

Thursday, August 14, 2003

## EDITORIAL

### Quacks & smacks

**Smacks** to the University administration for only extending the submission date for comments on revising the student privacy code until Sept. 2. While we commend efforts to allow students more time to provide input on the changes, the extension doesn't solve the problem: Students won't be around to comment; it is, after all, still summer. **Quacks** to the Eugene City Council for repealing its decision to implement Eugene road fees, which unfairly punish local businesses by charging taxes based on how much traffic is attracted to the area. We're glad councilors listened to the reasonable pleas of the Eugene Chamber of Commerce.

**Smacks** to Arizona's Alcor Life Extension Foundation for allegedly abusing the cryogenically frozen corpse of baseball great Ted Williams. Surgeons at the foundation allegedly mishandled the severed head of Williams and suggested it be given back to Williams' son, who failed to foot much of the \$136,000 bill. Foundation employees reportedly not only shaved and drilled his head, but cracked it, too — at least 10 times. **Smacks** to the Williams family, as well. If the purpose of freezing Williams was to preserve his body and possibly bring him back to life, what good was it to decapitate the guy?

**Quacks** to retired Admiral John M. Poindexter for resigning. Hey, we've got an idea: Let's bet on the number of words President Bush will mispronounce in his next speech, not on something as grotesque as when the next assassination will occur. As W would say, "Good re-dunce!"

**Smacks** to the British royal family for polluting the airwaves and eating up the media exposure that continues to parade them as a spectacle for the masses. Nobody really cares who's living with whom, or what kind of woman Prince William will end up with, or that Prince Harry sneezed while playing polo. Here's a tissue, now get over it.

**Quacks** to local restaurants that stay open past sundown. Despite the common misconception that students aren't here this summer, we are — and we're hungry!

**Smacks** to most of the 60 people from across the country who posted feedback to the past editorial, "Editorial staff shakes ass to downloads." We know downloading songs is copyright infringement. But if someone takes away the right for someone else to sell something of value, then that person is indeed stealing. Quit trying to make justifications based on small jumps of logic, you socially irresponsible thieves! Go split hairs at the barbershop.

**Quacks** to preseason football games. Something — anything — is better than watching baseball.

**Smacks** to Liberian looters who ravaged the country after its government fell apart and before peacekeepers were allowed to intervene. So this is what anarchy is like?

**Quacks** to Otter Pops. Whoever invented these things: We like your student-friendly culinary style. August needs a major holiday; we say it should be devoted to these frozen Kool-Aid-like treats.

**Smacks** to the Oregon Legislature for doing nothing — which is precisely the problem. After negotiations to work out a budget broke down for the millionth time, people are getting more antsy, services continue to operate without a budget and the outlook for higher education remains unclear. We appreciate the complexities of government, but we aren't getting any younger — or any funding for that matter. Where's Ah-nold when you need him?

**Quacks** to the end of the term. Congratulations summer graduates!

## 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.

## OUS lacks negotiating decency

Sitting at the bargaining table on behalf of 1,250 classified University employees represented by the Service Employees International Union has thus far proven to be quite an education for me. Unfortunately, much of what I've learned has left me with the distasteful impression that a core group of higher education administrators is hell-bent on decimating work contract language that has been in effect for many years. And this troubles me greatly.

Principled employers would avoid proposing non-economic concessions at a time when money for their employees is tight. This was apparently the tact with the Department of Administrative Services, as they presented no take backs in tandem with their wage and benefit package for classified state workers. But the Oregon University System is using hard budgetary times as a smoke screen for taking away worker rights.

Among their several mean-spirited proposals are forced unpaid furloughs of up to 15 days at a time and scheduling flexibility that could result in someone work-

ing seven days in a week, yet none of it would be considered overtime. In the event of layoffs, their language would reduce workers' ability to use their seniority campus-wide to bump into other jobs. Such article adjustments could have serious impact on the maintaining of family budgets, as well as be disruptive to scheduling of other jobs and childcare, not to mention erosive to job security.

These tactics are unacceptable for other reasons as well. If our governor's DAS team can provide a tentative contract agreement without stripping their contract, why is it that the Oregon University System seems compelled to do the opposite with their classified state employees? It also seems odd that the chancellor and the respective leaders of our academic institutions (the presidents and vice presidents) are either contributing to or are complicit in generating such a non-respectful bargaining and work environment. It is as though they welcome the prospect of higher turnover and more temporary workers.

Worded another way, it is as if we are considered the most expendable; and if we don't like it, well that's just tough, we can go elsewhere. But wait! These are universi-

ties we work for, not retail outlets!

Included in our bargaining unit are custodians, cooks, housekeepers, groundskeepers, computer technicians, health care professionals, librarians, trades maintenance workers, office specialists and secretaries. In a variety of ways — and every day of the week — we contribute to the education of students, as well as the campus environment that they live and study in. We, in fact, are what I call the nuts and bolts of the university system, and we are key to producing graduates who enter the workforce and provide hope for this state's economic future.

