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COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Students have a right to give personal data to big tobacco

Philip Morris is doing its best to drum up business in an increasingly anti-smoking society. And with recent promotions at local bars and clubs, college students are forking over their personal information to the tobacco giant in exchange for a chance to win a free trip. Whether this trade-off is morally acceptable depends on one's ethical view of smoking. But what is not up for debate is the fact that students who are willing to give out their private information have every right to do so — no matter how unwise the choice may appear.

Marlboro representatives ask 21-and-over bar hoppers if they are willing to give a copy of their driver's licenses to the company. In exchange, the Philip Morris "cowboys" try to wrangle up interest in free trips to one of three Marlboro ranches in the West. The tobacco company then uses the information at its discretion and sends a sundry of promotional materials to the address printed on the license. No one is coerced into making a copy, so why not let consenting adults distribute their private information if they so please?

Those who make the exchange will likely be barraged with piles of promotional mail for the rest of their natural-born lives. But college students have the upper hand on this potential headache and could easily avoid the junk mail by packing up and moving — as many of us do annually. Students with their parents' addresses printed on their licenses are really at an advantage, because the junk could simply fill their mom and dad's mailboxes instead.

No one honestly knows what Philip Morris will do with the personal information, but the practice is legal, and those who are willing to volunteer personal data should be able to without being chided. Revealing private information is a choice, just like lighting up. Adults agree to the exchange at the risk of forfeiting their privacy, and that's a choice they'll have to live with.

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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Draining the greek system

A policy is sitting on President Dave Frohnmayer's desk that, if approved, would wrongfully affect fraternity houses affiliated with the University. The policy, which caught many greek student leaders off-guard when it was announced last week, calls for all fraternity and sorority houses to become dry, or alcohol-free, by next fall. If a greek house fails to comply with the policy, its chapter would not be recognized by the University. Currently, all nine sororities at the University are already dry and five of the 15 fraternities affiliated with the University are as well.

National proponents of policies like the one being discussed here at the University feel it is a way to better the campus community and reduce drinking among college-age students. They are also leaning on a recent study released by the Task Force on College Drinking which concluded that drinking among college students is highest among those living in fraternities and sororities.

What the study fails to recognize is that college students are drinking in many more places than in greek houses. As much as some people don't want to believe, drinking is part of college. If students can't drink in a fraternity house, they will do it somewhere else. Many greek houses have members who live in private residences. If this policy goes

through, there is nothing that prevents fraternity and sorority members from going over to one of their brothers' or sisters' apartments. Isn't it much safer for someone to walk upstairs after having a few too many drinks than it is to drive a car across town?

As a University and also a society, we too often try to control behavior through ineffective means that attempt to prevent the source of the problem. This is an ideal goal, but a more realistic approach is trying to manage the effects of the problem. Telling students that they can't

drink at a specific location isn't going to get them to stop drinking. A perfect example is the City of Eugene's ban on smoking in places of business. People haven't quit smoking, they are just smoking somewhere else.

The same would happen if President Frohnmayer enacts this policy. Students would just go somewhere else to drink, and when you're dealing with alcohol, the last thing you want to do is worry about people driving.

The policy is hypocritical. Students liv-

ing in the residence halls who are over the age of 21 are permitted to drink alcohol in their rooms. Most of these rooms are on campus, and all are owned and operated by the University. If students are permitted to drink in dormitory rooms, how can the University rationalize preventing students from drinking in privately-owned greek houses off campus?

The same goes for all the tailgating that goes on prior to a home football game in the Autzen Stadium parking lot. If greek houses are prevented from becoming affiliated with the University because they have alcohol on the premises, then why shouldn't the football team be forced to do the same — after all, alcohol is sold in the Moshofsky Center during their games.

The words "greek" and "alcohol" are quickly associated with one another, and that is unfortunate. I would enjoy seeing nothing more than the greek community on this campus take a more active role in helping to erase the "Animal House" stigma. In some ways, the greek students at the University have reversed their negative image on their own. It's only right they continue erasing the stereotypes without the University acting as their baby sitter.

E-mail columnist Jeff Oliver at jeffoliver@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Jeff
 Oliver
 Columnist

Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

This week's poll question:

What do you think about the controversy over the Abercrombie & Fitch T-shirts?

Total votes: 87

- Not offensive — 14.9 percent, or 13 votes
- Offensive, but T-shirts should remain in stores — 9.2 percent, or 8 votes
- Offensive, T-shirts should be pulled — 51.7 percent, or 45 votes
- Don't care — 5.7 percent, or 5 votes
- Don't know — 18.4 percent, or 16 votes

Next week's poll question:

The last day to register to vote is Tuesday. Are you registered?

The choices:

- In Lane County
- Elsewhere
- Not registered
- Don't know

Letter to the editor

Keep campus 'green'

In March, I was happy to read about the National Wildlife Federation commendation the University received for being a "green" campus in the recent issue of News and Views. I appreciate what the staff of Facilities Services has done regarding recycling, waste reduction and "green" landscaping practices.

I am an anthropology professor who works in Condon Hall. Over the past 11 years I've been on campus, I've seen the amount of litter people discard in parking lots, on the street and around our buildings steadily increase. Every morning when we walk across the parking lot, my husband and I pick up litter if we have a hand free.

While I heartily applaud the institutional approach to waste reduction, what can we do to get people, largely students, from littering campus? Why are people such slob, when we are blessed with a beautiful campus? Where are the "green" student activists who might organize an anti-litter campaign? I am wondering if others on campus have thought about this issue and about what could be done.

While I am happy with our University progress on some environmental issues, there's a tremendously long way to go. "It's not easy being green."

Madonna Moss
 associate professor
 anthropology