

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:
 Peter Hockaday

Thursday, April 1, 2004

EDITORIAL

Bush desires fort on moon on April Fools'

The scene: A Washington, D.C., congressional room. This is "The April Fools' Hearings."

A distinguished panel of guests sits against one wall, while a chair stands in the middle of the room, facing the panel. The panel consists of George W. Bush, Janet Jackson, ALF, Barry Bonds and Simon Cowell.

The first person to give testimony before the panel is, of course, Condoleezza Rice.

Bush: So, Condi, could we have prevented Sept. 11?

Rice: Mr. President, I don't know how to answer that.

Bush: Just say 'no,' Condi.

Rice: No.

Bush: Yes.

Rice: What?

Bush: No. Yes. Let's build a fort on the moon!

The next person to testify is Justin Timberlake.

ALF: Just-i-fied, did you know the phrase "wardrobe malfunction" is the most-used new phrase in the English language? It's even more overused than "1-800-C-O-L-L-E-C-T."

Jackson: Yeah. You ruined my career.

Timberlake: What? You ruined your own career. You're the one who left your bra at home on Super Bowl Sunday. Besides, you have a new song out. You're going to be fine. Where is the love?

Cowell: That rendition of "Rock Your Body" was absolutely the worst performance in the history of the Super Bowl. I mean, I was in tears, I was so bored.

Bush: What? They sang? I was just looking at Janet's boobies. Ha ha! I said boobies!

The next person to testify is Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Bonds: So, Arnie, what are you going to do about this steroid issue?

Arnold: No-ting. I take de steroids when I was building muscle and all of dat.

Bonds: Yeah? Oral or injectable?

Arnold: Injectable.

Bonds: Oh, man, I hate that! I always take them oral. I mean, I don't take them. At all.

Bush: The steroids issue is the most important issue facing Americans today.

ALF: But Mr. President, what about our crumbling education system? What about all the American soldiers being killed in Iraq? What about health care?

Bush: Are you kiddin' me? We need to find out if Bonds was juicin' when he hit those 73 home runs! Go Rangers!

The next person to testify is John Kerry.

Bush: How's it hangin', wuss?

Kerry: Mr. President, I don't wish to engage in petty debates in this forum.

Bush: OK, wuss. How's it been defending our country from imminent threats lately?

Kerry: Mr. President, I haven't been doing that lately. It's been a while since I got back from Vietnam.

Bush: Oh, snap! No you didn't!

Kerry: Yes I did!

Bush: But seriously, as president, will you look for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

Kerry: No. Maybe in the White House, though. Oh, snap!

Bush: Let's fly to the moon.

