

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Suite 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 Email: editor@dailyemerald.com
 Online Edition:
 www.dailyemerald.com

COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:
 Michael J. Kleckner
 Managing Editor:
 Jessica Richelderfer
 Editorial Editors:
 Salena De La Cruz, Pat Payne

Friday, December 6, 2002

Editorial

Lack of diversity poorly serves students' needs

Look around. Look at the other students in your class or just walking by. Look up at the professor of your class. Who do you see? Or perhaps it's who you don't see. There is a lack of people of color at this University — or perhaps there are enough students but not enough faculty members. We're not sure.

There are 2,545 students of color on campus ("University reports diversity numbers," ODE, Nov. 27). There are more than 20,000 students enrolled in this University. So, in comparison, of what are the numbers reflective? The editorial board, despite extensive argument, couldn't say.

Who is to say the numbers are good or bad? How would we estimate the "right" number to shoot for in a quest for adequate representation of people of color? What would the "right" number be representative of, anyway? Oregon? America? The world?

And is having a certain number of students of color on campus the end-all be-all? How do we get them here? While recruiting students of color, it might be a good idea for recruiters to be people of color as well. This would, perhaps, help to illustrate the diverse reputation for which the University supposedly strives.

After recruitment, retention is the next most important issue. In order to keep these numbers at their current level, or to keep them growing if that's what the community wants, the University should focus on keeping students here by offering programs that engage ethnic minorities and bring them into the community, instead of simply offering a club where they can associate with others like them.

Perhaps a bigger issue, though, is the educational experience itself. The five editorial board members have taken about 200 classes at the University. Of that number, only five professors were people of color. That should be of concern to University administrators. Everyone's education is poorly served if those instructing don't come from a broad cross-section of American culture.

This isn't to say that only professors of color can teach ethnic studies or Asian history, nor that ethnicity is the only kind of diversity, but rather that students need to be exposed to a multiplicity of life experiences. Some of that multiplicity has to include ethnicity, or everyone gets shortchanged.

Less focus should be made on students of color and more on faculty of color. Most students attend higher education institutions to expand their horizons and find out about the world. To that end, we want to see more faculty of color on campus to share their views and help shape our own opinions.

Our ideas shape who we are and our skin color is part of who we are. To become educated, we need to see and hear what other people think.

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. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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Michael J. Kleckner Editor in chief	Salena De La Cruz Editorial editor
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Why they have it all wrong

This past week, President Bush had to realize, once again, that when you dine with the devil, you'd better bring along an extra long spoon.

The president found himself in the uncomfortable position of distancing himself from remarks by Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, who are, of course, rather large supporters of the president.

The duo once again (as with the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks) had shot their collective mouths off by calling Muslims worse than the Nazis (I didn't think anyone was worse than a Nazi) and describing the prophet Muhammad as a terrorist. Bush retorted by reminding the world that most Muslims are peaceful people, that Muslim doesn't mean suicide bomber any more than Christian means Bible-thumping mouth-breather.

I'm glad to see the president call these two on the carpet, even if indirectly. Their remarks are not helpful. People holding similar opinions have killed Muslims and Sikhs. The Falwells and Robertsons of the world just do not get it, unfortunately. They look to the history of the religion rather than the message.

The message of Islam is very much like the message of Christianity (they are from the same root): charity and benevolence. Every religion has sadly had its violent periods. Delve too deeply into Christianity and you get the

Inquisition, the Thirty Years War, and burning witches at the stake. The Hindus in India had some amazingly warlike kings. In Japan, there was a special class of Buddhist monk, the "so he," who fought on the battlefield alongside the samurai and even gave Oda Nobunaga some sleepless nights.

But looking factually at history doesn't seem to work for this duo. No, no, they'd protest. Now you're getting into moral relativism.

The hell I am (and excuse the bad pun). What Osama bin Laden helped to do on Sept. 11, 2001, was evil. Plain and simple. So were some actions taken in the name of Christianity, or Judaism, or

Buddhism or any other religion. It's not making anything morally relative. It's separating the wheat from the chaff.

All of these religions have also done things that have helped mankind immensely. Even Islam. It's thanks to Islamic scholars in the Middle Ages that a number of ancient Greek classics still survive, including medical works by Hippocrates. Algebra was refined by Arabic scholars. That's not going to be erased because a madman like Saddam Hussein is running around.

What's my own interpretation? It's not Islam that is the problem. There are violent people in any religion. For two examples, take a look at

