

# COMMENTARY

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## A firsthand account of violation

Ah... spring is once again approaching Eugene. This is apparent by the flowers delicately poking out of the ground, warmer, sun-soaked afternoons, children playing in the park and last — but definitely not least — the return of the campus masturbator. Nothing says spring quite like some guy walking around campus doing himself in public.

This phenomenon is quite curious, to say the least. I have been wanting to write about this topic for a while but didn't want to give this sick guy the satisfaction of reading about himself. But, what the hell.

The "campus masturbator," or whatever you want to call him, has been around for a while, at least four years. I know this because a friend and I had a run in with the guy when I was a freshman. I'm not saying that it is the same guy now as it was then, but it could be.

When I was a freshman, my roommate and I used to do laundry at what was once Club Wash. It was on the corner of 13th Avenue and Patterson Street, and is called something else now. There is a back door, which leads to a parking lot (a poorly lit parking lot, I might add) and a front door, which leads to Patterson Street. My roommate and I were killing time and were going to take a walk to Little's Market.

We exited the building using the back door. We were in the parking lot for less than a minute when some guy (approximately 20,

medium build, stylish haircut, clean clothes — the kind of guy you wouldn't really peg as the type who likes to do the five-knuckle shuffle in public, but I'm no profiler, obviously) approached us and did his thing.

Of course we were shocked to see some guy about 15 feet away from us masturbating. We stood there frozen (the deer-in-headlights cliché comes to mind) unable to move, watching this creep show perform some "manual labor."

The funny thing about stress is that everyone has different ways of dealing with it. This situation was definitely stressful, and the way my body chose to deal with it was by laughing. I laugh in situations that are the most inappropriate — in church, at funerals and, apparently, when strangers masturbate in front of me.

So there we all were standing in the parking lot: me, my roommate and a sexual predator. Minds are supposed to be programmed with "fight or flight." I'm pretty sure mine is lacking that function because I just stood there like a complete idiot, hysterically laughing.

After about a minute, he spoke the words of a true gentleman, "I'm sorry if this offends you girls, but this is the only way I can get off." An apology and an explanation all rolled into one. What a guy.

After his beautifully articulated declaration, he simply turned around with his pants around his ankles and ran off into a nearby alley, his white ass shining in the moonlight. In and out of our lives in less than five minutes.

I tell this story for two reasons: 1. It's a good story and applicable to what is once again occurring in the campus area. 2. For the next fe-



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male that encounters this guy... *mace him!* Don't stand there like a dumbass, laughing like I did. Do something. Run, call the police, spray him in the face with noxious chemicals, do anything in your power to escape.

I feel that I was lucky when faced with this situation because I wasn't alone and the guy was non-violent. Who is to say that the

next person is going to be so lucky? If a person's bold enough to masturbate on the fourth floor of the library, chances are he's bold enough to do something violent.

Contact the columnist at [kathrynpetersen@dailymerald.com](mailto:kathrynpetersen@dailymerald.com). Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

### Online poll

Each week, the Emerald publishes the previous week's poll results and the coming week's poll question. Visit [www.dailymerald.com](http://www.dailymerald.com) to vote.

**Last week:** Which of these anti-war slogan's from Feb. 8's rally is the most clever?

**Results:** 107 total votes

One nation under surveillance — 8.4 percent, or 9 votes

How did our oil get under their sand? — 16.8 percent, or 18 votes

I pee on Bushes (seen on a dog) — 14 percent, or 15 votes

Stop mad cowboy disease! — 8.4 percent, or 9 votes

War does not increase penis size — 14 percent, or 15 votes

None of these are clever — 31.8 percent, or 34 votes

What anti-war rally? — 6.5 percent, or 7 votes

**This week:** How will you pay for the tuition surcharge?

**Choices:** Pick up a part-time job; Wait for financial aid; Drop out of school; Cut back and eat lots of ramen; Parents pay the bills; What tuition surcharge? Leave me alone!

### CORRECTION

In Friday's article about the weekend's digital music conference ("Guitarist headlines censorship talks," ODE, Feb. 21), Krist Novoselic should have been identified as Nirvana's former bassist.