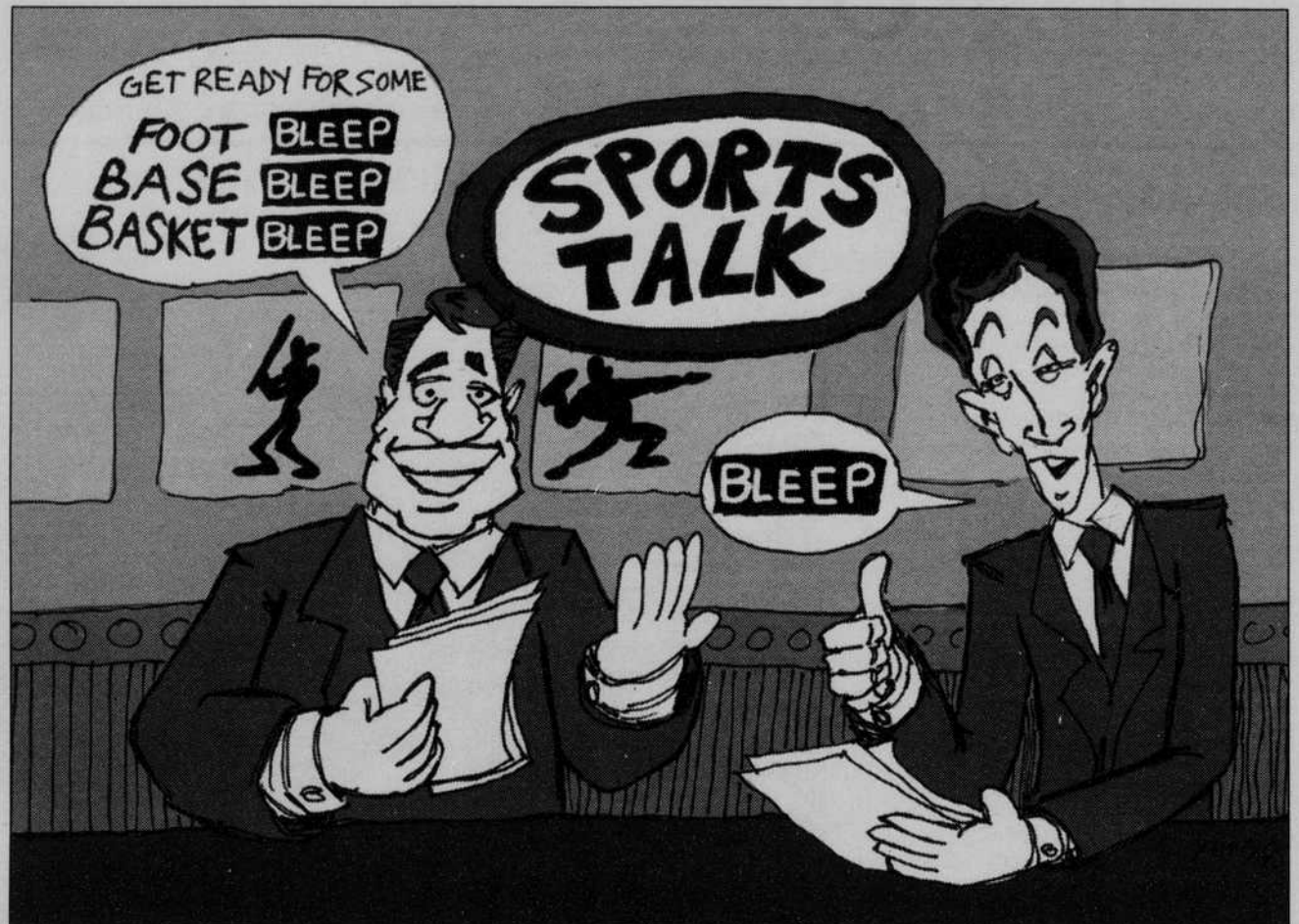
All in unison: April fools!

EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the skewed opinion of the Emerald editorial board, and it is not meant to be taken seriously. Responses can be sent to get_off_of_our_back_treehugger@fake_e-mail.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged, provided you agree with the editorial board.

EDITORIAL BOARD

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Brad Schmidt Future ASUO president | Jennifer Sudick Secretary of Defense |
| Jan Tobias Montry The "Caddyshack" gopher | Ayisha Yahya Supa-fine Nubian queen |
| Peter Hockaday Master and commander | |



Steve Baggs Illustration

Overworking obscenity

I was watching an NBA pre-game show on ESPN the other day when something surprising happened. During an interview, a coach expressed his opinion that sports journalists should not quote a source if the source "doesn't have the balls" to identify himself or herself in print.

The coach's comment wasn't all that surprising. What struck me was that ESPN bleeped out the word "balls" during a basketball pre-game show. They censored the word "balls" during a ball game.

It is now official: The obscenity police have gone too far.

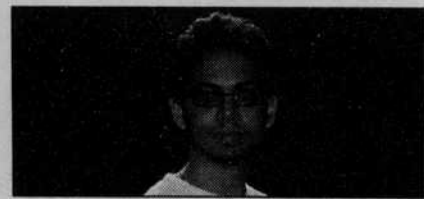
Oh, sure. Censorship absurdity was rampant in the past. I can remember years ago when MTV would bleep out the word "pot." But MTV, despite its branding, has never had a backbone — or balls, if you prefer — when it comes to controversy. What we are witnessing today is a fundamental shift. Anti-cursing hysteria has gripped this nation's broadcasters, and it is going to get worse before it gets better.

