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COMMENTARY

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Letters to the editor

Eugene has more bookstores

I am pleased that the Oregon Daily Emerald had a special books edition (July 26), but I am disappointed that your insert and articles on local stores did not include two downtown bookstores, Emerald City Fine Books and J. Michael's books. Both our businesses are working toward the revitalization of Downtown Eugene.

Our store, Emerald City Fine Books, has 40,000 titles, of which more than 31,000 are available for sale online. Beyond this, we have perhaps the finest stock of antiquarian books south of Portland.

My father, who runs the business on a day-to-day basis, is a founding editor of Firsts Magazine, widely recognized as the best periodical resource for book collectors. He has nearly 40 years of experience in the antiquarian book trade. We are also proud of our knowledgeable staff, who are deeply committed to the book trade.

Marc Weinstein
 proprietor
 Emerald City Fine Books

Women must make adjustments

Although Meghann Farnsworth asserts that "Women face more challenges when balancing career, family" (ODE, July 23), I believe it is a societal challenge. We can meet the challenges by accepting children's presence in our society.

Women need not sacrifice career or family but must make adjustments if they want to do them concurrently. Biology determines that she (not he) must have her family in the first half of her life expectancy.

The studies that show that children do better when they are constantly mothered for the first nine months of life should not be cause for anxiety. They present a challenge for us to make workplaces friendlier to women with offspring who choose or need to work while their children are young.

While the needs of women and men may have changed in recent history, the needs of babies and children haven't. Having more money for adequate child care does nothing to further the fulfillment of a child. It is more important to children in their infancy to have their mothers present, because mothers are the ones who are biologically equipped for the nurturing and nutrition that breast-feeding provides the infant for optimum growth and development.

It is a slap in the face to women who choose full time mothering to think they must have a paying career to be fulfilled. Men who are supportive of the mother who chooses to go with her biology — to be constantly available in their child's early years — should be respected and acknowledged for the sacrifices they make.

Beth Mali
 Creswell

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.

Spam e-mails part fools, money

GUEST COMMENTARY

Pat
 Payne

Some days, it pays to be paranoid. Always believing what you read could be trouble. And these days, fools and their money can be parted at the speed of thought.

A few days ago, I was checking my e-mail, when I got a message from someone named "Dr. Ego Bia" marked "Urgent and Confidential." Even though I don't fall for any spams, I love opening them up just to laugh at the ludicrous pitches they often contain. This, however, was no typical spam trying to lure me to www.hotslutswithdonkeys.com or the inevitable credit card pitch.

Nope. The alleged "Dr. Bia" was spinning a tale about how he and other members of a Nigerian government oil company had skimmed money off their contracts to the tune of some \$20 million. If only I would pay some transfer fees and a bribe or two, then come to Nigeria and give them my bank account number, they'd transfer the money to the United States. I would be able to keep a large percent of the ill-gotten swag for myself.

Right. In reality, that e-mail was a solicitation for the so-called "Nigerian" or "419" scam, and it is, according to the Virginia-based 419 Coalition, the third-to-fifth-largest industry in Nigeria. It's an old scam — it stems from a '20s con called "the Spanish prisoner" ("Oh, dear chap ... my brother, a wealthy playboy, was unjustly imprisoned in Spain ... if you will be so kind as to help pay for his release, he would reward you ever so handsomely").

It's odd to think that people would fall for this scheme, but they have. Fallen for it to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars each year, according to the Secret Service. It's a reason to be wary of anything promising "quick riches" on the Internet. Just remember this mantra: If it looks too good to be true, it is.

In the same vein of divorcing fools from their money is the old "chain letter" dodge. I'm sure you've gotten an e-mail from someone telling you of the 15-year-old whose mother found an ungodly sum of money in his closet. How did he get it? Yeah, I was thinking "selling drugs" too.

But no. He's in on a chain letter. He sends

five dollars through the mail to a number of total strangers on an e-mail list, and then puts his own name on and sends the e-mail off to others. He then waits and watches the money roll in.

