

COMMENTARY

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NEW MEANINGS FOR ACRONYMS

If there is one thing I know for sure about the new millennium, it's that a concept can't exist unless it's been given a clever acronym. In fact, the rule may be that if you can't text message it across a cell phone, there's no point in discussing it.

For instance, when my boss messages me with the keyword SMOT, I know that it may mean "See Me On This," but of course, it could also be a reference to Sabres and Magnas of Oklahoma and Texas, a notorious motorcycle club. This creates a dilemma: when my cell phone goes off on a "SMOT SMOT!!" tangent, I am never quite sure whether to contact my boss or don leather attire and find a hog.

My boss isn't the only one given to using clever acronyms in place of actual words. White house spin-doctors have figured out the power of the acronym as well. Prior to our little matinee invasion of an unpopular sovereign nation, I was silly enough to think that WMD meant Waste Management Division (which seems curiously appropriate title for this administration), or perhaps Waiver of Monthly Deductions — the folks on Capitol Hill do tend to like their deductions. (As an aside, the SMOTs suggested it might be the White Muscle Disease, but I have an inherent mistrust of anyone with that many bugs in their teeth.)

Eventually, with the help of CNN (my Certified Nephrology Nurse), I began to understand that WMDs are Weapons of Mass Destruction. However, it may be that this particular acronym is inadequate, and rumor has it that White House spin doctors are contemplating their options in the event that WMDs are not found in Iraq (after all, the absence of

Waste Management Divisions in Iraq would certainly explain the unrest of its citizens).

One option is to start referring to the WMDKs (Weapons of Mass Destruction... Kinda). But this could cause mass confusion. Tech-savvy folks will note that WMDK is currently being used to describe the Windows Media Development Kit. Now, no matter how flawed, WMDK doesn't quite justify invasion of Microsoft Corporate Headquarters (though, perhaps just a wee surgical air strike? I wouldn't mind seeing Bill Gates shocked and awed).

In the likely event that Microsoft can establish that they had WMDK first — and after all, they've cornered the market on everything else — the spin doctors may invoke WMDP (Weapons of Mass Destruction go Poof!) to describe how the WMDs that necessitated the invasion have magically disappeared from Baghdad (which now stands for Bad-Assed, Greedy Hussein Departed And — maybe — Died). Of course, this might be a bit confusing as WMDP is also shorthand for World's Most Dangerous Places, but hey, searching for WMDs in WMDPs was bound to lead to trouble anyway.

Now, my horse — a knee-jerk reactionary if there ever was one — lives in perpetual fear of WMDs (Whatever May be Dangerous). Her paranoia is usually aimed at the renegade bovines that she is certain lurk in their fields, laughing at her behind their cud, and plotting her demise. After all, everyone knows bovines have a deep-seated hatred for equines based on their ancient religious differences.

Brogan is convinced that any second now, the evil bovine empire will rise up and strike a blow that will wipe equines off the face of the earth. Her solution: Avoid them. Of course, I've explained to her that that is just plain

un-American and possibly treasonous.

When I mentioned Brogan's concerns to a red-white-and-blue-through-and-through friend of mine, he explained that there is really only one way to deal with her fear:

Step 1. Find a place that has a high-density of the suspect bovines that no one will miss much (Ohio was the suggested target).

Step 2. Invade.

