

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Props to faculty dance — no love for crossword slip, CBS' film decision

Here are the recent events that made the editorial board grin and grimace — our most recent collection of cheers and jeers.

Cheers to the University Department of Dance for selling out their Dance 2002 Faculty Concert. Thursday night, the Dougherty Dance Theatre at Gerlinger Annex was filled to capacity; ticket sellers even had to turn away latecomers. The Dance Department deserves a pat on the back for drawing such a crowd, especially on a night when so many other entertainment events were happening, including the opening of "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" and the long-awaited season finale of "Friends." Tearing people away from Obi-Wan Kenobi and Rachel's baby was an amazing feat for the department. The Faculty Concert, which featured choreography by eight different faculty members, can rightly be deemed a success.

Cheers to the University's men's track and field team for earning second place to Stanford in the Pacific-10 finals. The Ducks won five individual titles during the two-day Pac-10 Championships in Pullman, Wash. Individual winners include Billy Pappas, who earned the multi-event title and Simon Kimata, who raced his way to the 800-meter title. The rest of the team's 125 points came from the team's other stellar runners-up and top-5 finishers, like Fuloso Akenradewo, who finished second in the triple jump. Now, the team is preparing for the NCAA Championships in Baton Rouge, La., on May 29. We're confident several of our athletes will make the qualifying list. Go Ducks!

Cheers to Vecepia Towery, a 36-year-old office manager from Portland, who was voted the winner in the fourth season of the reality-based TV series "Survivor." Hooray for Towery, hooray for Oregon! Woo-hoo for "Survivor" — okay, maybe that's taking it a little too far, but Towery deserves a nod for spending 39 rugged days roughing it in the Marquesas Islands of the South Pacific. Besides successfully representing Oregon, Towery is also the first black person to win the series' grand prize.

Jeers, jeers and more jeers to CBS for airing a portion of a videotape made by captors of slain reporter Daniel Pearl, even though Secretary of State Colin Powell's office and the Justice Department urged the network not to air it. CBS anchor Dan Rather claimed the footage was shown because CBS believes Americans should be able to see the impact of the propaganda war being waged against the United States. However, Pearl's family has denounced the network for their callousness in causing the family to relive the tragedy. We agree with the Pearl family. CBS should also be reprimanded for doing just what Pearl's killers were hoping: spreading terrorist agit-prop. Yes, the Pearl story is news, but CBS failed to exercise tact and intelligence when making its decision.

Jeers to governor candidates running in the Primary Elections for their blatant use of attack ads. On the Republican side, Ron Saxton and Jack Roberts ran ads attacking each other and their other competitor, Kevin Mannix. Roberts accuses Saxton of being "too liberal," and Saxton whines that Roberts and Mannix both want to "squeeze taxpayers." Democrats have also done their fair share of mudslinging. Bev Stein added a barrage of commercials criticizing her opponents Jim Hill and Ted Kulon-goski for their views on health care. While the race is a close one, candidates should realize attack ads won't get them votes, and voters are sick of their childish bickering.

Finally, jeers to ourselves for running a crossword solution with no crossword in the May 15 edition of the Emerald. Our crossword puzzle-loving readers were sorely disappointed. Oops.

Middle East discussion in need of solid University curriculum

I found the May 9 public talk in the Erb Memorial Union Ballroom by David Zev Harris illuminating, but not in the way expected.

Several people I spoke with after the talk said they were disturbed by the same thing that bothered me. They, like I, were attracted by advance publicity describing Harris as an "international journalist."

The top line in the promotional advertisement printed in the Emerald stressed his identity as a former BBC reporter. Familiar with the BBC and its image of integrity, I was anxious to hear his views on the Palestine tragedy.

Early in his talk, it became clear that whatever his journalist identity once was, today he is an Israeli propagandist. That may not be an honorable title, though it is shared by public relations types on both sides of most political questions. But it is antithetical to integrity, just as is the place of PR in a school of journalism.

Misleading ads and PR are always with us. We just have to be able to see through them. That is what many of us had to do as Harris spoke. He was persistent in describing Israel's

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George Beres

response to Arab bombers as right and proper, even when its excessive actions brought criticism from almost every nation except the United States.

Propagandists have a right to be heard. But their sponsors (in this case, they included the Jewish Student Union and the Schnitzer Judaic Studies program) owe it to the audience to make clear whom the speaker represents.

Misleading rhetoric and advertising become even more negative as they feed tragic suffering among Palestinians and Israelis. They also risk building antagonism in an audience that publicity has misled.

When I asked Harris about the misleading promotional ad, he said (rightly) he could not control how his appearances nationwide would be advertised by host groups. That's where the problem lies: the host groups. A forum of this type on an issue of such importance derives credi-

bility from its sponsors. The Schnitzer Foundation and Jewish Student Union are respected groups with good credibility — except on the subject of Israel and Palestine.

Such a program would have respect and credibility were it sponsored by an uncommitted host, such as a Middle East studies program. Unhappily, that's where the University, an otherwise fine liberal arts school, has a gaping vacuum. There may be isolated classes on the subject. But absence of a solid curriculum, on one of the most critical subjects of the past half century, is an embarrassment to the University.

If funding is given for a program in Judaic Studies, I have no argument with it, even though it serves a small minority of students, most of them already familiar with the Jewish Temple. The irony is the vacuum in Middle Eastern studies, a vital program that would serve so many more.

George Beres is a former Oregon sports information director, former editor of the University of Oregon faculty newsletter and former manager of the University Speakers Bureau. Retired, he now writes on the history of college sports.

Letter to the editor

Community appreciates festival's reusable plates

Hats off to the unsung heroes of the Campus Recycling crew who broke new ground this weekend at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival by being the first campus outdoor event (and possibly the first anywhere) to

use real plates and forks instead of the mountains of disposable dishware usually found at events.

An enormous amount of planning by students and coordinators with the EMU and other University entities made it possible, and it was awesome! As a food vendor, I participated for the first time at this year's event just to be involved with this worthy project, and I must say it went without a hitch. I was honored to be associated

with the event and response from the public was ecstatic.

Thanks go to the ASUO, which allocated funds to buy reusable plates and forks, and to the many student volunteers who made it possible. The University deserves much praise for hosting the event and creating an environment that fosters such cutting-edge projects.

Katherine Lavine
 co-owner of Holy Cow Cafe

Steve Baggs Emerald

