

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Bush's patronizing sarcasm inflames anti-American sentiment overseas

The relationship between Europe and the United States has always been in flux, depending on the values of the leaders on both continents. When former President Bill Clinton was in office, a sense of camaraderie among European leaders and the White House was high. But now that George W. Bush is in office, his conservative bent and nebulous war on terror has drawn criticism from Europeans in the form of large demonstrations last week. When an esteemed American TV correspondent questioned American-European relations during the president's visit to that continent last week, Bush derisively defended his administration with flip sarcasm — certainly not a good way to improve Europeans' opinions of Americans, or our leader.

Last week during a joint news conference with Bush and French President Jacques Chirac in Paris, NBC News White House correspondent David Gregory asked Bush why he thought there was such a strong sentiment in Europe against his American ideals. Gregory also asked him to comment on a popular view that Bush was trying to impose American morals on the rest of the world; Gregory then asked Chirac — in French — if he would also care to comment on the same subject.

In a child-like display of frustration, Bush snapped back at Gregory and said, "Very good. The guy memorizes four words, and he plays like he's intercontinental." Gregory offered to continue in French and Bush replied, "I'm impressed — que bueno. Now I'm literate in two languages."

Reportedly, roars of laughter followed Bush's quip, but Gregory's question demanded a more serious answer. There were significant demonstrations against Bush's visit — protesters who numbered 20,000 in Berlin, 4,500 in Paris and 300 in Moscow — evidence that anti-American sentiment is only growing across the Atlantic.

The White House has admitted it has been on the outs with the American media, mostly because the Bush administration thinks the media are making mountains out of molehills regarding widespread dissent with traditional allies. But by addressing a serious subject with an unprofessional personal attack on a journalist, the White House just appears to be in denial about any European-American relationship problems.

At this uncertain time when we are finding out more of what the White House knew of Sept. 11, journalists should question the administration's policies and values relentlessly. Bush needs to keep his allies in Europe and stop patronizing those who question his dedication to upholding that friendship. With Bush's unprofessional display of condescending sarcasm, it's no wonder some Europeans have a stigma against Americans.

Editorial Policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailymerald.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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Rewarding ACHIEVEMENT with celebrity

Thursday night I found myself sitting in a concert hall in downtown Portland with hundreds of parents, cousins, nieces, nephews and a lot of high school-age friends all screaming their guts out for their favorite princess. Nope, it wasn't the Britney Spears concert going on across town. I was in the frantic midst of a spectacle far more confusing — Portland's annual Rose Queen Coronation Ceremony.

My friend's little sister was a Rose Court princess in the ceremony and weeks ago she asked if I was interested in attending. Not knowing what I had agreed to, but naively curious, I walked into the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall last week expecting a superficial beauty pageant of the Miss Teen USA variety. And I was



Julie Lauderbaugh
Editorial editor

kicking myself for thinking I could watch such a pageant without feeling like I was violating some silent rule of feminism that denounces all beauty contests. I've always felt like a traitor watching Miss America pageants, but I grew up thinking these contests were harmless fun — something I could emulate with my Barbies.

And I was expecting the rose princesses to be synthetic high school-age dolls also. But the coronation was much more confusing because the young women weren't made of plastic. They were chosen because of their outstanding community service achievements and were elected by their peers from 14 Portland-area high schools.

Realizing this in the midst of all the familial hollering, my feminist views on beauty pageants became mangled with my Girl Scout virtues and my head started to spin. Recognizing young women because of their philanthropic tendencies alone seemed even more old-fashioned than any token swimsuit (I'm sorry, "physical fitness") contest.

I would expect a small town like Drain to recognize its outstanding high school humanitarian with a scepter and a cape, not a metropolis like Portland.

SO WHAT DID YOU DO TO
DESERVE THAT?

ABOUT 5,000 HOURS
OF COMMUNITY SERVICE.



Peter Utsey Emerald

And it's such a big deal. I couldn't believe the coronation was broadcast live on KOIN across western Oregon. And what's more disturbing is that people who didn't know anyone on stage actually watched and had a vested interest in which high school girl would represent their city. But then again, this is the city that is still riding high on the success of Gresham native Katie Harman, who won the Miss America title months ago.

Maybe it's just because I'm not from the state. But I think honoring high school girls for their community service by freezing their grades a month and a half prior to graduation, clothing them with the sponsors' digs and sticking them on a float with a crown is kind of outdated. And not because society shouldn't recognize outstanding youth; on the contrary, we should encourage our youth leaders to continue their work. But doing so on such a grand scale only turns good Samaritans

into celebrities and cynical people like me stop taking them seriously.

Hopefully this fate won't befall my friend's little sister, who actually won the whole thing, much to the delight of many frenzied audience members, including myself. I finally met Portland's new Queen of Rosaria on Friday morning as she was brushing her teeth, preparing to be whisked off to do a morning television interview and begin the first day of her yearlong reign as Queen Leela. That awkward meeting over toothpaste will probably be my only brush with royalty in my lifetime. But I'm hoping Queen Leela can dispel some of the stereotypes that have been bequeathed to her by previous pageant winners and stay true to the anti-violence work that put her on such a rosy pedestal in the first place.

E-mail editorial editor Julie Lauderbaugh at julie.lauderbaugh@dailymerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

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.dailymerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

This week's poll question: What song would you like to hear Erik Brashers, the campus "banjo man," play?

Total votes: 40

■ "Stairway to Heaven" — 7.5 percent, or 3 votes

■ "Year of the Witch" — 2.5 percent, or 1 vote

■ "Desperado" — 10.0 percent, or 4 votes

■ "Layla" — 7.5 percent, or 3 votes

■ "Freebird" — 10.0 percent, or 4 votes

■ Don't know Erik Brashers — 30.0 percent, or 12 votes

■ Don't care — 32.5 percent, or 13 votes

Next week's poll question: What do you think of "Akbars Garden," the structure in front of the Student Recreation Center on 15th Avenue and University Street?

The choices:

■ It's beautiful art

■ It's ugly art

■ It's not art

■ It's a waste of space

■ Don't know/don't care

Letter to the editor

True patriotism means acceptance, not contempt

In the wake of Sept. 11, the patriotism in our country has rapidly increased. Bumper stickers displaying the quip "Proud to be an American" grace nearly every car on the road these days, along with wishes for world peace and the elimination of certain Middle Eastern radical groups.

Behind the wheels of these flag-waving cars are citizens of the United States who have experienced anger over the attacks upon our nation. Some of these people have grown to see that the violence implicated with these displays of patriotism is unnecessary, as well as the ostracizing of the many citizens of our country with certain ethnicities.

It is such a shame to see the uplifting messages of support for our country be misconstrued into a direct attack upon all cultures unfamiliar to Americans. This attack upon cultures other than our own is quite hypocritical. Our country is based upon those who have come from around the world seeking acceptance and freedom. These immigrants have made our country into a most unique combination of histories, which are all still very relevant today but should not keep us from growing as a national community.

As citizens of a "nation of immigrants," we should all keep in mind our country's humble beginnings and continually evade the ever present monster of ignorance.

Stephanie Morton
freshman
biology