The Emerald regrets the error.

## University already takes political stances

### Guest commentary

During my gathering of signatures on the "Concerned Faculty's" petition for a University Assembly meeting, I discovered that almost everyone on the Voting Faculty at the University of Oregon is opposed to America's impending invasion of Iraq. Some members, however, declined to sign the petition because they thought it inappropriate for the University to take positions on social issues.

I respectfully disagree with them and with University President Dave Frohnmayer, who has announced the same view.

Our University has taken, and should continue to take, positions on issues that are central to its mission and/or its survival. For instance, under Frohnmayer's leadership, the University has maintained its outspoken position on several "hot-button" social or

political issues.

Every time the University advertises its stand in support of diversity in matters of race, ethnicity or individual sexuality, it is taking a political position. The University takes such positions with conviction despite the fact that there are many Americans who are opposed to liberal social views. It has done so because to do otherwise would compromise its mission as an educational institution.

Does the impending invasion of Iraq constitute a threat to the mission of the University? Indeed, it poses the gravest threats imaginable.

1. Our University, like all others, can carry out its mission only in a free, open, democratic society, like the one envisioned by the framers of our Constitution, which is all that protects our rights of free speech, assembly, press and association. We have all seen how the State of Perpetual War declared by the present federal administration is resulting in

the erosion of those rights.

2. Our mission to educate Oregonians can be successful only if there are sufficient funds to support that mission. The unwarranted investment of Oregon's treasure to the support of an overstuffed military establishment is fast leading us to a poverty that threatens our survival as a society, not to mention our ability to provide an education, both K-12 and University, for our young people.

If the United States were imminently threatened by Iraq, the University would, of course, support the war, either outspokenly or by its silence. In the absence of that justification, however, the University must stand opposed to an unconstitutional war of aggression, which will destroy its very soul.

If we do not, who will?

Frank Stahl is a professor of molecular biology.

## Expressing collective opinion is our business

### Guest commentary

If the people who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks could have anticipated their deaths, I wonder if they would have remained silent about their views about what was going to happen. Imagine that they knew they were going to die, and they were given one last chance to express their views — about their fears, about what they would miss or regret, but also about what they would want to have happen in the world if it were up to them.

I wonder if some of them would have said, "Oh, we should only express our individual views. Just because we have something very important in common — namely, that we will all soon become victims of a common set of terrible, violent acts — we don't have any right to speak as a group. After all, some of us might disagree with what the group as a whole votes on or comes to consensus about, so it

wouldn't be fair for the group to speak in our name. Only elected government officials have the right to speak collectively about matters of war and peace."

It's too late for those people to express their views — but it's not too late for us. We need to remember that each person in the United States has a chance of dying, not just in a car accident or of a disease, but in the next terrorist attack. Sure, it's unlikely it will be you or me — but there's always a chance.

So the question is, should we remain mute about the events that are unfolding, about our fears, and about the changes we hope for in the world? Should we only express ourselves outside working hours, on our own, whenever there is a controversial issue about which not everyone agrees? Should we accept unquestioningly policies passed by others that basically tell us that it's none of our business to collectively express our views about matters of war, deceit and killing people in the name of peace? If we'd lived in Hitler's Germany would we have said, "that has nothing

to do with me," and gone about our business?

There are no leaders we can or should unquestioningly defer to. Deferring to leaders who have already shown themselves unworthy of our trust and unable to assure our security is nonsensical. While reason is not always found in a group, it is much more likely to emerge from respectful, orderly group debate and resolution than from acceptance of being silenced because some authority figure says an issue is just too big for us to deal with.

I encourage all the members of the University Assembly to address the issue of war with Iraq and to vote on a resolution in opposition. If we're too afraid to do that, how in the world will be able to deal with the events that are likely to follow? It's time for all of us to lead — together, for our institution, our nation and our world.

Joy Gall is a research and communications specialist in the Administrator Licensure Program and an assistant professor (courtesy) in educational leadership.