

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Cheers for gas, NASA; jeers to Enquirer, fire

It's finally here, the list all of our readers have been waiting for: The editorial board's final run-down of cheers and jeers for this school year.

Cheers to the Bush Administration — surprise, surprise — for finally acknowledging humans are at least partly to blame for global warming. According to a report issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, manmade pollutants emitted from oil refining, automobiles and power plants do indeed contribute to global warming. Even though this seems like standard knowledge, the White House has refuted this information in the past, claiming there wasn't enough scientific information to prove industrial emissions contributed to global warming from accumulation of greenhouse gases. While the EPA report only contains "voluntary measures" for companies to control pollutants, the administration deserves a nod for at least admitting that humans are part of the problem. As the old adage says, admittance is the first step to recovery.

Cheers to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for getting us excited about the space program again. The launch of the space shuttle Endeavor after many delays because of engine and weather problems, coupled with the recent discovery of huge oceans of underground ice on Mars, bodes well for space exploration. The discovery has also fueled the hope for human visits to Mars, though this type of endeavor is decades away. We're excited about NASA's progress and future plans.

Jeers to The National Enquirer for its tasteless decision to publish photographs of the Columbine shootings, including images of the bodies of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold after they had killed 13 people and themselves at Columbine High School in 1999. Though tabloids like The Enquirer have been known for their lurid photographs and sensationalistic reporting style, we think The Enquirer has gone too far. In this case, "enquiring minds" would rather not be subjected to gruesome, pointless photographs. Though it is not known who furnished the tabloid with the photos, executive editor David Perel claims they "help illustrate a very significant news story." But to the editorial board, it's clear that all the publication of the photos helps illustrate is The Enquirer's callousness, lack of taste and its anything-for-a-buck mentality.

And finally, jeers to the irresponsible students playing with fireworks inside the residence halls. Though the damage to the room was minimal, college students should be mature enough to know that playing with fire is dangerous. Perhaps the disciplinary action they could now face will remind them of that in the future.

Editorial Policy

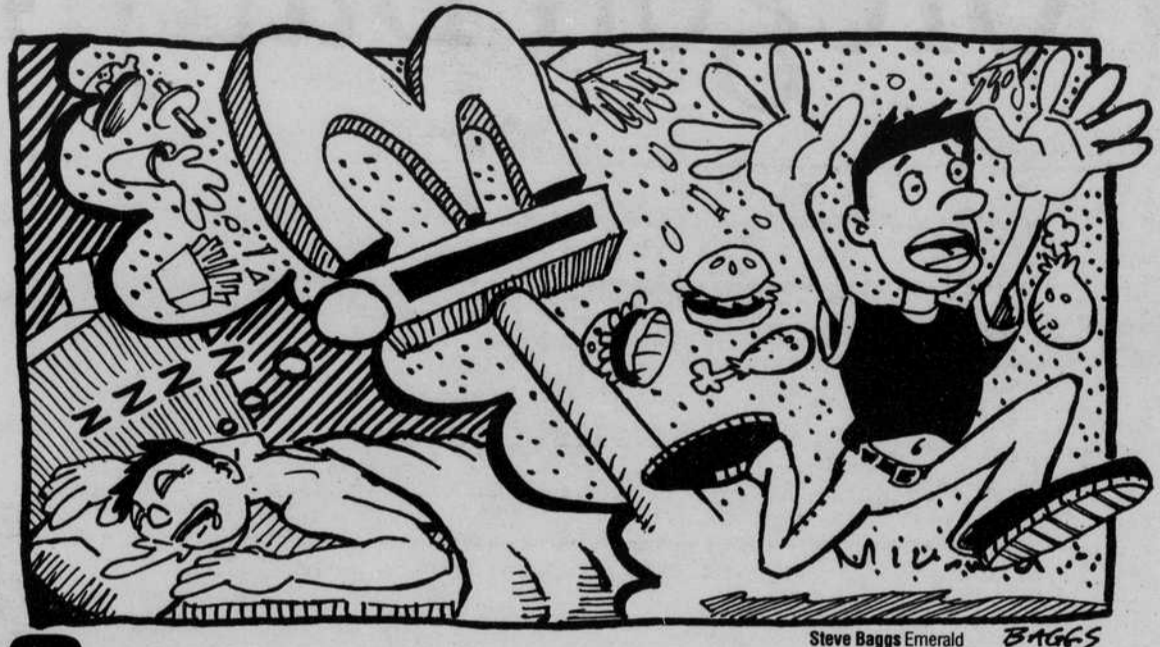
This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

CORRECTION

The story "Theft, loss of plates costly for Folk Fest" (ODE, May 28) should have said that 13 percent of reusable plates were lost or stolen during the Folk Festival.

The Emerald regrets the error.

Also, in the same story, it should be clarified that the project was an ASUO-sponsored, student-initiated event. Campus Recycling did not ask the ASUO for funds for the program.



Steve Baggs Emerald BAGGS

Supersized nightmare

"Welcome to McDonald's, may I take your order?"

