

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511  
 Suite 300, Erb Memorial Union  
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403  
 E-mail: editor@dailyemerald.com  
 Online: www.dailyemerald.com

Editor in Chief:  
 Brad Schmidt  
 Managing Editor:  
 Jan Tobias Montry  
 Editorial Editor:  
 Travis Willse

# COMMENTARY

Thursday, October 2, 2003

## EDITORIAL

### Quacks & smacks

**Quacks** to the University Bookstore for recognizing the perennial, worsening student budget crunch and giving away textbooks. In light of the economic slouch and the recently approved tuition hike, it's exactly what 13 of the University's luckiest students needed.

**Smacks** to parking on campus. Spending 20 minutes to find a spot is ridiculous and no doubt costs the University countless person-hours of productivity every term. Here's to hoping the new arena is built on Howe Field: Screw paradise, put up a parking lot.

**Quacks** to students who don't drive to campus. We recognize that biking or riding the bus isn't practical for every student, but we thank those students who can and do use alternative transportation.

**Smacks** to the New York Post for calling the Emerald and asking whether any reporters could dig up sensationalist dirt for an in-state story. We are far from fans of tabloid journalism, and we won't do their dirty work. Clearly, the editors of that publication have forgotten since their college days what the goals of professional journalism really are.

**Quacks** to research programs at the University, which scored a record \$77.8 million in the 2002-03 school year. It's a refreshing reminder that, even if most people don't make the association as readily, the University excels at academics as well as at athletics.

**Smacks** to Damon Stoudamire for hiring lawyers and challenging his latest pot charge. Don't try and get out of trouble on an absurd search and seizure argument, Damon. You — allegedly, eh hem — walked through a metal detector with your grass in tin foil.

**Quacks** to "Kill Bill," Quentin Tarantino's new flick. It's too early to tell whether it will be the next "Jackie Brown" or the next "Pulp Fiction." Oh, wait, both movies were great. So was "Reservoir Dogs." Mr. Tarantino, we are your humble servants.

**Smacks** to the Eugene Police Department. The next time the agency decides to search for a police chief, it might be a good idea to not renounce the other candidates before making sure the first choice will actually accept the job.

**Quacks** to the new pedestrian refuge on East 13th Avenue. Thanks to planners, architects and construction workers, the refuge is a great addition that makes the area much more eye-pleasing, turning a mere thoroughfare into a very walkable promenade.

**Smacks** to the war supposedly being over. Designated major combat ended May 1, but 175 American soldiers have since died, according to DefenseLINK, the Department of Defense's official Web site.

**Quacks** to the Justice Department for investigating the White House. Many people have suspected White House involvement in the leaking of the identity of CIA operative Valerie Plame. Whether the claims are true or not, it's good to see checks and balances in plain effect.

And finally, **smacks** to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association for creating cheeseburger fries. The deep-fried culinary chimeras are filled with a meat-cheese mixture, and are making their way into public school cafeterias. With more than six grams of fat per fry, there's no need to ask, "Where's the beef?"

## 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.

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## Schoolhouse discrimination

Then-governor Ross Barnett called it "the moment of our greatest crisis since the War Between the States": During this week in 1962, James Meredith became the first black student at the University of Mississippi.

Barnett's words sound exaggerated to our ears, but make no mistake: The civil rights movement was, in fact, civil war. Our public schools were freed from all-white control through military intervention. Our universities were liberated by force.

When news spread through the streets of Oxford Town that desegregation had finally arrived at Ole Miss, the white residents rioted. Federal troops were called in to quiet the violent mob, and by night's end, two were dead, including a French journalist, and several hundred more were injured.

This would not be the last time President John F. Kennedy mobilized federal soldiers to liberate an American university. Less than one year later, two black students were attempting to register for classes at the University of Alabama when then-governor George C. Wallace blocked their way. His infamous "stand in the schoolhouse door" ultimately failed after the feds forced him to step aside.

Later that day, Kennedy delivered a speech that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would laud as "one of the most eloquent, profound and unequivocal pleas for justice and freedom of all men ever made by any President."

"One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free," Kennedy said. "They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic



**David Jagernauth**  
Critical mass

oppression. And this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free."

