

# COMMENTARY

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Friday, May 2, 2003

## Anti-abortion group distorts message with photographs

During the lunch hour on Wednesday, I nearly lost what little I had in my stomach. No, it wasn't from undercooked chicken or bad milk. Like many of you, I walked by the EMU Amphitheater and was blinded by blood and body parts of babies.

I'll lay my stance down right now. No, I don't agree with abortion. No, I would never choose to have an abortion. But it is the right of every woman in this country to choose whether or not they have one.

When the anti-abortion group Survivors bombarded the EMU with very disturbing photographs of aborted babies, I believe they were taking away the rights of many people — the right of whether or not they want to look at these forms of expression.

Survivors director Dan McCullough said, "We are simply using images to show abortion is wrong. Our message is that abortion is the murder of innocent children and it needs to stop" ("Anti-abortion group repulses students," ODE, May 1).

Oh, so that was the message. I thought it was how to lose weight in 30 seconds or less — just look at the pictures. This is a serious issue; I'm not trying to joke about it, but for me, their message was lost. How can you speak out when no one is listening because of what you are showing? Next time, get personal, not up in our faces.

What disturbs me is that I was not given notice. There was no sign to warn me of graphic images. Yes, I am adult. Yes, I could have looked away. But I would hope that this organization, or any organization, could use a little tact when trying to get its message across.

I commend the women who came out as part of Survivors, having had abortions themselves, wanting to be heard. We heard them, and we very surely saw them. But I wonder if they got the reaction they were looking for.

Yes, I walked by and felt sick to my stomach. Yes, I didn't eat for nearly three hours after seeing those images, and yes, those images will haunt me for a very long time because I did not get to choose whether or not to see them.

However, the images won't affect me in the long run, not because I'm against abortion, but because I think they lost what they were trying to say by shoving the images of aborted fetuses into the eyes of any and every passerby.

If I had children and they were walking by, would I want them to see those images? No, I think children and adults alike can be educated with words just as easily as with pictures. Those pictures were worth a thousand words, but mine were merely three: "Oh, my God!"

I'm all about freedom of speech and expression, but here on campus I think there should be more stringent rules as to what kind of images students can or should be affronted with.

Survivors, tell us about the comparisons you see between "Hitler's Holocaust and America's Holocaust." Tell us your own personal stories, cry for us, show us your pain. I would be a lot more willing to hear your message without the images stabilized by your feet.

I cry for the children in those images who lost their lives. I cry for the women who felt they had no options, or worse that abortion was their only option.

Mostly, though, I cry because the message that every life is sacred was lost in a distorted picture of blood and body parts.

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



Salena De La Cruz  
Say it loud



Peter Utsey Emerald

## Protesters impact leaders with voices

### Guest commentary

In his guest commentary ("Protesters must face reality in war times," ODE, April 18), Patrick Gilligan expressed his disgust with peace demonstrators. As a long-time activist, I wanted to respond.

Gilligan criticized protesters for continuing to demonstrate after the invasion began. To him, it's a justified, declared war — end of discussion. In fact, millions of people on the planet, including the Pope, believe it's an unwarranted, preemptive aggression.

Unlike Gilligan, I don't think our leaders exhausted every diplomatic possibility to avoid war, nor do I buy their justifications. I protest because I refuse to let them mistake my silence for approval.

Also, despite some people's belief that the invasion represents a failure of the protesters to stop the war, first, it was obvious that our government was determined to go in, no matter what; and second, the worldwide demonstrations have clearly had a positive impact. For one, it forced our government to at least go through the motions of getting international support, which delayed the attack.

Furthermore, knowing the world was

— and still is — watching made our leaders more mindful of civilian casualties. We continue to voice our opposition to policies we disagree with to affect the actions of leaders who pretend to ignore us.

Gilligan was irritated by the "destruction and chaos" caused by protesters in San Francisco, but how did it compare to that of, say, Baghdad? Similarly, he was frustrated at the delays caused by demonstrations. Imagine the desperation of an Iraqi mother dodging cluster bombs to get an injured child to a hospital lacking electricity and running water.

Another purpose of protests is to interrupt life-as-usual for those individuals whose comfortable, insulated existence prevents them from empathizing with people half a world away in far more dire circumstances caused, in part, by our government. Ideally, these disruptions spark critical thinking and compassion in citizens willing to contemplate the consequences of our country's actions.

Gilligan's anger at the \$1 million in police overtime is woefully misguided and his prediction of "economic disaster" because of businesses closed by protests is laughable. Compared to the \$80 billion price tag for the war (which doesn't even include the cost of occupation and re-

building), it's 80,000 times cheaper to protest a war than to wage one.

He needs to put the figures in perspective and direct his anger at the real cause of financial ruin in this country: unbridled military spending. I also protest because I believe it's disgraceful that the wealthiest country in the world squanders 50 percent of federal tax dollars on the military while homelessness, hunger, health care, elderly support and education go underfunded.

The reality is: The people in power realize they are outnumbered and their legitimacy is derived from the complicity of the masses. Protesters, especially millions of them, who get citizens to demand a different agenda, threaten our leaders' sense of control. If the movement grows, they could lose power. Thus, they do all they can to marginalize, dismiss, discredit and even criminalize actions that could "get out of hand" and interfere with their plans.

I understand why our administration wants activists to shut up and go home. What baffles and disturbs me is seeing average citizens like Gilligan adopt our leaders' antagonistic and undemocratic stance toward dissent.

Char Heitman is an instructor in the University's American English Institute.

## Post-protesting arrest unjust, immoral

### Guest commentary

I was the student arrested at the April 10 walkout and march (see related story, "Protesting under the law," by Caron Alarab, ODE, April 17). Participants and I marched from the EMU Amphitheater to the Federal Building. On occasion, a few individuals, including myself, spilled into the bike lane. We were fully aware of the oncoming traffic and made sure not to block any bicycles or cars invading the bike lane.

We arrived at the federal building after being followed by a parade of motorcycle cops and Officer Martes in her unmarked vehicle. A discussion with a few speakers and a "Circle of Peace" developed in the courtyard. After a half-hour or so, my friend Kelly and I walked back to campus for our next class.

In a parking lot at Fifth Avenue and High Street, Officer Martes approached us

from behind. She proceeded to say, "Excuse me, ma'am! I need to write you a citation for blocking the roadway!" Stunned and confused, I asked her what she was talking about. She then began to grab my arm and my backpack when I realized she was the officer in the unmarked car from 30 minutes before. She insisted that I was resisting and should be arrested.

I was read my Miranda rights, handcuffed and tossed over to another police officer. I spent roughly an hour in the Lane County Jail. Political science Professor Jane Cramer posted my \$505 bail. Professor Cramer had spoken earlier that day in the courtyard of the Federal Building and felt that I was being targeted by Officer Martes since she holds a recurring record of arresting protesters.

My questions for Officer Martes are:  
 1. If the protest weren't happening that day, would I have been cited for committing a similar "crime"?  
 2. Why did she wait 30 minutes until

the first person left the group to act on such violation?

3. Why is it so ironic that Officer Martes is a "peace" officer?

4. Is my First Amendment right to the freedom of speech illegal if it goes against a police officer's political view?

5. Why is it every weekend night I see some intoxicated student heckling and stammering in the streets? Why aren't they cited?

6. Why didn't anyone get arrested or cited at the Peace is Patriotic Rally on April 12?

I felt this arrest was a form of harassment. I was treated unjustly and morally wrong for doing the "right thing," in my opinion. I believe passionately about my country. After things like this happen, I feel that my country doesn't believe passionately in me.

Angela King is a junior environmental science major.