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COMMENTARY

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Emerald prepares coverage of war, ASUO elections

It's so unfair. The sun is shining in the office windows this afternoon, and I can't help wondering why. Where was it last week? Why don't we have another week off? I need more spring break.

But we're back, and as we prepare to cover two extensive news events — war in Iraq and ASUO elections — I thought I should tell you what we're doing and why.

Our war coverage, at least as far as national news goes, will be light. We don't have the space to run six or seven wire stories every day, so we will generally have only one update on the front page. When we run other wire, we will try to cover different domestic and world issues. While war is important, it can be dangerous for the public to ignore the other things government is doing.

We will try to bring other sides of the war story home, by localizing different issues that aren't receiving as much coverage in other media. Please call or e-mail us with story ideas, names of loved ones sent to battle and news tips about local events.

And then we have the ASUO elections. While it doesn't have the gravity of war, electing student leaders is important. The ASUO Executive is students' voice and representation at the local, state and federal levels. Students should be sure these folks represent their interests and opinions.

The ASUO Student Senate is equally important, if not more so. The finance senators, in particular, are responsible for spending millions of dollars in student incidental fees. Students must be informed about the know-how and agenda of these candidates.

With the importance of student senators in mind, our elections coverage this year is a bit different than in the past. Instead of only covering the Executive race, we are writing stories for every contested race — 18 in all — and with the primary election beginning April 9, we have only seven publishing days in which to do it. This means a flurry of stories, beginning today.

Through April 7, on the front page we will print two candidate stories every day. We have three Executive stories, each of them looking at two candidate tickets in the race. Those run today, Tuesday and Wednesday. We have eight finance senator stories and one At-Large Programs Finance Committee story, each of them looking at all the candidates in a single race (for Senate Seat 1 or Senate Seat 2, etc.). Those run one per day today, Tuesday and Wednesday, and then two per day through April 7.

On April 8, we will have a special section inside the paper for the remaining five senate races, the Associated Students Presidential Advisory Council Race, the At-Large EMU Board races and the ballot measures.

While all of these stories are based on interviews with the candidates, the entire transcripts of the interviews will not fit in the paper. They will, however, be available online, linked from the candidate stories.

The elections begin April 9, and on that day the editorial board will devote the entire Commentary section to the Emerald's endorsements. We will be considering the transcripts of interviews as well as campaign materials. Feel free to drop off any materials at the office to my attention.

Which brings me to my final item: letters in support of candidates. For space reasons, we have some guidelines. Any letters endorsing a specific person are limited to 200 words or less, and they must be received by 4 p.m. Friday or they will not be able to run. Please include a phone number and e-mail for verification.

That's our plan; we'll keep you informed.

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



Michael J. Kleckner
The editor's office

MAJORITY SUPPORT

It's happened, war, and with it tragedy, death, sadness and loss. Though I am saddened by these things, I can't help but remember the purpose we have. Our purpose is to rid Iraq and the world of a madman with destruction on his mind and the button to do it at his fingertips.

Some of you may argue that President George W. Bush is the madman because of the civilians being killed in Iraq. In fact, you think we shouldn't be at war at all. I agree that it's terrible that innocent people are being killed. And no one really wants war, including me, despite what my last column said. However, I am not naive enough to believe that by doing nothing, nothing bad will happen. Had we done nothing, we would be sitting here, waiting for more smoke and bodies to clear. We would be waiting for another Sept. 11.

However, despite what most people think here in Eugene, polls show that support for Bush and his decision to go to war remain strong. The polls show 72 percent of respondents in the ABC News/Washington Post poll support the war versus 26 percent who opposed it. I believe at least 20 percent of that number are people from Eugene.

Your "peace" protests weren't the majority; your voice wasn't the one heard. The majority was in favor of going to war and showing Saddam Hussein that the United States will not sit by and watch a madman hold weapons that can not only hurt his people but ones that could come back to haunt this country. Steps have been taken,



Peter Utsey Emerald

the people have spoken — it's time to rid the world of this madman. Whether for peace or for fighting, none of us want to see people killed.

