

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 Editor:
 Pat Payne

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Letters to the editor

University should speak out against war

On Jan. 21, a forum was held at the University to discuss whether the University — as an institution — should speak out against war against Iraq at this time. University President David Frohnmayer argued that the University should not take a position on controversial issues and that “the state charter prohibits the school from making formal statements on ‘partisan activities’” (The Register-Guard, Jan. 23). While the charter restricts governance of the faculty of the University to “the immediate government and discipline of it and its students,” Frohnmayer missed two important points.

First, President Bush has announced that — even in the absence of a clear and present danger to the United States or of U.N. sponsorship — he is willing to invade Iraq, thereby violating the Constitution and the U.N. charter. How can a research University justify silence in the face of such an assault on our democracy, a key prerequisite to unfettered search for truth?

Second, given that the “immediate government” of the University would be directly affected by a drain on state and federal resources resulting from any war, should not the University as such try to prevent this as-yet-unjustified war?

Let us all, citizens and institutions alike, speak out against unprovoked aggression before it is too late.

Jette Foss
 Institute of Molecular Biology

S&M a legitimate ‘playtime’ pursuit

Pat Payne’s comments in “Disrespect, Leather and the KKK” (ODE, Jan. 11) are what triggered this missive. I am into the S&M sexuality, and I agree with him completely: It was an invasion of a serious arms expert’s privacy. And Payne is right; spare us the word on Saddam Hussein’s no doubt many fetishes. Too bad he isn’t into S&M; he could take all his aggression and let it out in the bedroom, and maybe even have some fun!

There are 250 million pursuits of happiness out there in this fair land of ours. Some of them are ones some of us don’t like. Whatever our feelings on any given one, we must, as democratists, respect each other’s rights, as long as they don’t really hurt anyone. The type of S&M we practice may cause us to be called — and call ourselves — “sadists,” but we are not sadists like Heinrich Himmler, Genghis Khan or Heliogabalus. Rather we enjoy a shared exchange of heightened sensations, perhaps with some psychological play that may or may not accompany playtime.

As a child, I played “cowboys and Indians,” but that did not make me an Indian. Now I play S&M. That does not make me Torquemada (and I don’t have any idea how to spell Torque... , etc., but you already got the idea anyway).

P.S.: I just ran spell check. It came to “Saddam,” didn’t recognize it, and — no kidding — the word it suggested was sadism!

Robb Goldstein
 Chatham, N.Y.

S&M enthusiasts form caring relationships

Pat Payne may as well nominate himself for one of those awards he so gratuitously handed out in “Disrespect, Leather and the KKK” (ODE, Jan. 11). To say that a person who finds themselves aroused by the thought of being completely dominated by another needs to “find help on pages 569-570 of the Yellow Pages, under psychologists” should put him foremost in the running for the “has no idea what he’s talking about” award.

To single out people and deride them for the ways in which they choose to express themselves to their partners behind closed doors shows extreme ignorance.

Perhaps “Captain Sensible” should do some research on this topic first. Those who engage in S&M behavior are extremely caring of their partners’ wants, desires and concerns, taking great pains to ensure that the activities they engage in will not harm either person. A relationship such as this requires trust beyond that which many spouses of any gender hold for each other.

The people who engage in these activities take much more care not to cause harm to the recipient of their attentions than a “normal” person having a one-night stand at a bar would.

Do your homework before sounding off on issues that you have no personal experience whatsoever with.

John Taylor
 senior
 biochemistry
 Elena Jonas
 sophomore
 undeclared

Sex ed, legal abortion will save lives

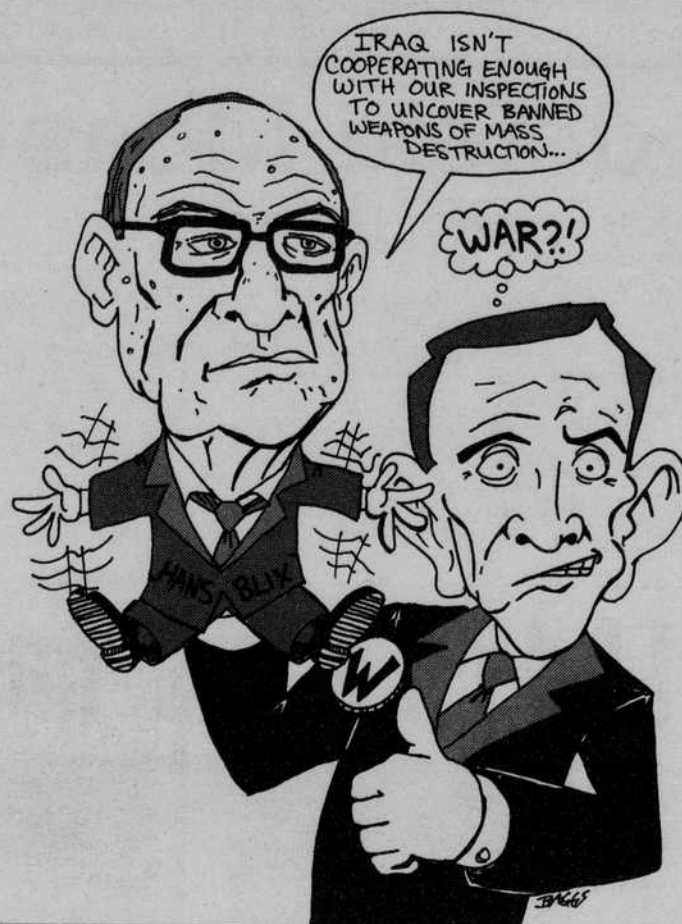
Regarding our president’s Sanctity of Life Day last weekend, I have two points.