"Yeah, I'd like a six-piece McSushi meal, supersized, with the Wacky Wasabi dipping sauce."

"Would you like regular fries with that, kelp tempura, or one of our new non-fat salt-water enemas?"

"Enema, supersized. Oh yeah, and I'd like to add a vitamin boost."

I have a dream. Actually, it's more of a recurring nightmare. In it, Americans have reverted to riding bikes everywhere they go. Rusting heaps of cars line the highways and little furry animals scamper freely across the blacktop fearlessly.

The average diet consists of seafood, veggies and rice.

Obesity is a distant memory, con-

signed by exercise and healthy diet to the Maury Povich Memorial Archives in Cleveland.

In this dream, self-satisfied grins are the dress code du jour, and as I make my way through an airport terminal, I notice the lack of national guardsmen. Terror has been stamped out like an incense stick when it's time to leave the house.

Time moves differently in dreams. I

blink my eyes in the airport gift shop, and I'm landing on a runway in Japan. Visions of John Zorn album covers Lindy-hop through my mind as I prepare to disembark.

The hatch hisses open and before the stewardess can say "Thank you for flying the friendly skies," I've bolted.

Up the ramp and 'round the corner I run. Urgency spreads through me like cheap whiskey. I just can't wait to...

(From dream to nightmare, in half a second.)

What the hell? What kind of cruel joke is this? Surrounding me, literally filling the waiting area are not trim, sparkling-eyed Japanese, but rather fat, angry Americans, wearing Hooters shirts and Mickey Mouse ear hats. As they begin to laugh, I feel a scream violating my lips.

That's when the pelting starts. French fries, ice cream cones, ketchup packets, jalapeno poppers — and the final insult, milkshakes not actually made with milk. I'm drowning in cheap fast food and though I try to run, my legs simply pinwheel like a spinning Chinese Pagoda firecracker on the Fourth of July.

And then I wake, my sweat a mixture of MSG and coconut oil.

"Welcome to McDonald's, may I take your order?"

"Coffee, black."

I come back from my nightmare to find the television still on. It's an ad for Wendy's. They're telling me to try one of their brand new garden-fresh salads.

I find myself wanting to comply.

Instead, I change the channel. Taco Time has salads too. I change the channel again. Burger King's bashing me in the skull with the blunt end of their new "healthy" Chicken Whopper. And now, at select locations, the BK Garden Burger... dear God.

I turn off the television and pick up a copy of Time magazine, hoping to distract myself from the hunger pangs gnawing like ravenous ferrets at the obsessive-compulsive portion of my brain.

Opening to the table of contents, I'm immediately struck by the feeling that my life has turned into a Kafka story.

On page 30 is a story about health trends in China and India. Evidently, after following our dietary lead, heart disease, obesity and hypertension are all on the rise. Not only that, but American cattle farmers are actually having to ship their product overseas, as U.S. citizens become increasingly health conscious.

I throw down the magazine and run. If I run fast enough, I might be able to escape the new dream I can feel forming. But I'm running on a treadmill. Everything comes full circle.

America? China? It's all the same. We all live in a yellow Big Mac wrapper.

Welcome to McDonald's, may I take your order?

E-mail columnist Jacob TenPas at jacobtenpas@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

Letters to the editor

Middle East occupation must end for peace

Regarding Friday's Emerald article about the excellent Middle East slide show and presentation by four speakers, we were puzzled by the closing comment, which said the speakers "shared one common ground: Both sides must cooperate" ("Vivid slide show demonstrates hope for Middle East Peace," ODE, May 31).

The issue of both sides cooperating is so clearly obvious that it wasn't specifically raised during the conference. Rather, the substantial common ground among the four speakers and the concluding message of the event, was: The occupation must end before real progress can begin.

Brian Bogart
 Madoka Kusakabe
 graduate student
 Eugene Middle East Peace Group

Reusable plate project accomplished its goals

I am very disappointed at the inaccurate article in the Emerald regarding the reusable plate project at the Folk Festival on May 28.

To set the record straight:

- The reusable plate project was very successful. Using plates reduced the waste by 22 percent while recycling/composting efforts reduced the waste by 67 percent. More than 75 volunteers (many students) participated.

- The project was the first of its kind and a model for other waste-reduced events around the country.

- The project was proposed by me, a student, and was supported by Campus Recycling.

- This was a pilot project that went off smoothly and got rave reviews.

- The project was funded to serve the Folk Festival as a free event and was never presented or funded to include a deposit system.

- Though there was some plate loss, this was built into the funding. The project is being evaluated for improvement for future events. Savings from using disposables is also funding replacement of lost plates.

Please help by returning any plates from the Folk Festival to Campus Recycling through campus mail to:

Campus Recycling, 1276 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403.

Campus Recycling is a program that is recognized worldwide while providing hands on opportunities for thousands of University students. The reusable plate project was a success. I hope the Emerald can find space in the future to celebrate the fiscal responsibility and integrity that Campus Recycling prides itself on.

Jon Borgida
 PPPM student
 events coordinator
 Campus Recycling