

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

COMMENTARY

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

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EDITORIAL

DPS incident precipitates new policies

In July, an event transpired that shook the Department of Public Safety at its foundation: Then-DPS officer Michael John Bonertz drove his vehicle onto a campus sidewalk and struck 26-year-old Eugene resident Donald Tean Gariepy, who Bonertz said was engaging in "suspicious activity" and attempting to flee via bicycle.

A few weeks later an internal DPS report found misconduct in the officer's actions and loosely cited vague directives regarding vehicle use. Administrative Lt. Joan Saylor, who conducted the report, concluded that Bonertz dangerously pursued Gariepy despite "specific directions not to drive on the sidewalk." It became apparent through the situation and report that DPS policies regarding pursuits were non-existent aside from verbal directives.

Last week DPS publicized its intention to develop a new policy detailing how officers should appropriately pursue suspects. The newfound policy will closely resemble that of the Eugene Police Department. DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks said at a recent Public Safety Advisory Group meeting.

And the news couldn't have come at a better time.

In the aftermath of the summer incident, the students at the University deserved a hint of accountability. It's good to see the time has finally come, and that DPS has stepped up and given students a sign the department is in fact taking the issue very seriously.

It should be stated that officers serve a vital purpose on campus, and the environment simply wouldn't be as safe without them. Just two weeks ago, officers diffused a potentially violent situation in the EMU Amphitheater when campus activists clashed. For these services and more, students should be grateful.

But the summer events did prove that officers can be prone to bad decisions, and as a result further analysis into policy obviously serves the greater public good, as is true with any public office granted any sort of policing powers. Thus, the new policy was the best decision that could be made. Another step would have been to fire the officer, but he had already resigned before the internal report was issued.

Furthermore, although trust between students and DPS may have been damaged by the summer's incident, DPS has justly make amends and renewed perception of the department's professionalism. A mediation program for students with grievances against officers has been proposed, and DPS has been active in the Public Safety Advisory Group, which allows ASUO and DPS to smooth out any student misgivings with the department.

All in all, it seems DPS has learned from the incident and taken legitimate steps to curb future problems.

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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Steve Baggs Illustration

The Real, the new and the Kucinich

I feel bad for Dennis Kucinich.

According to a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll, he would receive fewer votes than Carol Moseley Braun if the election were held today. He is losing in a presidential race to a black woman. How embarrassing! She has at least one good excuse for not getting votes; mainly, many white Americans would sooner vote for French President Jacques Chirac for president than a black person. What's Kucinich's excuse? He should change his campaign motto to, "Hey, I'm a white man over here!"

Carol Moseley Braun must contend with a hallowed tradition in the media: treating black congresswomen poorly. If they mention her name — and that's a big if — it is usually in connection with her past failures and controversies. They rarely mention that she was the first and only black female U.S. senator in this nation's history, the first black democratic senator and the first female senator from Illinois. If anybody could break the White House's gender and color barriers, it would be Braun. That's another big if, which is why she is fighting for not-last place with Kucinich and the other two bottom-feeders, John Edwards and Al Sharpton.

That leaves a handful of white men who are still serious contenders with the election one year away and counting. They can be divided into two different groups: the so-called New Democrats and the so-called Real Democrats.

The New Democrats scare me the most. Their true believer is Joseph Lieberman; John Kerry and Wesley Clark are honorary members. They rally under the corporate-funded Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a group formed in the mid-80s for the purpose of pushing the Democratic Party further and further to the right, in much the same way the Christian Coalition pushed the Republican Party to the right.

On their Web site, the DLC claims to "believe in a Third Way that rejects the old left-right debate." Funny, this Third Way, summed up in the "Hyde Park Dec-



David Jagernauth
Critical mass

laration," reads exactly like the Republican "Contract with America." The DLC couches their beliefs in thick rhetorical code designed to put conservative swing-voters at ease without upsetting their liberal base.

Rather than say they are against affirmative action programs, they talk about "resisting identity politics," "promoting character education in public schools" and "shifting policies." Every time they mention equality (racial, sexual, etc.) they add the caveat, "special privileges for none." On abortion they use the troubling threesome: "Safe, legal, rare." And instead of talking about welfare reform, they talk about ending welfare "as we know it."

Their social policies revolve around a traditional biblical worldview. "We believe that public policies should reinforce marriage, promote family, demand parental responsibility and discourage out-of-wedlock births," it says on the DLC Web site. This thinly veiled anti-gay marriage rhetoric sounds like it was lifted from a Christian Coalition newsletter.

The DLC is also rabidly pro-business, pro-globalization, anti-environment and anti-big government. They talk about "expanding opportunity, not government;" they say the government's role is to promote growth in the private sector and that they believe in "creating wealth, not transferring wealth."

I could not find a single clearly stated progressive goal on the DLC Web site. That is why it should be no surprise that DLC funds are coming from corporations that usually use their money to

further Republican careers, like Philip Morris, Enron, Pfizer, Citigroup, DuPont and the ultra-ultra-ultra-right-wing Koch Industries. In fact, two Koch executives are a part of the elite DLC Board of Trustees!

The DLC represents the creation of what has been called the bipartisan right, a joining of white corporate America and those who believe the government should be in the business of forcing a Biblical moral system on the country. In the eyes of those with power and money, it matters little whether Lieberman or Bush is president. They stand for the same ideals — as Jon Stewart said on "The Daily Show," Lieberman is the candidate for those who like Bush but feel he isn't Jewish enough.

Greens, liberal Democrats, libertarian-leaning Republicans and Independents are forced out of the bipartisan right's agenda. The New Democrats are counting on minorities, women and unionists — the traditional democratic core — to be unwilling to leave the party, even if it means voting against their conscience. It is a gamble that, unfortunately, I think the DLC will win.

It remains to be seen whether Howard Dean and Richard Gephardt, the so-called Real Democrats, can muster up a strong voice against the DLC. So far, I am not impressed. Gephardt ran in 1988 and lost to Michael Dukakis for crying out loud. And Dean's politicking leaves me less than satisfied: He is for gun control, but only in the context of states' rights; he is for civil unions, but against gay marriage. His rhetoric about the Iraqi war is strong, yet he has never had to back it up in Congress. Furthermore, he is an awkward man with a creepy smile who just does not strike me as presidential material.

Then again, in the post-Dubya world, not being presidential material might be exactly the magic Dean needs to win next November.

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