

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Quacks & smacks

Quacks to the Oregon football team for toppling the Stanford Cardinal on Saturday. Not only did the Ducks break a three-game losing streak and jump back above the .600 mark, they also shut out a Pac-10 opponent for the first time in more than a decade.

Smacks to the United States government for cozying up to Saudi Arabia. The nation may be more diplomatically palatable than Hussein's Iraq was, but the Saudi government's miserable human rights record should draw more fire from American politicians.

Quacks to the disappearance of the ill-conceived (ill-hatched?) alternate Oregon mascot, Mandrake. We don't care whether he's buried underneath Autzen Stadium or off in an unbridled love tryst with Benny the Beaver, but we do care that his grotesque, distorted grin and waves of Spandex are no longer attached to the University in the public mind.

Smacks to proposed federal legislation that would fine universities for increasing tuition by too much. We dislike massive tuition hikes more than anyone else, but if the federal government snatches money from colleges, students will ultimately be the ones who pay the price.

Quacks to the University Bookstore's Duck Stop coffee kiosk for collecting tips that will be given to the HIV Alliance. A single coffee tip might not make much of a difference, but last year's tip (handed off to the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic) topped \$5,000.

Smacks to overzealous preachers for crass displays in the EMU Amphitheater. Of course, they're welcome to express whatever they'd like within the bounds of constitutionality, but a protester claiming that "sports nut's (sic)" and Mormons make him sick only spreads animosity while adding little if anything to the realm of public debate.

Quacks to the Florida Marlins for overcoming underdog odds through the division series and World Series to become the 2003 Major League Baseball champions, defeating the powerhouse New York Yankees in the process.

Smacks to Florida Governor Jeb Bush for interfering with the family feud surrounding the possibility of ending Terri Schiavo's life. Schiavo's husband, Michael, had doctors remove the vegetative woman's feeding tube from her mouth, but her family contested the move, and Bush ratified a hastily passed bill that had the tube reinserted. There's room for debate about medical ethics, but rashly drafted and ill-considered legislation shouldn't be a part of that discussion.

Quacks to the General Services Administration for agreeing to change plans for Eugene's planned Federal Building to include a building-front wheelchair ramp. While the original plans were legal — and arguably more aesthetic — a ramp that allows easy access to key parts of the courthouse for disabled community members will make a more powerful statement about the core values of our society than a slightly differently shaped building front.

And finally, **quacks** to the Lane Transit District bus driver who takes trash from Safeway to a recycling station, making the world a greener place. If more people were as proactive as he is, Americans wouldn't need to go through nearly as much preconsumer content.

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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Money not well spent

I love to watch money flush down the toilet — especially when it's that new, pretty, multicolored money.

That's why I'm so jealous of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The people there get to see it happen a lot these days.

To educate the public about the new \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills and their security features, the agency has launched a \$53 million advertising, public awareness and education campaign.

For the next five years, BEP will dump roughly \$28 million into advertising purchases in order to increase awareness of the bills' security features and to discourage potential counterfeiters.

With their fresh-from-the-salon look, the bills will receive the type of publicity that many celebrities and product manufacturers can only dream of. And this product doesn't have any real competition.

To do the marketing work, the BEP hired public relations titan Burson-Marsteller. This firm, a division of WPP Group, has received a good deal of notoriety as the company charged with cleaning up the reviled reputations of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement, Big Tobacco, energy companies, biotech firms and the like.

Aiding Burson-Marsteller in getting out the news of the new bills are the product placement whizzes at Omnicom's Davie-Brown Entertainment and the world's largest talent managers: The William Morris Agency.

Together, these firms have worked quite diligently to get the ugly little bills featured in an eclectic jumble of our ever-weirdening culture.

ABC Unlimited, a property of the Walt Disney Company, scored a sweet deal. The new \$20 bill has been a feature on "Wheel of Fortune," "Live with Regis and Kelly," "America's Funniest Home Videos," "Who Wants to be a Millionaire," "Monday Night Football," ESPN's college football programs

and an extensive list of other ABC shows and stations.

Pepperidge Farms has a sweepstakes in which you can win millions with specially marked packages of its Goldfish crackers — the crackers themselves are colored to match the new notes.

Wal-Mart will do a public service address on their in-house satellite TV network.

Luckily, most of the media hype is coming with the initial launch campaign, but the new 50s and 100s — to be released in 2004 and 2005 respectively — will still be followed by some buzz.