Not even Christ is safe. ABC bleeped out the word "Jesus" when it was recently taken in vain on "The View." And it wasn't even used as an expletive.

What started all of this? Well, it's hard to pin down, but it probably began with Bono. During a live telecast of the 2003 Golden Globe Awards he said, "This is really, really f--- brilliant." (That was exactly how the quote appeared on CNN.com. I don't see why so many letters need to be blanked out. I would prefer the more popular "f---ing" or the artistry of the all-symbols approach: @\$!&%^ or even

better, %@\$^&!#).

In October the Federal Communications Commission ruled that Bono's use of the f-



David Jagernauth
Critical mass

word was technically decent since he was using it as an "adjective" to "emphasize an exclamation." As Gene Weingarten would point out in The Washington Post Magazine, the FCC was wrong: Bono was actually using the word as an adverb, not an adjective. Whatever the case, the FCC quickly reversed its decision after it received nearly 200,000 complaints.

That wasn't enough for Congress, so it developed legislation called the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004 that would, among other things, dramatically increase fines for on-air indecency. The House version of the bill passed with a 391-22 bipartisan vote. Soon the Senate will vote on its version of the bill.

In order to close any linguistic loopholes, the bill lists eight words and phrases that are always punishable if broadcasted regardless of context or grammatical form, including "hyphenated compounds" as

well as "verb, adjective, gerund, participle and infinitive forms."

Gerund? Where is my Diana Hacker "Pocket Style Manual?" Let's see here... "A gerund is a verb form ending in -ing that functions as a..." Ah, screw it.

There are eight banned words and phrases — words I would list here were it not for Emerald standards. However, some of the words are f---, s---, mother-f---er, piss, asshole. Since combinations of the words are also banned, you couldn't say "piss-hole" or the phrase popular with the kids these days: "mother-assing."

We should learn two lessons from this madness. First, human beings love to scapegoat rather than deal with real problems. Instead of talking about the issues facing America's youth, we argue about the word "piss." Why isn't Congress dealing with rampant child poverty and homelessness, lack of decent K-12 education and physical and sexual abuse? These are the real issues, not the phrase "asshole" on television.

The second lesson we should learn is that we need more people under 60 in Washington, because only somebody completely out of touch with the 21st century could think young people care about the amount of bad language on TV.

How about focusing on the amount of bad television on TV first?

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Kucinich publicity is good thing

It's nice to see Congressman Dennis Kucinich finally getting some much-deserved media attention ("Kucinich speaks at LCC," ODE, March 29). From the beginning, truly populist and anti-war candidates like Kucinich, if mentioned at all, were trivialized with labels such as "long shot," "dark horse" and "unelectable." Instead of demanding fair and balanced coverage of all their candidates, the Democratic Party

elite eagerly contributed to the media feeding frenzy against so-called fringe candidates. Likewise, Howard Dean, an early favorite with voters, was systematically drummed out after it became apparent that he posed a threat to the status quo. Last but not least, the party encouraged candidates to drop out early, long before most voters (like you and me) had a chance to express their preference.

Obviously, the Democratic Party was not interested in discussing issues, particularly divisive issues like the Iraq war and its impact here at home, or in hearing what its constituents' priorities were. All the

Democrats wanted was to quickly narrow the field and start serious fundraising for the campaign against Bush.

In such an anti-democratic environment, the anointing of centrist insider John Kerry — and the re-emergence of Ralph Nader as a countervailing force — should come as no surprise to anyone. What should shake us all to the core is the Democratic Party's taking advantage of the "anyone but Bush" mentality to give us "someone like Bush" in so many ways.

Mary Forthofer
Longmont, Colo.