

# COMMENTARY

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## Letters to the editor

### Bush doesn't support family planning

The Bush administration's recent decision to back out of an international agreement — this time an agreement made between 189 countries around the world to provide poor women with family planning and reproductive health services — reveals a blatant disregard for human life and the true extent of the president's shift to the right and away from the moderate views held by most Americans.

The agreement the president is now preparing to abandon grew out of a worldwide recognition that rapid population growth in developing countries was undermining economic development and exacerbating the grinding poverty in which billions of people live. And it determined that improving women's access to education, to economic opportunities, and to civic life — as well as to family planning and related health services — was the best way to address these problems. This is just the latest step in a long series of attacks on women's health and family planning.

Earlier this year, the president decided to eliminate all funds for the United Nations Population Fund — an organization leading the effort to provide poor women in developing countries with quality reproductive health care and family planning services. This despite strong bipartisan support in Congress and the recommendation of the president's own fact-finding team. While a small minority of outspoken extremists has captured the president's ear on this issue, the vast majority of Americans — Republicans, Democrats, and Independents — support family planning. More than half a million women die every year from pregnancy related causes — nearly all of them preventable with quality reproductive health care.

Aren't their lives more important than the whims of a handful of anti-family planning extremists?

Albert Kaufman  
 Portland

### 'Hate' should prompt contract review

University administrators will be meeting in June to consider whether to renew the University's controversial contract with radio station KUGN-AM. Hopefully, concerned parties will take a good look at the University's mission statement and two of its key principles: tolerance and respect.

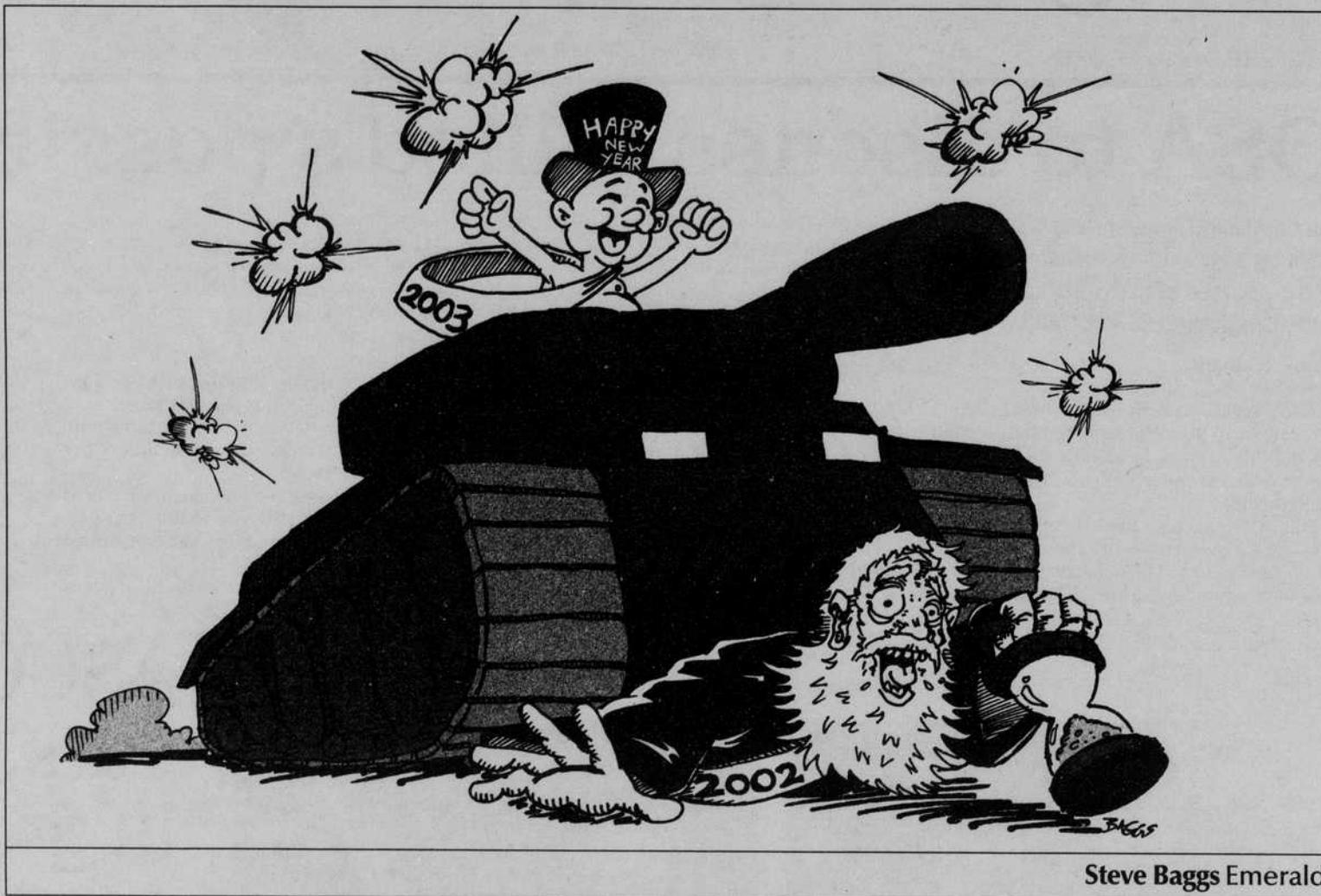
It is important to note that this is not an issue of censorship. This is about whether the University should continue a high-profile business relationship that juxtaposed with its stated mission principles reeks of hypocrisy.

