIRE.

Star Tribune U-WIRE



Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries policy

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