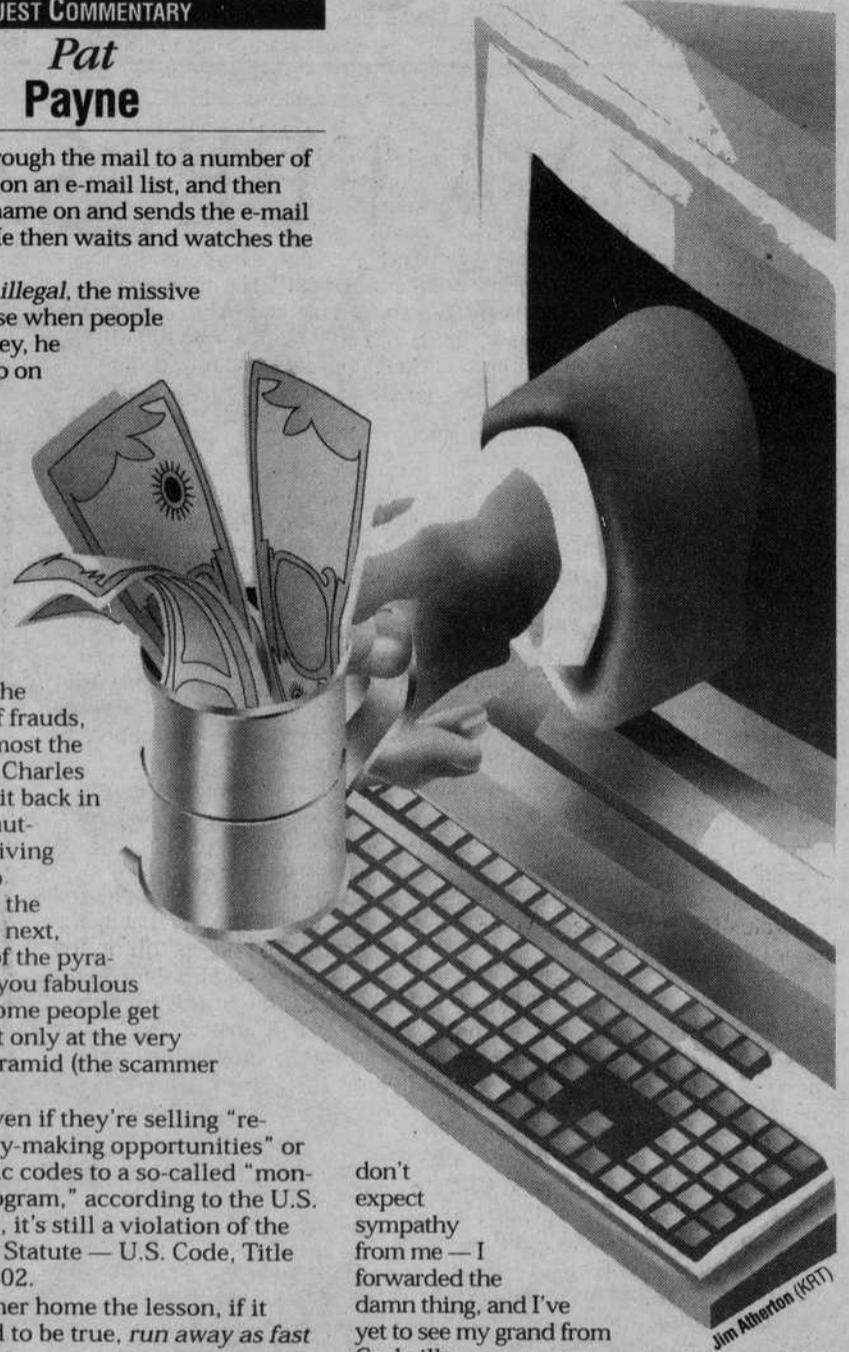
And it's *not illegal*, the missive tells us, because when people send him money, he gives them info on how to make money effortlessly (in a breath: Make yer own damn chain letter). It's a service, not a scheme, right?

Wrong. It's the granddaddy of frauds, and it runs almost the same as when Charles Ponzi created it back in the '20s. In a nutshell, you're giving your money to strangers with the hopes that the next, larger, levels of the pyramid will give you fabulous wealth. Yes, some people get wealthy — but only at the very apex of the pyramid (the scammer himself).

And, yes, even if they're selling "reports," "money-making opportunities" or even electronic codes to a so-called "money-making program," according to the U.S. Postal Service, it's still a violation of the Postal Lottery Statute — U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1302.

So, to hammer home the lesson, if it looks too good to be true, *run away as fast as you can*.

And if you get an e-mail saying Bill Gates will give you \$1,000 for forwarding an e-mail,



don't expect sympathy from me — I forwarded the damn thing, and I've yet to see my grand from Geekzilla.

Pat Payne is a freelance columnist. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Students have unequal college access

GUEST COMMENTARY

Mason
 Gummer

As a University student, I found the July 23 front-page articles ("Students face increased tuition, per-term fees," "Oregon universities seek more freedom, flexibility from OUS," ODE) most disturbing. First I read that we are getting increased fees — an additional \$53 per term, per student — making the University the most expensive in the state.

But what was really shocking was the article about the state university presidents requesting more autonomy from the Oregon University System. They want to eliminate spending limits on private university funds and students' ability to appeal to the state to amend university policy.

Currently, state taxes account for only about 18 percent of the University budget. Your editorial ("UO officials should rethink budget fixes," ODE, July 23) states that, according to The Oregonian, a mere 27 percent of Oregon's state tax funds come out of the multi-million-dollar pockets of corporations, meaning the rest of us fork out 73 percent of state taxes.

I echo your editorial's demand that corporations "need to pony up the bucks to make higher education realistically possible for the state's students."

However, that seems to be a utopian dream. The trend has been the opposite for most of the past century: The public's share

of the tax burden has increased, while that of the corporate sector has decreased. A half-century ago, business taxes accounted for about half of Oregon's budget.

The Bush Administration used the post-Sept. 11 mood of "if you don't support our proposal, you are unpatriotic" to further this trend, granting huge gifts to the wealthy sectors that control our government (is it a surprise to anybody that the richer you are, the more political power you have?).

An upper-class tax cut was passed, and the military budget was increased dramatically. Our military was already vastly superior to that of the rest of the world's nations combined, yet "defense" spending was increased to a whopping \$1 billion per day! Yet we can't afford to subsidize the education of our people?

Hell, our government doesn't even provide us with basic health care. No wonder America has the highest infant mortality rate of any industrialized nation.

Of course, critics are quick to point out that socialized education and health care (which are practiced quite successfully in

many European countries) will cause taxes to increase — which is irrelevant, since we already have to pay exorbitant amounts for those things anyway.

If we could persuade our government to take some of our money out of the immensely over-funded military-industrial complex and invest it in our well-being, then we could have socialized higher education and health care without higher taxes.

World population statisticians estimate it would take 10 percent of the U.S. military budget (approximately \$37 billion) to supply the world's entire population with shelter, food and water. But I don't expect to see those kinds of changes.

America and the University will most likely continue operating in the interest of wealth and power, ignoring the people as much as possible. There is plenty of money for a new football stadium, but little to curb tuition increases.

But have no fear, University President Dave Frohnmayer and his fellow presidents "promised to guarantee ... equal access to higher education for every qualified Oregonian." Since many Oregonians already lack access to higher education, I'm assuming that "qualified" is a euphemism for "only those who can afford it."

Mason Gummer is a senior sociology major.