But when and how do we decide whose life is worth more than another's? I ask a question to those who protest. Who would you protect? Who would you rather die? If it was between your families and those of the Iraqi people, who would you choose?

On another front, you've protested loud and proud. You continue to do so, and I commend you for your perseverance to your cause. But, now it is time to use your voice to show support — if not for the president and his decisions, then for the troops who have taken their lives and used them to give the Iraqi people the same kind of freedoms that

you have.

You protest because you can. You're free to speak because you can. You're free to march because you can. Why? Through the years, soldiers fought for the freedoms our country has, and it's about time you support it instead of protest it.

They fight because they believe in "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." They fight so their children and their children's children will understand and believe in freedom for every country around the world, not just the United States. They fight because it's our time to fight.

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

Dry endorsement insults greek system

Guest commentary

What has happened to the greek system at University of Oregon? Throughout my time at Oregon, all I have seen is a constant downfall and University discrimination to the time-honored greek organizations on this campus. How could a community with more than 100 years of pride and tradition be diminished and insulted so quickly and silently?

I used to believe that the dry endorsement policy was the main concern for the greek system, and many of us battled it as vigorously as possible. However, it is most apparent to me now that the dry policy is merely the tip of the iceberg.

When I attended a meeting with University President Dave Frohnmayer last spring to debate the problems and concerns with the new endorsement criteria, I was angered and shocked to see how hypocritical and unwilling to compromise the administration was. Each argument that I made was either met with subject change or completely unrealistic counterpoints.

Why was the school pushing this endorsement so thoroughly, and why did it happen so suddenly? The administration argued that the reason these endorsement requirements were passed was to help boost numbers for every chapter and provide safer environments for active members.

However, how are you supposed to boost membership by telling 21-year-old adults that they cannot have an alcoholic beverage in their own rooms? And how are already struggling non-profit organizations supposed to pay for a \$150,000 sprinkler system installation, or the \$30,000-plus-benefits expense of a full-time, live-in adviser who in fact cannot be an alumnus of the chapter? How is a fraternity or sorority supposed to hold social events at third-party vendors, when most of them cost thousands of dollars an evening with numerous other expenses? All of this without any aid from the University. If anything, that is the perfect recipe to extinguish the greek system.

With an estimated 25,000 students attending the University, perhaps there is

an ulterior motive. The administration knows that the majority of greek chapters are not at their live-in capacity, meaning there are many rooms available for students. By providing substance-free living conditions, it seems as though the University is trying to turn chapters into dormitories, eliminating the cost of having to build and supply new areas of student housing on campus, in exchange delineating the traditions, privacy and pride of the greek system.

I fear the day I return to campus to see the greek system a mere shadow of what it used to be, if it still exists. One would believe that the University would cater to the majority of alumni, which is 66 percent greek; however, it seems that these extreme idealistic sanctions are to simply benefit Frohnmayer's upcoming political run and to cover all liabilities of the school.

I believe it can be best explained like this: Communism looks good on paper, too; however, it clearly does not work.

Patrick Gilligan is a junior English major.

Letter to the editor

Don't overstate black slave owners

In the article "Anti-reparations points poorly reasoned" by Ellen Buller (ODE, March 14), she calculates that 3,000 slave owners in 1860 were black,

compared to nearly 4.5 million black Americans, "therefore only 0.7 percent of blacks in America at the time owned slaves." Actually, these numbers point out that only 0.07 percent of blacks in America at the time owned slaves.

Lori Kessler
graduate student
architecture

Online poll

Each week, the Emerald publishes a poll question. Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote.

This week: How long do you think the war in Iraq will last?

Choices: Three months; Six months; Nine months; One year; Longer than a year; Leave me alone!