Kennedy's speech was the birth moment of the Civil Rights Act. He would not live to see it become law. He would not live to see the Southern Democrats and their months-long filibuster defeated. He would not live to see Clair Engle on the U.S. Senate floor, mortally ill and unable to speak, cast his historic vote by raising a crippled arm and pointing to his eye.

My mother was a member of the first black freshman class at her high school in North Carolina. Like Jones, Hood and



Eric Layton Illustration

Meredith; like Holmes and Hunter; like the Little Rock Nine and many others, she was a soldier on the front lines of the Second Civil War, the War Against Segregation, the War Against Separate but Equal.

A generation later, as I pass through the schoolhouse door here at the University, I can see the positive results of my mother's struggles. Back then she was greeted by white students brandishing tire irons yelling "Nigger go home!" Today I am greeted by silence. The white mobs are gone. Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski did not block my way into the EMU.

And yet, to be perfectly honest, I still feel uneasy in this place. I feel like a foreigner. The public university has always been, and remains, hostile ground for minority students.

I know white students will have trouble relating to this feeling — this historical feeling. Year after year public educators teach us to deny or minimize our racial memories. We are taught to think of slavery and the civil rights movement as belonging outside of our bodies, to an externalized past. We know better. We know this history is in our blood.

We also know that the schoolhouse door remains blocked for the majority of African Americans and other persons of color. Today, more young black men are in prison than are in college, due to a racist criminal justice system and continued economic discrimination that leaves nearly one-third of black children in poverty.

As evidence grows about institutional racism, so grows attacks on affirmative action programs seeking to remedy its ill influence. The Supreme Court temporarily defeated a major challenge to affirmative action this summer, but damage has

already been done in places like Texas and California.

Like Engle on the senate floor, civil rights in this country are barely clinging to life. Our legislation "with teeth," as Meredith put it, is slowly losing its bite, sabotaged from within by the very Justice Department that fought to preserve it four decades ago. John Ashcroft is no Robert Kennedy.

This summer I was studying in the University library when I noticed a tiny swastika carved onto the back of my chair. That is today's racism: It creeps up on you; it is subtle and silent.

**And yet, to be perfectly honest, I still feel uneasy in this place. I feel like a foreigner. The public university has always been, and remains, hostile ground for minority students.**

But we won't let the silence fool us. We know every school in America is a racial battlefield, and the war is only beginning. It is up to us; the minority students who have passed through the schoolhouse door, to reinvigorate the civil rights movement before the white mobs return.

On this our first week of classes, we should pause to honor those before us who fought and died so that we could stand on this campus as students.

Contact the columnist at davidjagernauth@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Athletic spending not a sign of success

Winning, especially against odds, is what builds a sense of pride in an athletic program. So it's unfortunate that Hank Hager ("New Mac illustrates success," ODE, Sept. 22) equates "Oregon's greatest symbol of success" with the expansion of a football stadium for \$90 million and building a proposed new basketball fieldhouse for many millions more.

Spending that kind of money on an already adequate Autzen Stadium only turns the place — in use for only six or seven days a year — into even more of a white elephant, especially at a time when the University's academic budget is suffering.

Why not spend much less to improve — if not expand — McArthur Court? It is a

great home court. There's another reason for continuing to play there for years to come: It is the home site for the very first NCAA basketball champions, the Oregon Tall Firs, who won that title in 1939.

If spending on athletics is not reined in and placed in academic perspective, the two major varsity sports eventually will die — and deserve to die — from obscene spending and excessive promotion.

**George Beres**  
Eugene

### Campus map needs drastic improvement

The big campus map on 13th Avenue near Johnson Hall is a disaster. It is very confusing: Left is right and up is down. Also, there are no official three-letter identification symbols by each building name.

Perhaps the mapmakers on campus

could make a map that isn't confusing. Maybe such a map could be made by the students in a mapmaking class with appropriate credits given.

Alternatively (or additionally), there might be a box with a hinged cover (for rain protection) and a transparent face that holds 8.5-by-11-inch paper campus maps. This is done at the Lane Community College bus station.

Perhaps best, a correctly oriented map might be put on a horizontal surface. Also, arrows and directions to a few key buildings might be given. Example: "To get to the Knight Library, turn right and follow 13th Avenue for about 100 steps. Then, turn left and walk 300 steps."

This is definitely the way to go.

**Daniel Weiner**  
Eugene