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COMMENTARY

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EDITORIAL

Hallow's Eve commemorates joys, freedoms of childhood

On All Hallow's Eve's eve, we on the Editorial Board find ourselves reflecting on the days of our past, to a time when we were free from the stresses of midterms and other work, and we thought only of candy.

Halloween used to be the second-most exciting holiday of the year. It was hard to beat Christmas (or Hanukkah or Kwanzaa or Festivus), what with all the gift-giving (actually, we were young, so it was mostly gift-receiving). But the next-greatest holiday was, without a doubt, Halloween.

First, Halloween had the neatness of Christmas. Instead of the guy at the mall being the only one who got to wear a costume, everyone had the opportunity to become someone else. Wardrobes included vampires and cowboys, ballerinas and fairies. Dressing up as something fictional was fun at the time, but looking back, it's all too clear that a little loss of reality couldn't hurt from time to time.

Halloween was also a time to spend with family and friends. Who doesn't remember their first Halloween and that long, scary walk up the driveway to the first house on the journey? Some of us had friends for encouragement, others turned back to look for a supporting parent, ready to come to the rescue if needed.

But Halloween was also about achievement. Once that first house was out of the way, a new sense of power overtook the juvenile you, and you no longer needed your parents or your friends. The fine art of "trick or treat" was yours, as was the world. To have such a feeling now — can you imagine?

Moreover, Halloween never ended. There was the school party, a friend's party and finally, cruising the neighborhood. Oct. 31 was the sacred night, of course, so all the other events had to be moved to an earlier date. Halloween was pure fun, and the events seemed to last simply for your ongoing enjoyment.

Similarly, Halloween had a comforting feeling. If the porch light of a house was on, you were welcome. When else in life has there ever been such an elegant rule?

On the other hand, an aura surrounded Halloween that was just plain scary. Seeing a monster when you were dressed as Snoopy was traumatic as hell. So were the movies that were must-watches during the weeks leading up to Halloween. Nightmares were synonymous with the season, but it was all OK. It was scary — in a good way.

And perhaps most importantly, there was candy. Candy everywhere. Candy from everyone. Candy of all sizes, shapes and flavors. Enough candy to last a lifetime, or so we thought, but certainly enough to last until we were sick of it. We knew then how chocolate could brighten our day. Did we ever imagine it would still have the same effect some 15 to 20 years later?

Halloween is worth reflecting on because, for most of us, it was such a fun time. Perhaps it's a bit strange to be so sentimental about a holiday that represents the evils of the world, but when you were young it wasn't about that. It was about mystique and mystery. Halloween was happiness.

For some of us, we've reached the time of life where we miss these days, and for others, these days will soon be upon us — not as the trick-or-treaters, but as the watchful parents sharing the experience with our young ones.

Others are just a few years removed from a time where costumes and candy were not cool, when high school dogma dictated what was acceptable and what was not.

Perhaps most unfortunate is that Halloween has become a time of caution. The world is changing, some will say, and trick-or-treating just isn't safe.

We accept these changes, too. The purpose of today's editorial isn't to endorse the act, but instead the feeling.

Think back to what Halloween used to mean to you, and embrace that feeling. So on All Hallow's Eve, it is possible to celebrate the innocence of youth. And, whether the calories are good for us or not, enjoy the candy. It's Halloween — you deserve it.

FREE(DOM) PRESS



David Jagernauth
Critical mass

Apparently the feds are just plain fed up with us media types and our cup-half-empty, if-it-bleeds-it-leads attitude about the war in Iraq.

With 20 to 30 attacks on U.S. soldiers daily — and, on average, more than 10 injuries and one death per day — we don't have to look far to find a story that will satisfy our bloodlust.

Since the security situation shows no sign of improvement anytime soon, the Bush administration has decided to launch a preemptive strike on bad press and the bad liberal media responsible for it.

According to The Washington Post, the president has banned reporters from covering the arrival of dead soldiers in flag-draped coffins, a staple of wartime photojournalism. And, according to Newsweek, reporters are barred from hospitals and morgues in Baghdad, stymieing any attempt to independently verify the numbers of dead and injured.

Here at home, several members of Congress are doing their patriotic part by starting <http://www.freedom.gov>, a new Web site designed to give fair and balanced coverage of the Iraqi reconstruction effort. It looks exactly as one might expect: pictures of happy soldiers, happy Iraqi children and as many American flags as is technologically possible to cram on a single screen.

If you click on "Accomplishments" at the top of the page, you will find eight links to positive articles about the war.

I know what you're thinking: Have there really been eight separate accomplishments in Iraq? That sounds a little high. Well, you're right. I discovered, upon closer inspection, that two of the eight links go to the same article.

You have to get up pretty early in the morning ...

One link is entitled: "Rumsfeld Emphasizes Positive Coalition Accomplishments in Iraq." It is a transcript of the Secretary of Defense's Sept. 5 interview with Dan Rather.

"I'm impressed with the accomplishment that's taken place," Rumsfeld said. "Is it a perfect picture? No. Are there terrorists active? Yes. Are there criminals active? Yes. Are there still people being killed? That's for sure. ... It is a mixed picture."

If that's Rumsfeld emphasizing accomplishments, then I'd hate to hear him de-emphasizing accomplishments! What a minute. That is exactly what he does in a recently leaked memo obtained by USA Today, in which he says that Iraq will be a "long, hard slog" and that America has put little effort into long-range planning. The memo is oddly

missing from www.freedom.gov.

