

# COMMENTARY

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Steve Baggs Emerald

## Letters to the editor

### University should review involvement with Nike

In his article, "Now Corporations Claim The 'Right To Lie'" (published on Jan. 1 by CommonDreams.org) Thom Hartmann wrote: "While Nike was conducting a huge and expensive PR blitz to tell people that it had cleaned up its subcontractors' sweatshop labor practices, an alert consumer advocate and activist in California named Marc Kasky caught them in what he alleges are a number of specific deceptions. Citing a California law that forbids corporations from intentionally deceiving people in their commercial statements, Kasky sued the multibillion-dollar corporation.

"Instead of refuting Kasky's charge by proving in court that they didn't lie, however, Nike instead chose to argue that corporations should enjoy the same 'free speech' right to deceive that individual human citizens have in their personal lives. If people have the constitutionally-protected right to say, 'The check is in the mail,' or, 'That looks great on you,' then, Nike's reasoning goes, a corporation should have the same right to say whatever they want in their corporate PR campaigns. . . . but Nike isn't a person — it's a corporation. And it's not their 'say' they're asking for: It's the right to deceive people."

After the University completes a review of its association with KUGN, it would do well to review its association with organizations, such as Nike, that have no problem with lying. It is not good for the University's image not to mention its truth-seeking mission - to lie with the liars.

Franklin W. Stahl  
 professor  
 molecular biology

### Talking Stones vandalism racist, biased

In response to the recent defacing of

four of the newly-installed Talking Stones in the Whilamut Natural Area of Alton Baker Park, the City of Eugene Human Rights Commission wishes to express disapproval and sadness for this disrespectful and offensive act.

Four of the Talking Stones were defaced the day after they were installed. The perpetrator or perpetrators and their intents are unknown, and the act itself is reflective of racist and biased acts of intolerance.

These stones have been placed in the Whilamut Natural Area as educational tools. They feature Kalapuya words — and accompanying English translations — which highlight cultural, historical and physical aspects of the landscape. The stones were intended to adorn the park and provide a reclaiming of this natural area for the enjoyment of all people in the community. The last and most significant message of the stones is to honor the indigenous people, known as the Kalapuya, who were the first people to reside in the Willamette Valley, and to recognize present-day Native American residents descended from the Kalapuya.

As community human rights advocates, we must respond to intolerant acts. The Human Rights Commission wishes to help speak out on acts that show disregard and contempt for human rights. We appreciate the community members who have brought this to light and applaud them for speaking out.

May we all together continue to work toward tolerance and respect, so all human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief, and freedom from fear.

Marcy Middleton  
 Navajo Nation  
 James Dean  
 members  
 Human Rights Commission

## Racist charges undermine core beliefs

### Guest commentary

Following the controversy surrounding republican Sen. Trent Lott, an Emerald editorial recently raised its concern over the perception that the Republican Party needs to do more to reach out and demonstrate its sensitivity with respect to race relations in America. While that sincere concern has had relevance in the past, the continued use of the GOP-as-racist stereotype ignores the fundamental beliefs of republicans.

We don't want blacks. We don't want whites. We want your best and brightest. We don't care what you were born as, so long as you want to improve life for your children and live in a meritocracy that respects all individuals according to their own qualities and capabilities.

It is young republicans and libertarians, those who believe that the main measure of a person is their character and their ability to produce for themselves and society, that are now the true defenders of justice and the highest ideals of a society based on individual accomplishment.

So, even as the GOP continues on its path to remove the remnants of racism or sexism from its

reputation, there continues to be the perception that republicans can be casually assumed to have racists in their midst. Why does that notion continue? A few bumps in the road like the Lott instance, and the continuation of race-based politics by those who profit from such perceptions.

Every election, there are plenty of democratic candidates who tar their opponents with the brush of racism because it is an easy method to drive up "negatives" in polls and increase their own chances of victory. And democrats continue to support policies, such as affirmative action and race-based government contracts and loans, that favor particular groups at the expense of free and open market forces, which ultimately will favor whoever is most productive and whoever produces the best results.

This point is evidenced in the Emerald editorial when even as the ODE voiced its concern over republican Lott's "insensitive" remarks, they did not mention democratic Sen. Robert Byrd's former affiliation and alleged recent ties to the Ku Klux Klan. Was this just an honest oversight of the editorial board? Readers of this page can reach their own conclusion.

There is a common and understandable assumption that identity politics are here to stay. After all, they win elections for democrats and it makes liberals within this isolated and self-righteous campus community feel better. But those who hold the highest ideals, that anyone can achieve given a level playing field, are slowly winning the hearts of the American people.

Race will continue to be a stumbling block for the GOP only so long as it allows liberals and win-at-all-cost democrats to frame issues with race as a central theme. That tendency is evident at this University, where specific classes are taught (and even given more weight through their ability to satisfy general education requirements) with specific ethnic groups or women as their central theme. That demographically focused vision of the world is not productive, nor is it founded in any meritocracy.

Ultimately, the republican message that all can achieve through hard work and a level playing field will undeniably carry the day. And for that, we should all be proud.

Bret Jacobson is publisher  
 of the Oregon Commentator.

### CORRECTION

Tuesday's news brief, "Bus bound for Bay Area anti-war rally" (ODE, Jan. 14), should have said the bus will depart from San Francisco at 10 a.m. for the return trip to Eugene.

The Emerald regrets the error.

### CLARIFICATION

The headline and summary on Monday's Measure 28 article ("Measure may increase tuition surcharge," ODE, Jan. 13) may have given readers the wrong impression that passage of Measure 28 would raise tuition.

In fact, if Measure 28 fails, University administrators will offset the loss of funding by increasing tuition 13 percent.