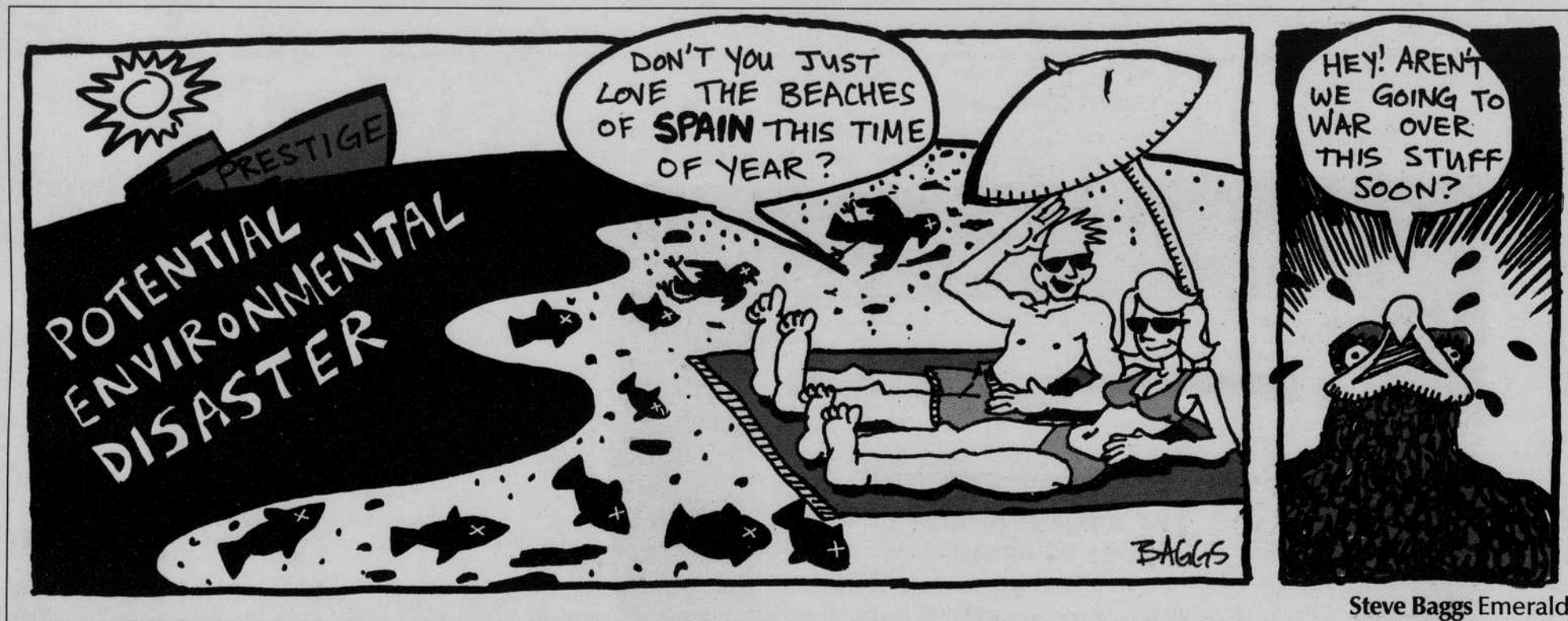


COMMENTARY

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Steve Baggs Emerald

The bare facts

Would you take your clothes off for \$500? Being a college student and having to work a full-time job and pay for my schooling, my apartment and my car, I considered it — for all of two seconds.

When I saw an ad asking for "nude models," with the possibility of making \$500 per session, I thought, I do things that are outlandish and wild all the time, just to say I did them. But this was beyond that — I needed to see what it was all about, as a service to our readers.

I e-mailed a photograph of myself and a contact phone number. In about 10 minutes, I got a call back from "Gary" — which may or may not be his real name — saying he liked what he saw and would like to set up an interview. I agreed to the meeting, not knowing what I was getting myself into.

I met him at a coffee shop on 18th Avenue. He began by telling me a little about the "business" and how they'd been an established part of the community for more than five years. It sounded all right until I heard the details. They would take several still pictures and/or prints, along with a 20-minute movie that sometimes could take an hour or more to tape.

The interesting part was I would put absolutely no money into this. I had done some modeling and acting when I was younger where I sometimes had to give money to the directors or photographers as a sort of "contract fee" for discovering me.

But then "Gary" got into the details of the work. If I was interested, I had to do an audition, which included a photo shoot where I took off all my clothes so he could see if the money was worth it. Well, being the woman that I am, I can be pretty self-conscious, especially around people who've never seen me naked before.

Which led me to my second option, which was called the "Point-of-View." This is where I could give



Salena DeLaCruz
Say it loud

a guy oral sex where it just showed me and him, so the person who gets the video can pretend it's them. Oh, and I would be paid \$75 for getting my knees dirty. One thing I noticed is that he made sure to quit talking when people walked by, which gave me the feeling he was ashamed of what he did.

But that wasn't all — for pleasing myself in front of the cameras, I'd get a paltry sum, as well. For them to videotape my raw talents with a man, I'd get a little more. And since many male fantasies are woman-on-woman, that payment outweighed all the rest. Remember, each session also includes the still photographs.

