

Monday, February 17, 2003

## Editorial

### Everyone can do something to end culture's objectification

Last week, we published an editorial after a rash of masturbation incidents, including one involving a man who flashed and masturbated in front of ASUO President Rachel Pilliod. The point of the article was to reinforce what we thought to be things that young women could do in case they encounter a similar situation.

However, we did not include the other side of the equation, and this omission was brought to our attention by readers and by Pilliod, whose response to that editorial is running today as well.

Obviously, men need to stop harassment and assault, but the issue is deeper than that — it's a social problem. Originally, we didn't discuss the social forces that create a culture where men commit sexual crimes because we felt helpless.

It seems impossible to change the whole world, and if we can't change the culture, women at least need to be able to protect themselves. But that's not the whole story. Women do need to stay safe, but safety will never be enough until everyone works to stem America's objectification culture.

The United States is gripped by a culture that changes women from humans into body parts for men's sexual gratification. Television commercials are famous for using women, often in skimpy clothing that maximizes their "assets" — even that commonly used term implies women's value is in their body parts — as window dressing or as a subtle message to men: Buy this beer or eat this pizza or drive this car, and you will get women's body parts.

Anyone who has picked up a Victoria's Secret catalogue or seen beer commercials knows what we're talking about. Objectification in mass form leads to a mass unconscious understanding that women are there to be used.

So if you want to know how to stop men from committing sexual crimes, here's a start that everyone, men and women, can participate in: Stop buying products that are advertised using objectification. Stop saying it's acceptable for our culture to portray women in this way.

Stop patronizing movies that glorify rape and sexual violence or that show women as existing only for sexual reasons. Stop listening to music that refers to women as "whores" or seems to infer that it's OK to rape. In short, tell those in the media who set the culture's agenda that objectifying women is unacceptable. Tell them you want to see women portrayed as full, complete humans.

Certainly, it is naive to expect that reversing objectification culture will completely end the problem of rape and sexual harassment. But if American culture retrains young males and tells them that women are not simply items to be used for sexual pleasure, there is a chance of reducing harassment and date rape. Frankly, one more incident of sexual assault is too many. It's time Americans looked at their culture and tried to change it.

### 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.

### Editorial board members

Michael J. Kleckner Editor in chief	Julie Lauderbaugh Editorial editor
Jessica Richelderfer Managing editor	Pat Payne Editorial editor
Jenna Cunningham Student representative	

## Time for action against Iraq

It's time I put my two cents in about the impending war with Iraq by saying: Blow the bastards away!

What are we saying by not doing anything? Are we saying that the United States can talk a good talk but it can't walk the walk? We're saying that we threatened them, they called our bluff; therefore, we will not act. No, that is unacceptable.

Saddam Hussein has proven time and time again that he is not willing to cooperate. He is willingly a n d k n o w i n g l y keeping weapons of mass destruction, and

this fact has been announced by the major networks and newspapers as well as by Secretary of State Colin Powell in a dramatic address in front of the United Nations nearly two weeks ago.

What should America do? Smile, slap his wrist and say, "Mr. Hussein, you naughty, naughty boy," and then pretend that he'll behave himself? People like him do not understand pretty words of negotiations and talk. They understand only one thing — action.

The United States must take action. We have to send the message that we will not merely sit idle while Hussein uses the time to plan, and eventually carry out, a devastating attack on the United States or any other nation. He's done it before, by overrunning Kuwait in a blitzkrieg.

However, on the opposite side, why now? Why after all



Peter Utsey Emerald

this time, why after Desert Storm, when we had the opportunity to take out the madman behind the chaos? It's all about the money. And it always will be. America may not be able to afford war with Iraq, financially, but can it afford what will happen if action is not taken?

There has been much speculation on what will happen when we do go to war. Will there be suicide attacks? Will Saddam let loose his weapons of mass destruction on our troops? Will there be a bloodbath in Baghdad? No one can answer these questions. I can't answer these questions. Is that the reason people balk at the word 'war'?

