

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: editor@dailyemerald.com
 Online Edition:
 www.dailyemerald.com

COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:
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Editorial

Abercrombie wrong to add to prejudices

Clothing empire Abercrombie & Fitch's latest T-shirt design depicting Asians as nothing more than laundry service workers is tasteless and crude. To their credit, the clothier did pull the offensive shirts from shelves after numerous complaints. But Abercrombie & Fitch should be ashamed of themselves for perpetuating a stereotype that should have died a century ago.

The most offensive of the new line was a T-shirt reading "Wong Brothers Laundry Service — Two Wongs Can Make It White." The shirt depicted two smiling Asian men with slanted eyes and traditional hats. Another style featured a smiling Buddha with the slogan "Abercrombie and Fitch Buddha Bash — Get Your Buddha on the Floor." The humor and logic behind the design is beyond good judgment, and it's amazing the company's officials approved the shirts.

Abercrombie & Fitch spokesman Hampton Carney told the Associated Press the shirts were created to cater to Asians and reasoned the company makes fun of everyone. Carney cited past satirical clothing designs included a foreign waitress, taxi drivers and Britons. But just because the company stereotypes everyone doesn't mean it's okay to continue. Any attempt to perpetuate racial and social stereotypes is a

blow to society. And any endeavor to trivialize an entire culture's philosophy and religion only encourages bigoted attitudes.

Student representatives from the University's Asian Pacific American Student Union were unaware of the T-shirts or the backlash against Abercrombie & Fitch. But Asian students at Brown University protested at their local mall in front of the store and demanded an apology from the clothier. And Asian students at Stanford University started a phone and e-mail campaign calling for the same action.

Racism and bigotry are issues that constantly resurface within American society and it doesn't help when popular clothing retailers promote closed-minded ideas. With increased scrutiny on race relations and racial profiling in metropolitan cities, the messages Abercrombie & Fitch is putting out for kids don't help — they only fueled the social labels that already exist.

Asian men and women are much more than the laundry service maids that Abercrombie & Fitch makes them out to be. Society can only move past intolerance of any sort as far as popular culture will let it. And if a popular store like Abercrombie & Fitch is any indication, society has a long way to go before racist attitudes can be changed.

Earth Day, ice cream equal success at UO

Eugene residents and University students should be recognized for their support of the Survival Center's Earth Day celebration on Monday. A large crowd of between 400 and 500 people filled the EMU Amphitheater to honor our Earth. It's great so many people were on hand for the event at a time when attention to natural resources is imperative for continuing to live in the modern world.

Another event on Monday also gave us reason to cheer. Ben & Jerry's Eugene ice cream shop

should be commended for giving away more than 10,000 scoops of free ice cream during their "Free Cone Day." Ice cream has a way of bringing people together — albeit in a long line — and lifting the spirits of students bogged down by course work. The free scoops certainly boosted morale around the Emerald office.

The company has shown it is dedicated to improving local communities. The "Free Cone Day" in Eugene alone helped raise more than \$1,000 in donations to help the Eugene Relief Nursery.

Editorial Policy

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'Girls (and boys) Gone Drinking'

It's amazing what you can learn while watching "Extra."

You know, the Entertainment Tonight knockoff that features in-depth stories on Tom Cruise's flossing habits and Catherine Zeta Jones' most recent brush with terminal flatulence. In other words, hard news that Edward Murrow would have been proud of.

"Extra" is the type of phenomenon that could only exist right now, and it's proof that we've moved far, far beyond what the Romans would have considered dangerously excessive decadence.

Although, I like to think the Romans would have appreciated last week's super-special feature on Joe Francis, the young entrepreneur behind the incredibly successful "Girls Gone Wild" series of mail-order, soft-core boobs videos.

And when I say boobs, I am, of course, referring to the people who order them.

Yes, the Romans would have appreciated the raw, undiluted cynicism needed to make a buck by sending low-grade videotapes of drunken sorority girls taking off their tops at Mardi Gras — just like the way they respected the idea to put a bear, a lion and 25 slave boys together in the Coliseum for a violent frolic.

"Extra's" selective coverage is evidence of our civilization's coming demise.

To prove this point, the infotainment program blatantly ignored a story that would have

had far more impact for its viewers. The week before last, Harvard's School of Public Health released some disturbing, if not all that surprising, statistics concerning binge drinking on college campuses.

According to the study, which was done way back in '99, 44 percent of all college students reported binge drinking in the two weeks leading up to the survey.

Further, the study determined that being an athlete, a frat boy, a sorority girl or just plain white upped the odds of binge drinking.

For men, binge drinking was defined as having five or more drinks in a row, and for women it was four or more. From personal experience I know that I can, on a full stomach, put away five whiskey sours without feeling terribly reckless, but hey, maybe I'm a different breed of cat.

Regardless, in my completely un-puritanical opinion, binge drinking doesn't have to be a problem in and of itself, as long as it doesn't wreak havoc on the rest of your life, encourage violent behavior or become your daily routine.

Unfortunately, the study found that on the average, regular binge

drinking (more than three times a month) does lead to all these things. It also found that binge drinkers are far more likely to either commit or become the victim of sexual violence.

That's where "Girls Gone Wild" comes in.

In his interview with the quantum physicists at "Extra," Francis lamented, "The toughest thing for me is finding a girl, and dating a girl and knowing that she's not after these things that basically aren't important to me."

What "things" are those, Joey? The jet and vacation house you bought with the money you got exploiting binge-drinking fools? Or perhaps you're referring to the T-shirts you gave away to the gals who "bared it all" for your cameras?

After all, no sensible heterosexual male would think it was cool if his girlfriend embarrassed herself on a nationally televised commercial, but somebody's helping scum like Francis become millionaires.

It's exactly this kind of muddled thinking and objectification of women that's causing these rising numbers of binge drinking-related sexual assaults.

When men drink, they get crazy. When women drink, they get wild. Nonsense.

You shouldn't believe everything you see on TV. Even when it's a class act like "Extra."

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



Jacob
 TenPas
 Columnist