

COMMENTARY

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A call for peace

When I was asked to join the University group "Students for Peace" when they went to Washington, D.C., to protest the war against Iraq, I must admit I was hesitant. "Don't people get arrested at demonstrations?" I asked. Although I am firmly against the war in Iraq, I was hesitant to show up at a rally that would be slightly more radical than I thought I would be comfortable with.

However, at the last minute, I decided to go, and have not regretted it. Certainly, there have been marches in history that have been filled with violence, and though violence was not supported by most in the march, the mainstream media angled their coverage (whether purposely or not) to exclude much of the message of the marchers, and focused instead on the destruction of private property. I was afraid that this would be the case in D.C.

Thousands were expected to protest the president's foreign policy, and I was not sure I wanted to be connected to the radical left, whom I thought the demonstrators would be.

A handful of the counterprotesters were thinking along the same lines. Among some of the smaller pro-war groups was one with most interestingly, if not ridiculously, named MOVEOUT (Marines and Other Veterans Against Outrageous Un-American Traitors). One man yelled out of a passing SUV, "Get a job!" while another had a sign reading "Hippies Go Home."

This image of the hapless, dirty and worthless pacifist hippie is the prototypical activist many pro-war partisans believe make up the anti-war movement. On the contrary, the protest consisted of people from all races, of all ages, and even a trio of well-groomed businessmen who carried a sign proclaiming, "Mainstream white guys against the war."

During the rally, there was electricity in the air; street vendors hawked T-shirts, scarves, hats and gloves to the unprepared, and politi-

cal groups were selling anti-war signs to carry in the march. The media was hungrily circling the demonstrators, pulling over one or two for interviews, and rapidly photographing the rest. While this was not my first time in D.C., it was the first time I had been to the Capitol, and, when I looked back onto the Washington Memorial, was unable to see where the throngs of people ended.

When the march began and I took my place next to the other University students, I could not help but join in some of the chants. Some reminded me of the Seattle demonstration's chants, "Whose streets? Our streets!" and "The people united will never be defeated." While these were slightly tired, there were plenty of call-and-answers that I had never heard. Even when there was a lull in the chanting, there was plenty to look at and to do. One man wore a television around his head with his hair slicked back in the traditional "talking head" style and was announcing, to the laughter of those around him, that we were on fuschia — no, pink — no, lime-green alert!

There was only one slight hang-up in the march, which I was later to discover was the result of two University students climbing on top of a building along side the march and waving an inverted flag to the cheers of the people below. As the police dashed up, they scaled down the back wall and, while we were nervously looking around for them, rejoined our ranks further on.

While I attended the rally with some initial hesitancy, I came out of it fully convinced in the righteousness of our cause. Death and destruction does not become us, and we cannot be distracted from the pain and suffering here at home by a war abroad. On Sunday, I went to the Vietnam Memorial and walked slowly down the thousands of names engraved on the wall. I would like to take Bush there, and make him read each and every name — one by one — and have him think about the potential consequences of his war.

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 Her views do not necessarily represent those
 of the Emerald.



Megahn
 Farnsworth
 Just think about it



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Steve Baggs Emerald

Bush administration perpetuates ongoing war against women

Guest commentary

With the impending war, budgetary woes and the upcoming MLK holiday, one could easily forget that Jan. 22 is the 30th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. One might overlook the peril this decision faces in 2003, and frankly, one might not fully take in the Bush administration's ongoing war on women.

You might be tempted to think of the above statement as hyperbole, so I would like to take you on a short journey through the decisions this administration has made that affect women.

Shortly after taking office, President Bush reinstated the Global Gag Rule. The rule denies funding for

HIV/AIDS care and contraception to any organization that refers needy women to abortion services, even if U.S. dollars are not used for those services. This was followed by denying \$34 million to the U.N. Population Fund, even as youngsters from around the world imperiled by AIDS/HIV begged for that help. The Bush administration opposed our country signing on to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), despite the widespread support of this convention by the rest of the world. This administration denied \$200 million scheduled for programs to support women and to address HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan. Shifting from their international

efforts to national ones, the Bush administration, through Ashcroft's Department of Justice, threw their weight behind an effort in Ohio to ban certain abortion procedures. This was followed by legislation to increase fetal rights through the Unborn Victims of Violence Act and provide fetal health care through the CHIPS program. The mother, on the other hand, is denied both prenatal and postpartum health care.

Appointments made in this administration, at the agency and the judicial level, are consistently anti-choice. The recent appointment of Dr. W. David Hager to the FDA's Reproductive Health Drug Advisory panel would be laughable if not so painful. He has published books that

advocate prayer as the first line of women's health care. All the nominations for the circuit court benches that were turned down because of their biased positions on abortion are now going to be recycled, and will no doubt be confirmed.

Finally, government Web sites are now tainted with biased information based on little to no scientific evidence. An example is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "revised" fact sheet on condom use, which supports the Bush administration's opposition to all forms of contraception. And, of course, the NCI Web site suggests an unproven link between breast cancer and abortion.

Three major decisions have been paramount to the full enfranchise-

ment of women in our country: The right to vote, the right to contraception and the right to choose. All of these decisions acknowledge that women have the right to make decisions regarding their own bodies, and can be trusted to make decisions that are in the best interests of their families and society. The real meaning of Roe is our national confidence in the wisdom and compassion of women. We all need to stand up and speak out in support of this revolutionary decision and its key role in the health and well-being of American women.

Kitty Piercy is the public affairs director for Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon.

Letters to the editor

People should spend less on sports hype

Picture a Eugene where the masses donate \$10 each toward scholarly needs at the University and forgo their usual purchase of gimmicky polyester Duck flags on their cars. Less trinkets and plastic crap and more mindpower should be the University's New Year's resolution.

Canceling expensive sports-hype billboards around the country could keep tuition costs down. Diversity, culture and mindfulness are not a priority at the Univer-

sity — in-your-face jockism reigns. Preventing students from burning down their neighborhood is teaching them to be smart, not overspending on rock-video-style sports-hype TV commercials.

Zachary Vishanoff
 Eugene

There's plenty to forgive

Forgive: 1. To excuse for a fault or offense: pardon. 2. To renounce anger or resentment against. 3. To absolve from payment of (e.g., a debt) -vi. To accord forgiveness.

While I agree that shouting forgiveness from the mountaintops will do little to curb terrorism, I think that there is more to what Sill had to say in "Forgiveness may prove

more successful than war" (ODE, Jan. 8). My interpretation is that perhaps Sill thinks that America should accept the Muslim majority's apology for what some illegitimate radicals have done in their name. We could forgive and not take on a narrow view of Islam and discard vague stereotypes like "those countries that preach hate and murder against the United States on a daily basis."

Or maybe America could take a more responsible approach to eliminating passive support for such atrocities by not attacking everyone except those terrorists who have America in their crosshairs.

We missed bin Laden, so Hussein is next. And then, Kim Jong II? We could "forgive"

the debts that we have somehow transferred out of al-Qaeda accounts and into Iraq's.

Instead, we've externalized the effects of our actions and driven the accounts of the peoples of these dark, hateful places further into the red. Maybe we should ask for forgiveness from the very people that have quite conveniently been kept from achieving the very things that we, the great blue-eyed beacon of democracy, have prescribed for them.

Surely, with the way things are going now there will be plenty of forgiveness to go around.

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