While University classified employees are still reeling from the legislature's recent attempt at solving the PERS crises, we now are being asked to settle for no cost of living adjustment or annual wage step increases for the next two years. Against the backdrop of these grim economic factors, the OUS take backs seem perversely unkind. Respect doesn't show up on our pay stubs, but it sure as heck is something we deserve.

Star Holmberg is the graduate coordinator for computer science and is the University Bargaining Table Representative for SEIU Local 085, OPEU.

## GUEST COMMENTARY

## ASUO must include Republican voices

I must say that once again I am not satisfied with the lobbying efforts of ASUO. As noted in the Aug. 12 issue of the Emerald ("Finding capital at the Capitol"), a group of six students went to Salem to lobby against budget cuts to higher education. This is something I strongly agree with; however, I feel the lobbying effort isn't as strong as it could be.

As a leader in the University Republican culture, I can attest that none of our top people were consulted in this effort. Clearly this is a more liberal campus, but don't cut us out of the "Don't Cut Us Out" campaign. The Emerald article listed several Republican legislators the group talked with. Wouldn't it be logical to assume that Republican students will have more of an impact with these people?

Right now in Eugene we have both the

chairman and vice chairman of the University College Republicans, as well as myself, who — in addition to once being a candidate under this party — is the state first vice chair of College Republicans. The three of us would clearly have more pull with Republican legislators. The chairman of the University College Republicans is even a constituent of Rep. Pat Farr, R-Eugene, who is pictured on the front page of the Emerald.

I think it is irresponsible of the ASUO's lobbying efforts to so blatantly show its cards. We know the University is liberal. The more we embrace that, the less voice we

will have. Going to one side always means that candidates can and will ignore you. By not sending our top Republicans as part of the lobbying group, the legislators will further ignore us. Like it or not, it is a Republican House and a split Senate.

Even if ASUO is more liberal and represents more liberal people, this is an issue that student Republicans would have been happy to support. An opportunity missed, and one we'll feel in our tuition bills.

Greg McNeill is a senior majoring in political science.



## GUEST COMMENTARY

## Intelligentsia unfairly misrepresents Iraq conflict

Peaceniks, hear this heretic out, in the name of all the gods of the Pit. A dark cloud hovers over the Bush administration of late, concerning decisions made over Iraq.

Goodbye, sunshine; hello, rain. The big debate is that no conclusive WMD (weapons of mass destruction) evidence has been found in Iraq, though this was the administration's primary motive for war. And the counter-debate is that regime change was necessary, regardless of whether WMD were found. I think both sides of the debate should realize that whether we got flimflammed by the Bush administration is irrelevant. Why?

Iraq is of HIGH STRATEGIC VALUE.

Iraq is of strategic value for two obvious reasons: First, Iraq has plenty of fuel; second, it offers airports adjacent to two belligerent nations, Syria and Iran, which American forces will eventually engage, like it or not, Intelligentsia.

All of my military sources say Iran's borders are fluctuating and that they are next: one in the Marines and another in Special Forces. This is the problem, the In-

telligentsia will not give you the unmitigated story on Iraq, like a Marine or Ranger that's been there and got blood on their hands. As skeptical as I am, I think veterans of Iraq know what is going on in Iraq, not conspiracy-obsessed crackpots.

The good news is that if engagements with Iran or Syria become necessary, America will no longer have to supplicate Turkey for use of its airports and airspace. American B-2 pilots will be spared the LONG flights from Missouri and mid-air re-fueling.

Though I vehemently opposed the war with Iraq, it angers me when people fail to realize that it would be counterproductive to give up such a strategic spot in the Mideast. And it is not counterproductive pride to keep American forces in Iraq. We have not painted ourselves into a corner yet, despite the Intelligentsia's opprobrious appellations.

I hold my tongue in many circles, because there is a tendency to put emotion before objective thinking in debates, and, thus, a fantasyland debate ensues, and blinkered statements are passed off as a genuine bon mot.

Unsurprisingly, there are still people that demand war should be fought in an ethical manner, which seems like the ul-

time self-deceit. Sherman is rolling in his grave, reiterating: "War is Hell" — to those who will accept Azazel's gift to humanity.

Some liken Iraq to Vietnam. And this simply is not an accurate comparison. Vietnam was a much different scenario, though I can see a slight similarity in the two.

There were significant world powers funding and aiding the Viet Cong — world powers America was not stupid enough to directly engage: China and Russia. Unlike Vietnam, Iraq will stabilize after Iran and Syria, two insignificant world powers, fall, so long as a gestating theocracy is aborted in Iraq and a rigid American government implemented there and in Syria and Iran.

Whether Bush misled Americans does not deserve all this acrimony from the Intelligentsia — strategically speaking, the Bush administration had to craft some sort of reason to obtain that prime airstrip and fueling depot.

To order American forces out of Iraq would be a foreign policy blunder of monumental proportion by the Pentagon and 10 steps backward in the war on terrorism, which no one likes to fight.

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