

Tuesday, March 30, 2004

EDITORIAL

Quacks & smacks

Quacks to the Oregon men's basketball team for making the best of a bad situation. Tonight, the Ducks will play in the "other" Final Four, that of the National Invitation Tournament, in New York. Instead of packing in the season, Luke Jackson and company have won two straight games and will have a chance to raise their national profile.

Smacks to the University Comptons, er, Commons. Over spring break, two separate incidents — a stabbing and a possible shooting — made the people living at the Commons some of the most dangerous folks in Eugene.

Quacks to American Idol, which is having one of its best seasons yet. The Editorial Board wishes to place its mustard behind red-headed crooner John Stevens, whom the board considers the male version of Norah Jones.

Smacks to Jessica Simpson, who officially broke the camel's back with a recent comment to Interior Secretary Gale Norton. On a visit to our nation's capital, the blonde pop star reportedly told Norton, "You've done a nice job decorating the White House." Buffalo wings are one thing, but this is ridiculous.

Quacks to Dennis Kucinich for fighting until the end. While Ralph Nader might actually take votes away from a Democratic presidential nominee, Kucinich is like a turtle. He's cute, harmless, and not going anywhere. He was in Eugene on Sunday trying to convince people to vote for him in Oregon's primary on May 18. Awwwww. Cute!

Smacks to the American-led coalition government in Iraq, which this weekend closed an Iraqi newspaper that coalition officials said had been inciting citizens to commit violence against American soldiers. The government shut down the radical Shiite Al-Hawza newspaper for 60 days amid protests by Iraqis. So, this is democracy?

Quacks to Richard Clarke for having the guts to stand up to George W. Bush for his actions preceding Sept. 11. Clarke, the former White House counterterrorism chief, told the Sept. 11 panel and wrote in a new book that Bush didn't pay enough attention to terrorism before those terrible attacks. Clarke's accusations confirm the fears of many across the nation.

Smacks to Clarke for the hypocritical nature of his comments. While commending him for making them, it would be foolish to ignore the circumstances. Clarke was formerly loyal to the Bush administration and released his book at a time when he, along with presidential hopeful John Kerry, could profit greatly from his words.

Quacks to the best reality show in history, "The Apprentice." If we miss this show, we fire ourselves. "The Apprentice" is a refreshingly honest look at the cutthroat business world. With the final episode coming up, we've got our legal pads and pencils ready. But don't fret about the end of the show because there's an open casting call for "The Apprentice 2" in Portland on Friday.

Smacks to Austrian booger doctor Friedrich Bischinger, who believes that picking your nose — and eating it — can actually improve your health. He says it's a good way to keep your nose clean and boost your immune system with all the bacteria from your nose. Don't believe him. And don't show this to any kids.

Quacks to Benton County for standing up to the state in its own way on the issue of gay marriage. While Multnomah County swung its clout and started marrying couples, this spring break Benton County went another route and decided to outlaw marriage in general — heterosexual or homosexual — until the state rules on the issue. It's a tongue-in-cheek way for the county to address a contentious issue.

Smacks to Jayson Blair and Jack Kelley, two yellow-bellied journalists who are ruining the profession in the eyes of readers. Kelley was a top foreign correspondent for USA Today before he retired early this year. Recently, the paper found out that he fabricated many stories, including one about Cuban refugees that earned him a finalist nomination for the Pulitzer Prize. Blair, meanwhile, released a book called "Burning Down My Masters' House," about his debauchery at The New York Times. Both men should be flogged with newspapers for a week. We call first flog.

EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailymerald.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.



Steve Baggs Illustration

Hire this columnist!

About this time three years ago, I interviewed my senior roommate for a class assignment. I had to ask him about his greatest fear. He didn't hesitate.

"Graduation," he said. "Finding a job." I laughed at him then; I cry with him now. There are scary things in this world, such as dousing your eyeballs in burning acid. Right now, I'd rather douse than look for work.

Theoretically, one-quarter of the students at this university should be facing the same fears (the rest of you can clip this out and save it until your own graduation). Some of us graduates will work in mommy's pet store, some of us will live on daddy's couch, but the rest of us need jobs. And June 12, graduation day, looms like the apocalypse.

We live at Kinko's and run up our phone bills with calls to East Coast job recruiters. We converge on job fairs like hyenas on a felled zebra. We place our résumé on the best-looking BMW windshields. We single-handedly keep Weyerhaeuser in business.

I was in New York for spring break (yes, interviewing for jobs) and considered just walking into The New York Times offices and dropping to my knees in front of the receptionist.

"Please! I'll mop the floors!" Right now, most people who are looking for a job have this massive overwhelming

fear inside them like a sickness. We wonder what, exactly, will happen if we don't get a job? We don't have jobs right at this moment. What if we never have jobs? Will we live on the streets? Can I go live with my Aunt Trudy in Kansas? Will I drive around the country, begging for work like a character in a Jack Kerouac novel?



Peter Hockaday
 Today is Hockaday

I need a Monster.com advertisement. You know, the ones where they have somebody get up and tout their skills, then they say "to hire Wesley Rue, visit Monster.com." See, the people in those commercials probably get jobs. Those of us who don't get an advertisement end up like the kids in the old Monster.com ads. The ones who say, ironically, "I want a career in middle management."

I don't want a career in middle management, but I am willing to start there.

So everybody has their ultimate employer. The company where you want to go so bad, you'd kill your pet goldfish if it meant working there. But you don't want to tell people you applied for that job, because you don't want to jinx it. If you're a software engineer, it's Microsoft. If you're in television, it's ABC. Wherever it is, you'd sell your soul quicker than Dante for an interview.

Anyway, I had my dream interview in New York. I'm not going to say what it was, because I don't want to jinx it. I was lucky enough to get it and I'm not going to screw it up now.

I know, I just spent a whole column talking about how I'm afraid about looking for work when I already found a sweet interview. But that's the point. Even with all the sweet interviews in the world, even with all the job offers and all the leads and all the contacts in the world, that fear will sit in my stomach until I'm sitting in my own cubicle and staring at my own computer screen.

I hope I find a job and I hope you find a job. If we don't, you'll see us in one of those advertisements soon enough.

"To hire Peter Hockaday, e-mail peterhockaday@dailymerald.com!"

Contact the editorial editor at peterhockaday@dailymerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Plan B should be made readily available to women

I am writing in response to the Emerald's March 8 editorial ("Anti-Plan B crusaders should see value of pill"). The Food and Drug Administration is currently considering whether or not to approve Plan B for over-the-counter use. As the Emerald stated, Plan B is a form of emergency contraception that reduces the risk of unintended pregnancy or the need for abortion by stopping the release of eggs from a woman's

ovary, or by preventing fertilization.

Plan B is safe, effective and easy to use. It offers women a backup method of birth control in the event that her contraceptive method failed, she had sex without using contraception or she was forced to have sex.

Because emergency contraception is most effective when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex, it is critical that women acquire this drug in a quick, efficient manner. Women need over-the-counter access now.

The Bush administration has delayed the FDA approval process for Plan B,

although FDA advisory committees have unequivocally recommended it for over-the-counter status. (See <http://www.ppfa.org> or <http://www.agi-usa.org> for more information on Plan B.)

To contact the president about your support for making Plan B available over-the-counter, write: President George W. Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20500.

The health of women is at stake.

Stephanie Schwenger
 Senior
 History and German