Step 3. Take anyone not willing to be saddled up and entered into the

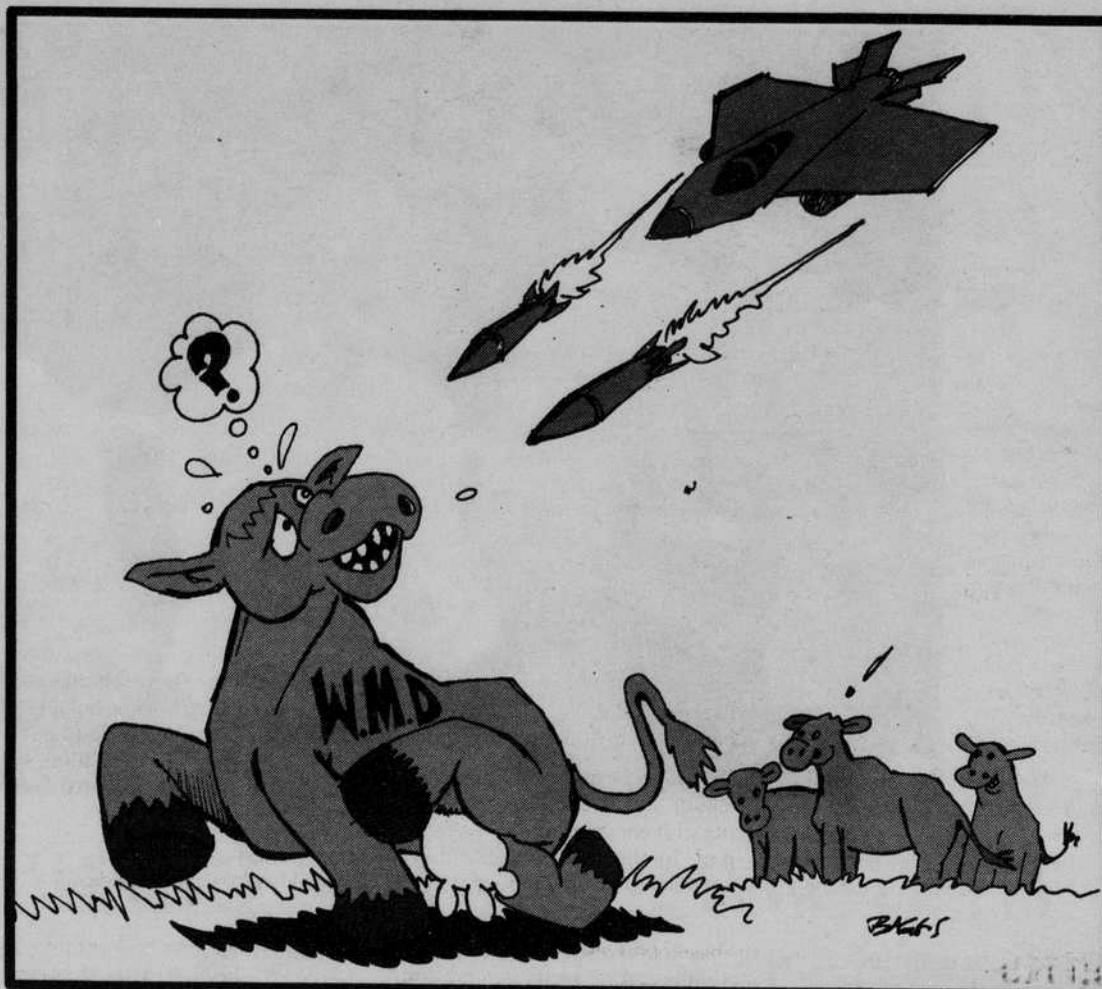
Kentucky Derby to the nearest McDonald's or Guantanamo Bay (whichever is closer).

Come to think of it, Ohio cows may truly be WMDs. Just drive through Ohio on a hot summer day with your windows open. Now, there's a threat to NS (which is either National Security or Nederlandse Spoorwegen, if you need to catch a train in the Netherlands).

So, I think I'll go set up a television out in the barn so Brogan can watch

the invasion of Ohio — which will soon be short for either Our Heroes Invaded, Overcame or Oregon Horse Insightful, not Obsessed. Me? I'm gonna send an e-mail suggesting that embeds watch where they step — land mines are about to take on a whole new meaning.

Contact the columnist at jessicacolehodgkinson@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Steve Baggs Emerald

Abortion 'facts' don't hold up

Guest commentary

Brian Stubbs' commentary ("Students must see results of abortion," ODE, May 6) shows he's misinformed about the process a woman goes through when deciding to have an abortion and the reality faced by abortion providers. No woman likes having an abortion. The decision is painful but often perceived as necessary by many women for various reasons — too old, too young, too poor, too sick.

