

COMMENTARY

Monday, May 13, 2002

Editorial

More students should support the University's Yellow Jackets

After months of talking about safety issues on campus, students finally have the opportunity to take action. The Department of Public Safety's new Yellow Jackets Volunteer Program is an excellent idea — it's a way to increase safety on campus and get more students involved. Both are important, but students need to take a more active role and the initiative to make the program a success.

The Yellow Jackets program, a group where students can volunteer for training and donate hours to patrolling campus at night, is a great start; however, the program depends on student involvement to keep it alive. So far, only 15 people have volunteered and been formally trained, including one faculty member. The Yellow Jackets are still networking and have a list of a few interested groups and individuals, such as the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity. Yellow Jackets student coordinator Meghan Madden said the fraternity has been very helpful in recruiting volunteers.

But unlike those few philanthropic individuals, many students don't seem to take the program seriously at all. The first night out, Yellow Jackets volunteers were subjected to giggles and snickers from bystanders. The jocular attitude seems strange, considering the recent uproar over a perceived lack of campus safety and demand for more safety programs.

Where are all of the students who organized and attended the safety rallies to raise awareness about sexual violence on campus? Where are the students who urged administrators to take steps toward improving campus safety? Madden said that to her knowledge, none of the Radical Cheerleaders who helped bring the issue into the limelight have volunteered. Though it's true some safety advocates have shown interest, more students should be stepping up to be Yellow Jackets volunteers.

Though the Yellow Jackets aren't allowed to confront anyone or attempt to stop a crime, their goals — to escort students and staff and report suspicious activities to DPS — are important and should be treated as such. The bottom line is that the program has a lot of potential but will die if students don't show more interest and take the Yellow Jackets seriously.

Just because no attempted assaults have been reported in the past few months does not mean campus safety isn't an issue anymore. Students and faculty should be concerned with preventing future assaults and other crimes on campus. The Yellow Jackets program could be a powerful tool in this endeavor, but only if students — the program's lifeblood — take more of an interest in it.

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.

Free speech STOPS at the turnstile

Last year, a Portland Trail Blazers fan was ejected for holding a sign that criticized the team's general manager. Last February, Southern California head coach Henry Bibby demanded the names of students who were chanting what he believed to be "insensitive" remarks during his team's loss at McArthur Court. A month ago, a handful of Seattle Mariners fans were asked to remove or turn inside-out shirts that read "Yankees Suck" during a weekend series at Safeco Field against New York.

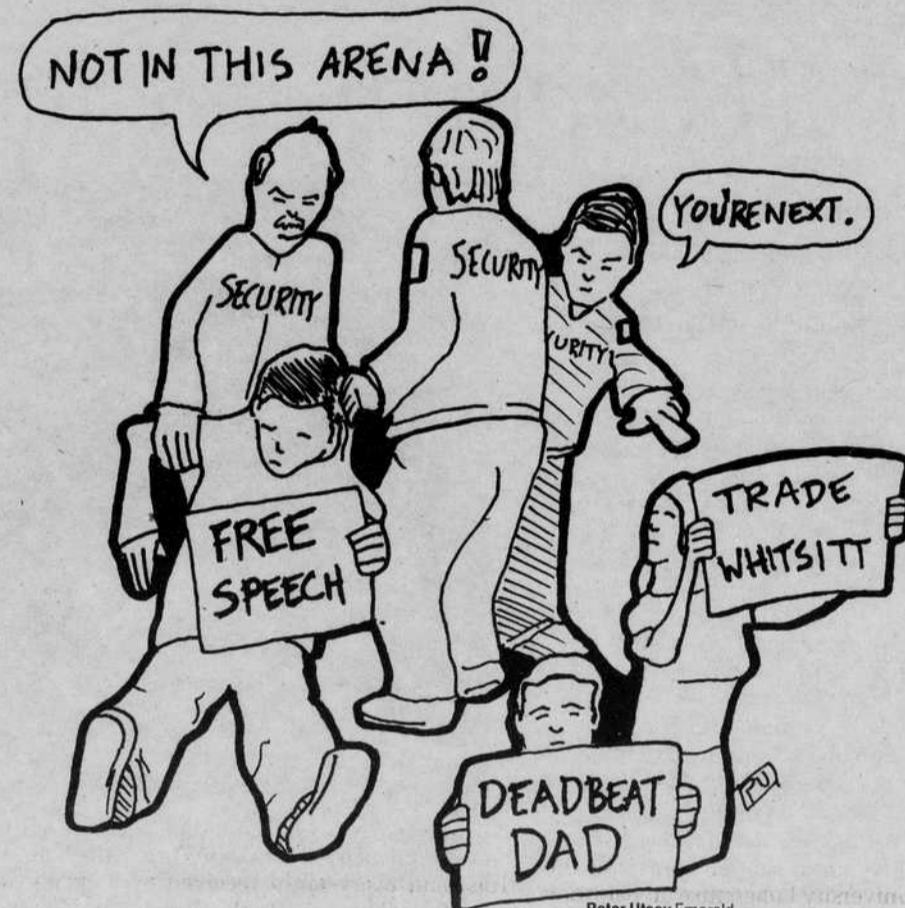
In 2001, spectators in the United States spent more than \$26 billion on tickets, concessions and merchandise. Without this money from the paying fan, sports would be on its last days of life support.