Another article on the site — this one from that pillar of journalistic objectivity, the American Forces Press Service — shows how happy a group of soldiers are after 15 days of R&R. Said one enthusiastic soldier: "All I can say to the Army is 'thank you, thank you, thank you.'"

I've seen subtler propaganda on Al Jazeera!

What is not included in any story on www.freedom.gov is the almost daily flood of complaints from soldiers and their families, ranging from not having the proper bulletproof vests to the terrible living conditions of wounded soldiers, many of who wait weeks or even months for medical care. One officer told United Press International, "They're being treated like dogs."

In his effort to minimize political backlash, Bush is dishonoring the men and women risking their lives every day in Iraq. Their struggles and ultimate sacrifices deserve to be covered by the media, whether or not it hurts Bush's chances at re-election.

Many of the articles on www.freedom.gov are written by or about congressional Republicans and their recent trips to Iraq.

For example, the article repeated twice is by U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., writing to his local paper: "Flying over this city of 5.7 million people in a Black Hawk helicopter ... Baghdad appeared to be functioning close to normal. Cars, buses and trucks were on the roads. Stores were open. People were walking along the streets."

U.S. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-N.J., confirmed Hoekstra's rosy report: "From the air, Baghdad looked remarkably prosperous and totally undamaged."

Hear that liberal media? Both Hoekstra and Frelinghuysen flew over Iraq and it looked normal. People were walking. What more proof do you want?

In the interest of fairness, both of these men eventually landed in Iraq and spent a few days walking around Baghdad. I believe they even spent the night in Iraq, unlike Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, who slept in

Kuwait during both nights of his trip, according to Newsweek. Who can blame him? U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz spent last weekend in Iraq, and his hotel was attacked with six homemade rockets. He survived uninjured.

When Commerce Secretary Don Evans was in Iraq, he saw teenagers selling Coca-Cola on the street. "The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Baghdad," Evans said in an interview with The Washington Post.

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, was also impressed with Iraq's growing economy. "I saw satellite dishes — outlawed under Saddam's tyranny — cropping up on top of homes, the early stages of a free economy."

Satellite dishes and child laborers selling soda: Are you writing this down, liberal media?

Lastly, U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., said in an interview: "Based on what we saw and heard, ninety-nine percent of Iraqis seek and want a U.S. presence, yet the one percent that does not receives the majority of the media coverage."

I don't mean to question the scientific legitimacy of Davis' "what I heard one day" methodology, but that number is closer to 50 percent, according to a new poll from the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies in Baghdad.

Their poll also showed that 60 percent of Iraqis have little or no confidence that the safety situation will improve, and only 14.8 percent view the coalition as liberators, down from 43 percent six months ago. You won't read that on www.freedom.gov.

I've been a vocal opponent of the mainstream media's failed coverage of the Iraq war from the very beginning. They failed to report on the use of depleted uranium weapons, failed to discuss our responsibility for a decade of savage economic sanctions, failed to scrutinize claims about WMDs and failed to inform the world about civilian casualties.

But browsing through www.freedom.gov has given me a new appreciation for how bad it could be, and how bad it might get if we don't continue to fight for true freedom — the free press — in America, in Iraq and all over the world.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Christian faith calls for inclusion, tolerance

After reading David Carr's guest commentary ("Tolerate others, don't accept them," ODE, Oct. 22) last week in which he asserts that we should tolerate others but not accept them, we find ourselves compelled to respond. While we appreciate Mr. Carr's attempt to describe a way of living in this world with its competing and often conflicting values, we find his solution ultimately to be unsatisfying.

As two other "self-identified" Christians, we believe that our faith calls us to a love of neighbor that has more to do with inclusion than exclusion, characterized by bridges rather than walls, by hospitality over mere tolerance. We would agree that God has given us life and liberty, and wants us to pursue happiness. However, that happiness is always compromised when my neighbor's happiness is compromised. My completeness as a child of God is limited every time I try to limit another child of God living out who God created him or her to be.

Living in such a diverse and pluralistic world is always challenging. However, our Christian faith invites us not only to make room for those who are different from us, but to make friends with them as well, acknowledging that we are all children of God on this journey called life.

Rev. Ann Bowersox

Koinonia Presbyterian Campus Ministry

Rev. Jeremy Hajdu-Paulen

Wesley Foundation United Methodist

Campus Ministry

Lobby for the right to choose

Last week was a rough week in the struggle to maintain a woman's right to choose. As reported earlier last week, the ban on so-called "partial-birth" abortions was passed in both the Senate and the House and is certainly going to be signed into law by President Bush ("Senate approves 'partial-birth' ban," ODE, Oct. 22). The anti-abortion faction has won a major battle in its war to reverse the 1973 ruling of *Roe v. Wade*.

What is very troubling to me is the misinformation provided by anti-abortion

groups. For example, contrary to some reports, late-term abortions are extremely rare. Of all abortions, 98.6 percent occur within the first half of pregnancy, and 88 percent within the first 12 weeks, according to www.choicusa.org. Only a handful of doctors are able and willing to perform late-term abortions, and it is only utilized when the fetus or mother has serious health risks.

In a perfect world, there would be no need for abortions at any point in pregnancy. Everyone choosing to have sex would be educated about the correct uses of contraception and no woman would face complications during pregnancy. Unfortunately, that is not the case, and having access to safe and legal abortions is being threatened every day.

Both men and women need to defend the right to choose through voting for abortion rights legislators and lobbying current legislation about the importance of choice.

Amanda Mabry

junior international studies co-director, Students for Choice