It's never taken lightly, and though it can relieve emotional stress, it can result in regret or emotional pain. In fact, it can cause both relief and grief. Haven't we all made decisions we knew were right, yet still regretted having to make them? Of course exposure to confrontational presentations would upset women who made this difficult and upsetting decision.

The comparison to things such as the Holocaust (during Holocaust Remembrance Week, no less!) and racial lynchings made it more offensive to everyone, not just to those who've had abortions. No one denies that abortion is unpleasant. But who welcomes the upset woman that has had one? Who provides her a safe, comfortable environment where she can grieve in peace and not feel attacked? Not Survivors.

I also challenge the supposed fact of "the abortion industry" being "big money." Planned Parenthood is hardly Phillip Morris. In fact, because of abortion providers' high insurance costs, the cost of performing an abortion can be up to \$700 in Oregon (Susan Dudley, "Economics of Abortion," National Abortion Federation, 1996).

However, because many providers believe in equal access to health care (including abortion) to people of all incomes, they often charge less than the

cost of the procedure, usually \$350 to \$450. I don't see how losing \$250 or more every time the procedure is performed can be interpreted as a "big money industry."

Stubbs argues that Rachel Pilliod's attempt to keep people out of the amphitheater is censorship; rather, it's the same as the warning at the beginning of a graphic television show, telling people what's coming so they have the option of avoiding it. Pilliod didn't try to stop Survivors' visit or students' looking — that would have been censorship. Instead, she exercised her right to free speech, just like those who stopped to read the signs, just like Students for Choice and Survivors.

Also, Stubbs' statements about SFC's actions are false. The Survivors group was holding photos, and SFC was in the amphitheater speaking. The only incidence of "shouting down" that I witnessed was when a Survivors group member yelled at the SFC member who was reading at the time, who then increased her volume to be heard over the interruption.

The decision to have an abortion is a complex, challenging one made by a woman in the context of her own life, her own religious and moral beliefs, and the consultation of her physician. The question is not, "will abortions happen?" but will they be safe, private, and early enough?

Free speech is free speech, and we're all proponents of it, since the right to choose — whether to speak, listen, have an abortion or not — is the main tenet of our organization. However, we also have the right, perhaps even the duty, to point out that many of Survivors' "facts" are false, as are many of Stubbs' statements and conclusions.

Lauren Manes is co-director of Students for Choice and graduated from the University winter term 2003.

What about war crimes committed by America?

Guest commentary

We have all deservedly heard of the terrible cases of war crimes committed recently by the Iraqis. But why have we not heard of the war crimes committed by the United States?

There have been cases of the United States violating or potentially violating international and Geneva accords. A U.N. resolution has declared that the use of depleted uranium shells, which the United States has regularly used, is a violation in that the United Nations has labeled DU as a weapon of mass destruction (we do it too!).

Thousands of civilians will suffer diseases in the future, as doctors have documented from the past. And the weapon violates at least five international treaties. Also, the use of cluster bombs in population areas has been roundly criticized by human rights groups. And the United Nations stated that possible (actual?) use of riot-control substances (like tear gas) is also considered a chemical treaty violation.

The bombing of television stations in Iraq is against the Geneva accords unless the stations are being directly used for military purposes. The head of the relevant international journalist association has already come out strongly against that. There are the cases that journalists have condemned of the U.S. military attack on the Palestine Hotel for foreign journalists, when journalists contended no fire came from the hotel first.

Also, U.S. special forces have been going without uniforms in Iraq (obviously that is the intention — to be undercover). The answer given by a government/military spokesperson about that was total doublespeak. Also, a non-embedded Australian senior correspondent wrote about observing and being sent away from a school where U.S. military was occupying and Kurds were not very happy about; i.e., use of civilian location for military work.

And while Iraqi parading of U.S. soldiers in front of the camera was cited, how about U.S. parading of detainees in the Guantanamo Bay base and in Afghanistan?

Neil Wollman is a senior fellow at the Peace Studies Institute and a professor of psychology at Manchester College in Indiana.