And to add insult to injury, I would essentially have to sign myself away. Any photographs or movies done are the sole possession of "Gary," and he can then sell them to anyone he wants. Not such a good idea if I ever want to go into politics.

I know many people would love to hear that I was ready and willing that very moment, but the truth is, the minute he told me all of this, I wanted to get up and run away as far and as fast as possible. But I sat there with the smile glued to my face because I knew I was doing it as a service to my readers — to let them know what's up if they consider answering ads like this.

I might as well have put on some knee-high boots, a tight mini-skirt and a tube top and stood on the corner of Broadway and peddled my wares.

Ads like these prey on students who need quick cash, and it's sad that people are willing to do it. I, on the other hand, left the meeting knowing I could never go through with it. My self-respect and dignity couldn't take it. So, sorry "Gary," but you won't be pimping this woman out to the highest bidder.

That said, before you drop your drawers, weigh the pros and cons. Could you swallow your own self-respect and dignity for \$500? I couldn't, so I guess my minimum wage job will have to do.

Contact the editorial editor at salenadelacruz@dailymerald.com. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Americans can rethink over-consuming habits on 'Buy Nothing Day'

Guest commentary

On Nov. 29, the day after Thanksgiving, millions of North Americans will flood out of their homes and into shopping malls and stores, summoned by T.V. commercials, newspaper ads and sales kicking off the holiday season. On the day after the biggest annual eating day on the continent, many University students will partake in the biggest annual shopping day on the continent.

This year, however, ASUO asks you to resist the urge to shop and participate in a different holiday — Buy Nothing Day. Established in 1989 by the Media Foundation of Vancouver, B.C., Buy Nothing Day is a 24-hour shopping moratorium meant to encourage us to challenge our shop-til-you-drop, eat-your-heart-out culture and not spend any money. This year, more than a million people in Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Israel, Sweden and the United States will find alternatives to the consumer frenzy and consider the impact over-consumption has on our planet.

Even if North America alone celebrates Buy Nothing Day, we could take a giant leap forward in improving the quality of life on Earth. The average North American consumes five times more than a person in Mexico, 10 times more than a person in China, and 30 times more than a person in India. This has got

to change. Many of the purchases we make undermine the spiritual reasons for celebrating the holidays, were manufactured in poor working conditions for poor wages, or, especially cell phones, diamonds and coffee, were made from resources that come out of brutal wars fought overseas in which hundreds of Africans, Southeast Asians and Middle Easterners die each year. Moreover, much of what we consume comes in excessive packaging, which enlarges landfills, pollutes drinking water, harms plant and wildlife, and in most cases, is something we simply do not need.

From Nov. 29 on, let's try our best to curb over-consumption. There are several ways to do this. We can start by cutting up our credit cards (it's not that hard to do), only buying what we need, repairing broken things instead of throwing away and replacing them, using reusable products instead of disposable ones, recycling, supporting local and independent shops and challenging our government to do more to address the issue of consumption.

Also, when friends and family members ask us what we want for the holidays, let's consider asking for non-material gifts. Meanwhile, we should give ourselves and our planet a break, and buy nothing on Nov. 29.

Vivian Vassall is a sophomore majoring in journalism and is the ASUO environmental coordinator.

Letters to the editor

Why cross picket lines?

After reading today's article ("Grocery workers may strike," ODE, Nov. 18) I would like to put forth some information and a challenge. First, in the very first sentence, the reporter writes, "Grocery shopping may require the crossing of picket lines this holiday season." Why?

Why not support the workers who are trying to hold on to a living-wage job with benefits? Wal-Mart's slave-labor wages certainly won't support

working families. Second, Safeway cashier and University junior Grant Leffler has it wrong. A strike is a last effort by employees, not a first choice to "show its power."

As a union worker here at the University, I challenge Leffler to find out more about unions, because there are three here representing employees of the University. They are the people who teach him (GTFF); help with his financial aid, clean the rooms he studies in, and provide him with course materials (SEIU), to name just a few; and print the materials he reads and learns from (GCIU). SEIU will be bargaining soon, and we need the Univer-

sity community's support, especially from students such as Mr. Leffler. So, my challenge to the reader — support all local area workers, because someday they may support you. Isn't that what community is all about?

Cheri Smith
undergraduate coordinator
computer and information science

Change the world, not just the station

With due respect to Ben Lacy's letter regarding KUGN, "turning the dial" and ignoring the problem is equal to choosing hate and a violent future, which infringes

on everyone's existence. There are 1,200 radio stations; it's a monopoly of digital hate, providing viewpoints, not viewpoints.

America and the world turned the dial and the Holocaust evolved. We turned the dial in Rwanda, Vietnam, Korea and throughout the 20th century. We turn the dial for the women in Afghanistan who die in childbirth every twenty minutes because we broke our promise to rebuild after bombing them in search of a man we never found. We turn the dial every moment we allow violence to be part of our way of life, and we simply will not survive the century

if we continue to do so.

This is not about freedom of speech. It's about institutes of higher learning — with their grand and celebrated mission statements of diversity — supporting extremism and the spread of hatred in exchange for money. In short, it's about perpetuating the kind of hypocrisy we routinely study in many of our classes.

Think ahead. Resist all concepts that threaten future generations. Choose an intelligent future.

Brian Bogart
first-year graduate student
peace studies