

COMMENTARY

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Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Steve Baggs Emerald



Letters to the editor

David Kelly deserves support

David Kelly is a well-respected Eugene City Councilor and he deserves the University community's support. He has always been the voice of reason tempered with compassion.

His insights into difficult situations have always helped me to understand all sides of the issues before the council. I applaud David Kelly's efforts and the long hours he has given to public service. We should very thankful that he is still willing to serve the community.

Bonnie Ullmann
 Institute of Neuroscience

Fraternities offer framework for obesity, depression

University-sanctioned organizations should model healthy life-affirming habits. Despite Chris Alexander's compelling commentary ("Don't single out greek system to make point about alcohol," ODE May 1), I am not sure that fraternity binge drinking meets the criteria of healthy life-affirming habit.

Certainly, many students choose to "go a little nuts" during their college years, and fraternity keg parties do present a model for friendship, brotherhood and an opportunity to get laid with little use of social skills.

However, binge drinking is not healthy. Alcohol, when used irresponsibly, is a life-destroying drug. When fraternities have alcohol parties, are they then encouraging a framework for obesity and depression later in life?

Maybe Mr. Alexander's proposed Alcohol Awareness 101 should take a field trip to a local dive bar to drive this point home. Provided, of course, that the students are over 21.

John Muir O'Brien
 junior
 pre-journalism

Bit of FYI

In the May 2 edition, the Emerald reported that one of the complaints the employees of The Register-Guard have with their employer is the rule against using company e-mail for union business, even though it can be used for just about anything else ("Union rally marks third year of labor dispute," May 2).

It might interest the Emerald's readership to know that the Oregon University System applies the same stipulations to campus e-mail; thus is the SEIU, which represents university classified employees, apparently equated in the minds of OUS administrators with pornography, threats of violence, plagiarism and libel.

Bill Smee
 University staff

Reality TV: no substitute for life

GUEST COMMENTARY

Chris Chase

(U-WIRE) CORVALLIS, Ore. —

Along with 7 million other people in the United States, I have become addicted to the newest "reality" TV show "The Osbournes." Every Tuesday evening revolves around getting to a quiet place to watch Ozzy and his family hack out family issues. But what is it that makes this sort of television show so appealing?

We all know that by the time the producers and censors have gotten around to editing the material, the only thing that is left is the amusing material. The "reality" television material that is presented to us is mind-numbing and unrealistic, but it does provide a way for people to waste an hour or so of true reality.

Why is it that we choose to sit and watch an episode of "Change of Heart" or "The Jenny Jones Show" rather than go to class, or even shower for that matter? It's all about human weakness.

Weakness is a personal defect or failing. Obviously someone has a defect if they decide to stay at home just to find out what Rude Jude has to say about the overweight women who want to become models on Jenny Jones. Culture has developed into a mode where it is perfectly acceptable to label watching these shows as personal or family time.

No matter what kind of task is at hand, people are always looking for an easier way to get things done. This is how our culture runs. Sitting in front of the television has become such a cultural norm that productive family discussions have been replaced with watching people eat buffalo testicles on "Fear Factor."

Free speech did exist back in the '50s, even though it was taboo for a woman to wear a dress

that fell above her ankles. For some reason, family programs stayed mild and there was a large emphasis on developing a quality family. This is a revolutionary era when we are just now starting to question everything that was taught to us. Baby boomers are out seeking therapy for the traumatic childhoods they experienced back when values were stressed. The suppression of that speech is what led to what I see as widespread cultural frustration.

Now that the people who grew up under those circumstances are controlling the media, we are seeing a shift to a more liberal view about what makes it on the air. Because all the controversial issues were never shown on television, let alone spoken about openly with the family, society is starting to see the shifting trend toward bringing all of these issues to the surface.

The real issue here is how we want our nation's youth to be raised. Media has become an invaluable asset and will play a serious role in how almost everyone grows up.

Sensitivity in addressing real issues has become vital to our society. However pointless it is to watch someone devour the reproductive parts of a buffalo for \$50,000, it still represents the way our media are not afraid to address taboo subjects.

We have already gone too far to ever go back. We will have to live with the material that is presented to us on television, but it remains up to the parents when it comes to the raising of youth.

There are pros and cons to what the First Amendment protected media have become. We'll always have some complaints about what is on television, but families are just going to have to deal with the fact that it takes a little more policing of the television. On a personal note, cable is out altogether; I'm pretty sure my child will only be watching OPB and Barney videos.

This column is courtesy of Chris Chase of Oregon State University's newspaper, The Daily Barometer.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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.