

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

Tuesday, January 20, 2004

EDITORIAL

## President's NASA plans lack funding

In one of his most daring and longest-term plans to date, President Bush announced last Tuesday an outline that's out-of-this-world, both fiscally and otherwise, for the future of the space program.

If Congress agrees to Bush's "new course," the long-term focus of the nation's space program will shift from shuttle missions and the International Space Station to a new manned space vehicle that will lift off in the next decade; NASA's three remaining shuttles would be retired.

He wants America to make a return hop to the moon by 2020. (Oddly, that gives National Aeronautics and Space Administration engineers a much longer time to hash out details for a moon mission than President Kennedy did when he promised a man on the moon by the end of the '60s.)

Moreover, Bush called for an eventual manned mission to Mars as early as 2030.

And if high-end field trips outside earth's sphere of gravitational influence didn't command enough eyebrow raisings, the initiative calls for the stuff that afternoons of playing with Lego sets are made of: the establishment of a permanent moon base.

The price tag? Well, that depends on how you do your accounting: Bush asked Congress for a \$1 billion budget hike for NASA over the next five years, just a fiduciary nudge compared to NASA's current \$86 billion budget. But, the plan also calls for the reallocation of \$11 billion from other NASA programs.

Still, big numbers and big plans aren't impressing many Americans, particularly in a recovering economy: More than half of respondents would prefer that the budget increase be spent on domestic programs, a recent Associated Press poll found.

Those Americans would presumably be displeased if even this short-term projection dramatically increased, as some Capitol Hill pundits warn.

"The first year after Kennedy announced the Apollo program, the NASA budget doubled," explained Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla. "And in the second year it was doubled again. That's not realistic today. But 5-percent-a-year increases are not going to get us to the moon."

Nelson is more than a politician concerned about fiscal accountability, too — he's the only current member of Congress who has flown in space.

The Editorial Board shares Nelson's monetary concerns, as well as the importance of maintaining funding for critical domestic programs, but believes too in the importance of exploring the unknown.

The fruits of space exploration, as the last decades of space flight have demonstrated, go beyond satisfying the intrinsic human desire to stretch the boundaries of understanding; they include valuable new technology and information, from improved rocket design to a starkly deepened understanding of the structure of the universe.

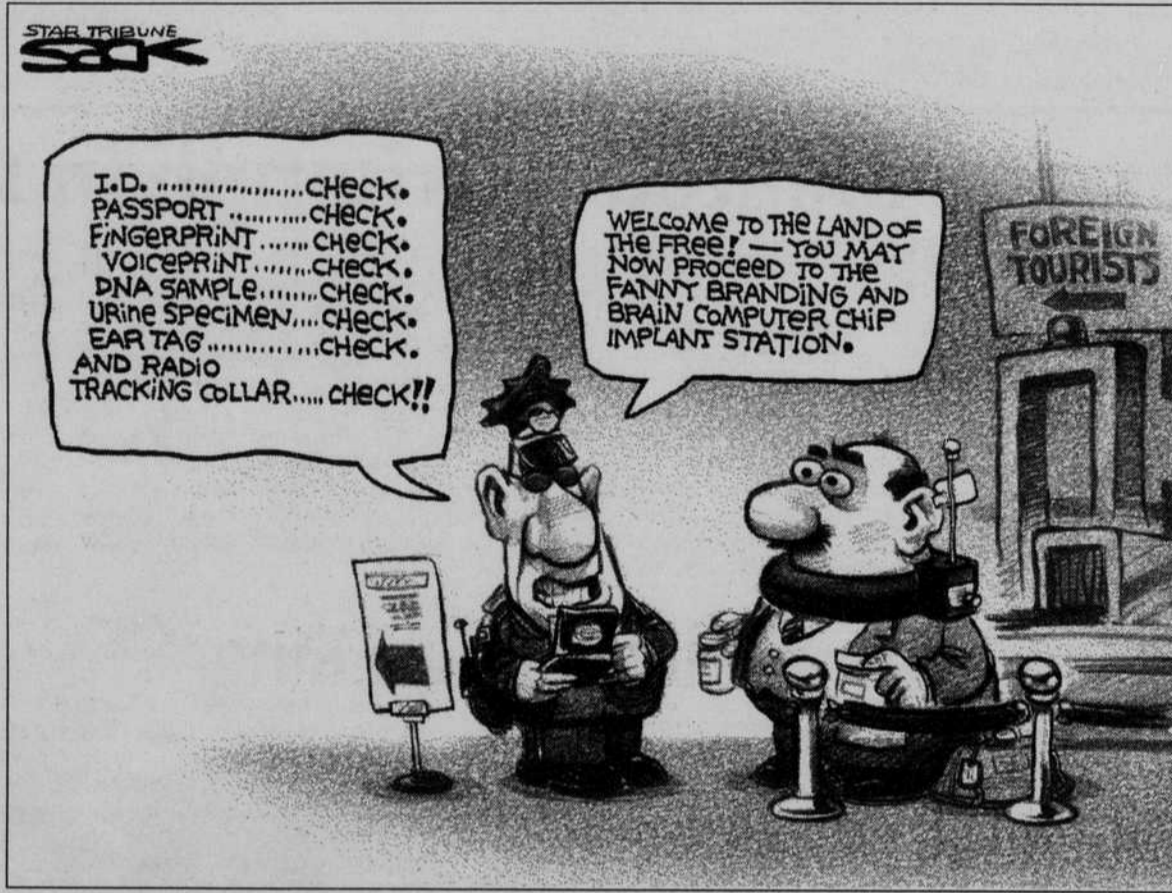
Given that policy decisions factor in feasibility and fiscal common sense before fantasy, the Editorial Board gives a tentative thumbs-up to the first few years of Bush's space plan.