In response to this frivolous spending, Congressman Ernest Istook, R-Okla., chairman of the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Treasury, called the publicity campaign a "waste of taxpayers' money."

According to a press release from Istook's office, the BEP operates on a revolving fund generated from funds it receives for manufacturing products and performing services. Whatever money the agency doesn't spend should be sent to the Treasury's general fund.

"Every dollar wasted on this ad campaign is a dollar that does not go to the Treasury and doesn't help us reduce the deficit. Maybe introducing the new currency isn't free, but it shouldn't cost \$53 million," Istook stated in the release.

The slogan of the ad campaign goes: "The New Color of Money: Safer. Smarter. More secure."

It sure would be nice if they'd talk about our tax dollars like that.

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



Steve Baggs Illustration

work, posters will feature the new bills in subways, and a huge billboard in New York's Times Square will advertise the new, wallet-sized eyesores.

The three firms have also pitched ideas to the hot propagandistic dramas on prime time television. "The West Wing," "Law & Order" and "CSI: Miami" have all been approached to help with the campaign. Look how valuable they've been with promoting fear and the war on terrorism; maybe they can help us scare away counterfeiters.

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Joe Bechard
Cultural obstetrician

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Students must speak against cuts

I would like to thank A. Sho Ikeda ("Funding reduced by \$15 million for University," ODE, Oct. 21) for bringing attention to the unfortunate and dire state of funding for public higher education in Oregon.

Amazingly, tuition and fees for Oregon in-state undergraduates surged 15.7 percent from the 2002-03 academic school year to the 2003-04 year. For out-of-state undergraduates, the rise was 6.89 percent. (Taken from "Estimated Expenses — Cost of Attendance" at <http://financialaid.uoregon.edu>.)

In a September statement from the Office of the Chancellor at Oregon University Systems, the president of the State Board of Higher Education remarked: "The growing share of college costs that students are bearing should be a major concern to all Oregonians. In 1999-2001, students and the state split the cost almost 50-50... for 2003-05, students are covering 64 percent of the cost of education." (<http://www.ous.edu/news/press/091903>).

Say what? Last I checked, the idea of public education was that it was publicly funded, but the reality is that the majority of the burden is now on students. Now, the student community may have to brace again for another hike.

In Ikeda's article, Vice President for Academic Affairs Lorraine Davis said that the administration will explore "all possibilities" in dealing with budget shortfalls. Praytell, Ms. Davis, does "all possibilities" mean deal-

ing with outdated facilities and buildings? Higher student-faculty ratios? Smaller or absent pay increases for deserving faculty, staff and graduate teaching fellows that work so hard to give us a quality education? Does this mean another tuition surcharge? Another tuition increase of nearly 16 percent? If "all possibilities" includes any of these options, I can resolutely say that I, and many of my fellow students, will be paying more money for a poorer-quality education.

I implore my fellow students to become involved in resisting tuition hikes. Galvanize your disdain for budget shortfalls and speak up; after all, it's our money running this place. Our voices must count for something because money talks.

Bliss Newton is a senior studying sociology, women's and gender studies

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Furthermore, the notion Peltz promotes — that you should only write about a conflict if you have visited the area and speak the language — is idiotic. With so much of our tax money going to Israel, Americans deserve to have an opinion on its use.

Casually throwing around the word "anti-Semitism" ultimately devalues its meaning for when we use it for someone like Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who really deserves the label.

Jackie Prange
senior
biology and political science

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Country, religion can be criticized separately

Libby Bottero, Sol Hart and Matthew Peltz, whose letters to the editor were published Oct. 21, have confused a cartoon critique of Bush's support for Ariel Sharon's murderous policies and religious fundamentalism with anti-Semitism. Many Jews, and indeed many Israelis, are appalled by Sharon's blatant statements (and according policies) to incorporate the Occupied Palestinian Territories into Israel, no matter the cost. Far from hinting at a worldwide Jew-

ish conspiracy, Baggs is commenting on the fact that Bush cannot criticize Israel's inflammatory military tactics because of their similarity to his own tactics in Afghanistan and Iraq. Opposing the "anti-terrorist" policies of the United States and Israel (especially as these two states kill more people than the terrorists they are fighting) does not amount to anti-Semitism. Under this logic, any political criticism of Bush, who is Christian and leads a mostly Christian country, would be anti-Christian. Criticizing the leader of a country does not equate criticizing the religion of that country, even if that country's chosen political symbol

is the same as its religious symbol.

Casually throwing around the word "anti-Semitism" ultimately devalues its meaning for when we use it for someone like Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who really deserves the label.

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