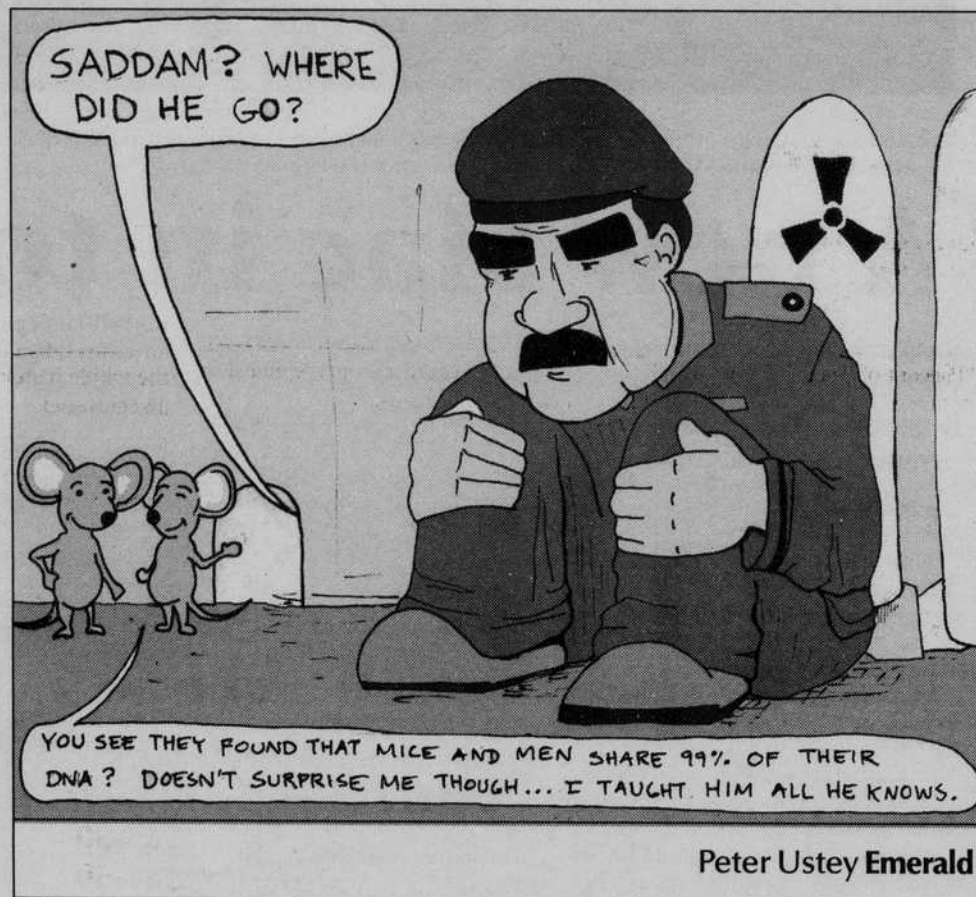
the late Jerry Rubin of the Jewish Defense League (on trial for trying to bomb mosques and a Congressman's office in Los Angeles) or any of the Christian extremists who shoot doctors who perform abortions. My interpretation is that there are people out there, in any religion, who are so filled with hatred and malice that they will do anything to vent it on those they hate.

So in the end, rail on the people doing the killing, not the religion they choose to cloak themselves in for their own burst of moral superiority.

Contact the columnist at patpayne@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



Pat Payne
The return of Captain Sensible



Peter Ustey Emerald

Letters to the editor

Letter misses key Iraq facts

Levi Strom's letter to the editor "Letter lies about Bush" (ODE, Nov. 26) contains one factual inaccuracy after another, and I would like to address the most serious.

Mr. Strom's suggestion that America is not waging war on al-Qaida is bizarre. Where has he been for the past 14 months? Just last month, a Predator strike in Yemen killed top bin Laden lieutenant Abu Ali and five colleagues.

Mr. Strom claims "investigations ... have found no substance to rumors of an Iraq-al-Qaida connection." However, CIA Director George Tenet's recent letter to Congress states exactly the opposite: "We have solid reporting of senior level contacts between Iraq and al-Qaida going back a decade ... Iraq and al-Qaida have discussed safe haven and reciprocal non-aggression. Since Operation Enduring Freedom, we have solid evidence of the presence in Iraq of al-Qaida members ... Al-Qaida's leaders sought contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapons of mass destruction ... Iraq has provided

training to al-Qaida members in the areas of poisons and gases and making conventional bombs."

Mr. Strom somehow blames U.N. sanctions rather than Saddam Hussein for withholding humanitarian aid from the Iraqi people. What Mr. Strom fails to note is that the humanitarian crisis in Iraq persists despite \$55 billion worth of Iraqi oil sold under the Oil-for-Food Program because Saddam has subverted that program, working around the sanctions to buy weapons rather than food and medicine.

To put not too fine a point on it, Mr. Strom seems unencumbered by reality.

Sean Walston
sixth-year graduate student physics

Column forgets to make logical argument

Meghann Farnsworth's commentary ("Blindly following the political flock," ODE, Nov. 26) left me amazed. Not only does she blindly follow party lines herself by regurgitating the argument that any action in Iraq would be for the purposes of obtaining its oil (were that indeed the case, the United States could have much more easily and cheaply followed France & Russia's lead in circum-

venting U.N. sanctions on Iraq), she then goes on to deride a small group of Republican students who had the courage to make their views known throughout the demonstration.

On my way to and from lunch that day I stopped near these "sheep" for a while, and found them standing politely with smiles on their faces, enduring all sorts of verbal attacks from the surrounding crowd. I found their strength of character encouraging, and this made me feel good about the students at this University. This feeling ended with Ms. Farnsworth's article. Rather than applaud the diversity brought by the Republican students, she attacked them with stereotype and insinuation. I find it interesting that in lieu of an attempt at any sort of logical argument, she instead chose to mention that the four or five Republican students appeared to be of European descent, while failing to mention the sea of white faces that made up the rest of the demonstrators. I suggest Ms. Farnsworth revise her byline from "Just think about it" to something along the lines of "Blind leading the Blind." It'd be far more appropriate.

David Mason
seventh-year graduate physics