What is "hate radio"? Some would have you believe that it is simply an airing of controversial issues with some hosts who push the edge a bit. In reality, it is unrelenting character assassination, ridicule and demonization of anyone whose philosophy differs from the extreme right-wing persuasion. It routinely bashes minorities and women.

A favorite pastime for Michael Savage and Michael Medved is homeless bashing: Savage, on April 4, talked about "forcing the homeless to eat geese until they gag." Medved often refers to the homeless as "human trash" and "scum."

If these themes were occasional, or perhaps tongue-in-cheek, it might diminish the conflict of interest. Unfortunately, this is not the case. These are recurring and incessant mantras. So when Michael Savage says "(Senator Joseph) McCarthy was 100 percent right. ... McCarthy was a hero," (March 28) and

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Steve Baggs Emerald

## Conservative voices bring necessary balance to 'liberal' college education

### Guest commentary

I am writing in regard to an issue that has come up in the past few weeks both here at the University and at other campuses across the country. The issue is that of political ideology and the conservative minority at many universities.

There has been a lot of talk about biases against conservatives at universities. At other campuses, it has been brought out that political minorities are not given any protection that other groups enjoy.

Here at the University, the issue of grading based on political views and not quality of work has come up. In addition, the issue has arisen of whether a radio station that broadcasts a politically biased radio show should be allowed to use the University's image.

I would like praise the people

that are bringing these issues up. No matter what a person's point of view, they should have a right to be heard. It is wrong that some would prevent conservatives from voicing their opinion. I know that my political ideology and views are not all correct, and just the same the left is not always right.

What is right is to allow both views to come out and be heard, and through that we can advance society. At Amherst College in Massachusetts, they chose to create student senate seats that were based on underrepresented minorities. Every group that applied was granted a seat except for conservatives. Now this wouldn't change the balance of power or anything like that; it would simply have given a voice to an underrepresented group. Why not give these people a voice? Even if it is little heard, it is better than being silenced.

Here at the University, it has been brought out that many conservative students feel like they get graded down for putting conservative views in papers. The Emerald's advice column suggests that conservative students should avoid putting their political views in papers. Is that fair to repress one's voice because it doesn't coincide with the majority?

Also here at the University, there has been much talk about not allowing KUGN-AM to call themselves "the voice of the Ducks" because they broadcast Michael Savage's conservative radio program. People should be proud that the voice of the Ducks can be associated with allowing all views to be presented. Even our "teach-ins" are not educating if they come from one point of view.

I know that the University is a liberal university, and I came here, if not for anything else, to see and

be exposed to the other side. As a result, some of my views have become more liberal, and others are now more conservative.

Our political views should be dynamic and not static. This can only happen through seeing a good representation of differing views. Rather than condemning the expression of a conservative voice, we should be praising it for its balancing effect. Just the same, conservative universities should praise liberal voices for adding an element of balance. If we shut out one point of view, no matter what that point of view is, at the University, we become ignorant and not educated. I assume that by coming to college, we all want to be educated.

Greg McNeill is a senior major in political science.

Editor's note: This piece was submitted before KUGN's decision to stop carrying Michael Savage.

## Conscientious shopping does support economy

### Guest commentary

This is in response to Julie Lauderbaugh's commentary ("Let your conscience be your shopping guide," ODE, Dec. 4).

I am growing increasingly frustrated that Americans such as Lauderbaugh feel that to not shop and/or to question an economic machine that has little regard for environmental degradation or labor exploitation is inherently un-American. I feel this is a misconception.

I am also frustrated at the current belief that terrorists are targeting our wealth. I have yet to hear any terrorist statement that targeted my country's wealth, but rather what we do with our wealth in the form of our foreign policies that often have consequences including death. (Exam-

ples include continued support of an often brutal Israeli occupation or sanctions in Iraq that have led to the deaths 500,000 children).

However one feels about such policies, it is important for Americans to not confuse the issue. We are being attacked because of our policies and actions, not because we are wealthy.

Yet, I agree with Lauderbaugh about our economy. I am perhaps more disturbed by those who would suggest not supporting an economy at all. I feel this serves no purpose in either strengthening our nation, or even promoting good causes. Rather, I would propose what I thought the title of her commentary was leading to: consumerism with a conscience.

It is not an all-or-nothing game. There is a middle ground, in the form of supporting local economies through venues such as the Eugene

Saturday and Holiday markets, or even larger companies such as Patagonia. There are many companies and products that seek to find a balance between conscience and capitalism.

Thus, I would submit to you and your readers: Do let your conscience be your shopping guide, but educate yourself on how to make informed shopping decisions that not only leave your conscience care-free, but support the economy at all levels.

For this concerned consumer, to not question what I perceive as injustices, inequalities and exploitation by my government and our economic system would be truly un-American.

Thank you for this opportunity to engage in this forum.

Joseph R. Snyder is a fifth-year graduate student in architecture/historic preservation.