### 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.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

<b>Brad Schmidt</b> Editor in Chief	<b>Travis Willse</b> Editorial Editor
<b>Jan Tobias Montry</b> Managing Editor	<b>Jennifer Sudick</b> Freelance Editor
<b>Ayisha Yahya</b> News Editor	



Steve Sack KRT

## Young blood

This weekend, 14-year-old Michelle Wie came within one putt of making the cut at a professional men's tournament.

Umm, when I was 14, I was worried about pimples and why I suddenly liked girls. Maybe it's something in the water these days, but everything's happening faster and younger. I used to laugh at people who said, "These kids these days ..."

But, man. These kids these days ...

In China, pianist Li Yundi, now 22, was a pop icon at 18. And it's not because he wears schoolgirl outfits and sings "Hit me baby one more time." Yundi is supposed to be the best thing to happen to the piano since Mozart, another child prodigy. Yundi's first album went platinum in Asia in 2001. I know Mozart never made an album, but you can bet he would crush Clay Aiken on the charts just like Yundi is now.

In Pennsylvania, 14-year-old Alia Sabur just enrolled in a doctoral program at Drexel University. She already got her undergraduate degree in applied math from Stony Brook University in New York. She

graduated summa cum laude. Most 14-year-olds can't even say "summa cum laude."

Doogie Howser, M.D., anybody?

And of course, in the alternate dimension that is the NBA, there's LeBron James. He's



**Peter Hockaday**  
Today is Hockaday

19 and already has \$200 million in the back of his Hummer H2. I couldn't afford a toy Hummer! Seriously, Nieman Marcus sells a candy-stuffed toy Hummer for \$55.

Then there's Freddy Adu, who was selected first overall in the Major League Soccer SuperDraft on Friday and

therefore anointed with the crown as "the future of American soccer." Not that it's much of a future to be anointed with, but still, good luck, buddy.

Imagine being "the next Michael Jordan" at 19. Or the "future of American soccer" at 14. Or a "graduate student" at 14. It boggles my mind more than "Boggle" the game. I mean, Michelle Wie has already almost reached the pinnacle of her profession! At 14!

Wie is often compared to Tiger Woods, himself a child prodigy. Woods is proof that the "child prodigy" thing can work out. Woods and Drew Barrymore. And Michael Jackson.

Well, maybe not Michael Jackson. So I'll just grab my cane and throw in my dentures. I'm getting old. The kids are getting younger. In my day, we never had these "child prodigies." And we had to walk to school every day in the snow. Backwards uphill.

Kids these days.

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

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Litwer's efforts are one-sided

The Oregon Daily Emerald ran a highly visible front page story ("An international education," Jan. 16) on Lach Litwer's mission to "educate" the University community about American-Israeli policy and "the importance of, not only Jewish students, but all students connecting with the state of Israel."

And I'd like to respond to the messages in the story by asking Litwer, if, in addition

to "educating" us about the stoic suffering of a kind, golden retriever-owning Israeli, will you also "educate" us about the many thousands of Palestinians who have been massacred by, or continue to suffer under, the Israeli army?

Will you educate us about the powerful and far-reaching influence of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, of which you are a member, in our own government? (Even the supposedly "dovish" Howard Dean boasts former AIPAC President Steven Grossman as one of his top advisors.)

Will you "educate" us as to why the state

of Israel is so often at odds with such well-established humanitarian organizations as the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Amnesty International?

And will you also "educate" us as to why we, the vast majority of Americans who are not Jewish, should feel obliged to spend what meager good will America still receives from the global community, for the sake of the Zionist-Israeli vision for the Middle East?

**Paul Griffes**  
senior  
geography

### ONLINE POLL

Each week, the Emerald publishes the results of the previous poll and the coming week's poll question.

Visit <http://www.dailyemerald.com> to vote.

**Last question:** Does the city of Eugene need a housing code?

**Results:** 44 votes.

- Yes, it will be a benefit to students: 43.2 percent or 19 votes.
- Yes, it's the ethical thing to do: 43.2 percent or 19 votes.
- No, Eugene is fine without: 6.8 percent or three votes.
- No, it will force landlords to raise rent: 6.8 percent or three votes.

6.8 percent or three votes.

**This week:** Which of the seven Democratic presidential candidates' views most closely match your own?

**Choices:** Wesley Clark; Howard Dean; John Edwards; John Kerry; Dennis Kucinich; Joe Lieberman; Al Sharpton.