Some people may think America's president is merely finishing what his dad, former President George Bush, started, and perhaps that's true. However, I believed even then there was a time for action. We

acted, responded to a threat and launched Desert Storm. But we never really finished the job. We never went to Baghdad and put Hussein away. If the United States had, we would be able to put more effort into the 'War on Terrorism' instead of dividing our efforts between Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

There is a time for everything. There is a time to talk and negotiate and a time to act. That time is now. America must show the world that our country stands behind its leader. We must show the world that we support war because we want Hussein's plots of destruction to be resolved. We do not want them closer to our back door.

Let me bring this a little closer to home for those who think war with Iraq is unnecessary. I see a day of disorder, a day when Hussein uses those weapons of mass destruction

because the United States hoped words were enough. I see a day when the people of this great nation will be falling to their knees for mercy and be denied that small act. On this day, once the weapons have been deployed, what is to stop them from entering our country and destroying what little we would have left? Fear and death would be so much more than what would be — it would be closer; it would be here.

It is in our faces now. It is close to home now. How much closer will it have to be for people to want to react? Would you like them at your home, killing your loved ones? Would you act then? No, yes, maybe ... by then, it would be too late ... by then, we would have had our chance, but by then we would be dead.

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

## Constitution Court petition isn't sour grapes

So on Friday, I filed a petition with the ASUO Constitution Court, asking it to halt the Programs Finance Committee's recall process until procedures for recall hearings could be written.

And no, I'm not here to plead my case. That's for the court to decide based on the Emerald's complaint. Instead, I want to explain the conundrum the newspaper found itself in, so that our appeal to the court doesn't appear to be sour grapes.

It certainly could look that way. Our news coverage explained that the ASUO Executive recommendation for the Emerald's incidental fee allocation represented a nearly \$11,000 decrease to our incidental fee allocation. Readers could think we were just mad.

On the other hand, before the Emerald's PFC hearing, the editorial board wrote that PFC was wrong in cutting OSPIRG's budget. Readers could think PFC members recalled the Emerald's budget because they were mad.

Both of these situations show the dilemma we face as a news organization. Part of our core duty is to be a watchdog of student government, and surely that means being a close watchdog on the arm of government that handles the money. Unfortunately, that's the same arm that holds the purse strings of our student subscription fee.

Other news organizations have concerns slightly similar to these: Unduly angering advertisers or large segments of the subscribing population can be hazardous to the bottom line. That doesn't mean, however, that journalists should do their job with any less scrutiny. And no other American news outlet has the government controlling all the dollars of its largest subscriber base.

Regardless of the outcome, we try to cover student government with the utmost fairness, including fairly criticizing the government or running less-than-flattering articles if they are warranted. But for this particular story, I decided we needed a split between the organization as fee-seeking group and the organization as news-gathering group.

As soon as I heard that PFC was recalling the Emerald's budget, I removed myself from any news decisions about the story. Jessica Richelderfer, my managing editor, and Brook Reinhard, one of my news edi-

tors, are in charge of deciding what to cover and how to cover it. I told them simply to think about the story as if it was some other student group. How would they cover the story if it was about the Oregon Commentator or the Oregon Marching Band?

My role in this is as administrator for the group. My interests need to be in representing the Emerald before PFC, not in deciding how to cover our hearing procedure. Certainly, I don't want our budget cut; we're doing the same job we always have while facing increased costs as well as a larger student population to serve.

What I hope for the most, though, is a resolution to this yearly dilemma. It would be nice if PFC and the Emerald could develop a formula for the bulk student subscription that could be used year after year, so that the appearance of reprisal or caprice can be eliminated.

After all, regardless of the outcome of our incidental fee allocation, we still have to keep reporting on what student government does — whether it looks like sour grapes or not. We can't change that, but maybe we can engage the process in a way that makes it easier for everyone to do their job.

Contact the editor in chief at editor@dailyemerald.com.



Salena DeLaCruz  
Say it loud



Michael J. Kleckner  
The editor's office