If you open your wallet to watch your favorite team play in person, are you allowed to open your mouth as well? It would be expected that, in a country where our deepest-felt right is free speech, that answer would be yes. The answer, though, may be a surprise, in that an individual's free speech rights are limited once they go through the turnstile.

Journalism school Dean Tim Gleason said that, with the sale of a ticket, teams have the right to set conditions to control fan behavior and expression. So next time you are at Safeco Field watching the Mariners take on the Texas Rangers and you are asked to take down your "A-Rod is an idiot" sign, don't rush from the stadium looking to find the American Civil Liberties Union.

But even with the law on their side, teams should think a little bit before they harshly discriminate against fans and eject them or demand they remove clothing or signs. When you look at it logically, teams should actually be thankful for this type of behavior.

When Katherine Topaz raised her handmade "Trade Whitsitt" sign at the Trail Blazer game last year, it wasn't because of a personal vendetta against the team's general manager. It was because she cared about



Peter Utsey Emerald

her team and she wanted them to win. Topaz simply questioned some of the general manager's moves, and as a dedicated fan she should be able to hold up that sign.

The same goes for the fans in Seattle and the students here at the University who choose to display their hatred toward the opposing team. Although Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent made the image-conscious move to ask students to be more respectful after Bibby complained about being called a deadbeat dad, he has routinely praised the ruckus-like behavior of the students at Mac Court. Kent thinks that Oregon plays in an environment that not only creates an advantage for his team but is positive for college basketball as a whole.

Even some visiting coaches to Mac

Court have enjoyed the taunts directed at them. When UCLA head coach Steve Lavin spotted a group of students mocking his signature slicked back hair earlier this year, it evoked a smile.

Sports need fans who are willing to wear "Yankees Suck" shirts. In an era of dwindling attendance and declining television ratings, the support of the die-hard fan is as important as ever. If these fans fall victim to the trap of political correctness, there is little to fill the void. Teams shouldn't be looking to kick these fans out of their seats, even if the small text on the back of a ticket allows them to do so.

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

Letter to the editor

Stewart looks out for students

As a student and a lifelong inhabitant of Eugene, I have slowly come to realize the effect city politics has on our community. Unlike many students, I merely had to move across town when I chose to attend the University.

I have kept up with city politics since the age of 16, but it was not until I became a student that I realized students have no representation on the city council. I found this astonishing, since students make up such a huge part of our population.

When Maco Stewart decided to run for city council, I listened to what he had to say. Then I listened to what his opponent, David Kelly, said he would do for students. I heard a lot of the same ideas from both of them, but when I looked up Kelly's record on student issues, I realized he has a record of voting against student interests.

The fact is that all of Kelly's ideas to help students are ideas that Stewart first suggested. Kelly then adopted those issues to counter his opponent. In more than three years on the city council, David Kelly has done nothing for students. Why, then, should we, as students and as Eugeneans, trust Kelly to represent us?

Maco Stewart is the obvious choice for every student on this campus.

Russell Chorlton
 junior
 political science

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.

Last week's poll question: How do you think University Housing could make residence halls most welcoming to the LGBT community?

Total: 83 votes

- Add "queer friendly" to the roommate-matching questionnaire — 36.1 percent, or 30 votes
- Separate dorm — 8.4 percent, or 7 votes
- No change — 26.5 percent, or 22 votes
- Don't know — 6.0 percent, or 5 votes
- Don't care — 22.9 percent, or 19 votes

This week's poll question:

When are you going to see "Stars Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones"?

The options:

- First show
- Opening week
- Sometime
- Never
- Already saw it on the Internet