Each person should have the choice to decide what happens to his or her own body. If you do not believe in a woman’s right to have an abortion to terminate a pregnancy, don’t have one. Any woman who does wish to have this procedure deserves to be able to make her own decision on this issue.

Second, to those who support abstinence-only sex education for our children, please get your heads out of the sand. Our young people need the most medically-accurate information available to protect and educate themselves about life. They say “ignorance is bliss,” but in this case ignorance, or the lack of accurate information, will just lead to increased teenage pregnancy and the spread of AIDS and other STDs. AIDS still leads to death the last time I looked. Teenagers and adults will keep having sex and not just to procreate — let’s not keep anyone from information that may save their life.

Please keep abortion safe and legal and let’s all push for medically-accurate sex education in our schools.

Albert Kaufman
 Portland



Steve Baggs Emerald

Cintas doesn't deserve to recruit

Guest commentary

This week, a company is coming to campus that should not be welcome here. Cintas Corp., which is recruiting at the Career Fair, has repeatedly broken the law while mistreating its own employees and the environment.

Cintas is the biggest uniform and laundry business in the country. It's a very profitable company, with record profits last year of more than \$200 million. And the people at the top are making off like bandits — the CEO gave himself a \$51,000 raise last year (more than most workers make in a year), and the chairman of the board is listed by Forbes as one of the richest people in American, with a net worth of more than \$1.6 billion.

But while Cintas may be a leader in profits and executive pay, it is at the bottom in terms of how it treats its employees and local communities. Cintas' workers are struggling to get a fair raise while being forced to cope with rising health care charges and without any secure retirement plan.

More shocking, Cintas employees

have been subject to numerous cases of harassment and discrimination. The company was forced to pay more than \$200,000 in damages after illegally discriminating against a female employee and then firing her for complaining. Another African American employee was told by a manager that “Cintas didn’t promote minorities” and that “upper management did not want black employees working in supervisory capacities.” All told, there have been more than 40 lawsuits against Cintas for discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age and disability.

In addition, the company regularly cheats its employees out of the wages they’ve earned. In California, Cintas employees recently won a class action suit worth millions of dollars when the company was found guilty of cheating its workers out of overtime pay. This is in addition to at least eight other Cintas lawsuits, citations or fines for failure to pay minimum wage or overtime.

Cintas is also a notoriously anti-union employer — the company has been cited 25 different times for vio-

lating federal labor laws.

Finally, Cintas is a polluter. In Connecticut, Cintas was sued for repeated violation of state and federal clean water laws. In California, the company was served an “Imminent and Substantial Endangerment and Remediation Order” by the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

This is a company that should not be welcome on our campus. At the very least, the company should be required to disclose all its wrongdoing to University students before asking us to go work for it. Right now, Cintas employees across the country are trying to unionize and make sure they get treated fairly; and community activists are trying to force the company to clean up its environmental act.

If students knew the facts, I don’t think anyone would take a job with this company until it changes its ways. The Career Center should make all these facts known to students and not be part of hoodwinking us into working for an employer like this.

Robert Hayden is a senior in political science.

Online poll

Each week, the Emerald publishes the previous week’s poll results and the coming week’s poll question. Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote.

Last week: Do you agree with the University of Michigan’s race-based admissions policy?

Results: 59 total votes

Yes, Michigan is doing the right thing — 27.1 percent, or 16 votes

Yes, Michigan’s system is better than nothing — 15.3 percent, or 9 votes

No, having a point system is unfair — 8.8 percent, or 8 votes

No, race should never be a factor — 39 percent, or 23 votes

Don’t know — 1.7 percent, or 1 votes

Leave me alone! — 3.4 percent, or 2 votes

This week: If found guilty, should ASUO Vice President Ben Buzbee be removed from office?

Choices: Yes — He broke the law; Yes — He is a poor representative of the students; No — His personal and professional life should remain separate; No — It’s not that big a deal; Don’t know; Don’t care

CORRECTION

Some of College Democrats co-Chairman Mike Linman’s comments were taken out of context in Tuesday’s student walkout article (“Midday walkout calls for ‘yes’ votes on 28,” ODE, Jan. 28). Linman said that if Measure 28 fails, classes would have to be cut only if the tuition surcharge was not implemented to make up the budget shortfall and the administration wasn’t bearing the brunt of the cuts.

The Emerald regrets the error.