

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

Friday, April 30, 2004

Drivers should know, follow laws of road to benefit all

The other day while cycling home from class down 15th Avenue, a safe distance from the line of parked cars on my right, I was honked at, given the finger and told that I belong on the sidewalk by a thoughtless and woefully misinformed University car commuter. So, for the benefit of the University community I offer the following clarification from the Oregon statutes pertaining to bicycles and pedestrians:

"ORS 814.400 Application of vehicle laws to bicycles.

"(1) Every person riding a bicycle upon a public way is subject to the provisions applicable to and has the same rights and duties as the driver of any other vehicle concerning operating on highways, vehicle equipment and abandoned vehicles, except: (a) Those provisions which by their very nature can have no application. (b) When otherwise specifically provided under the vehicle code.

GUEST COMMENTARY

"(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (1) of this section: (a) A bicycle is a vehicle for purposes of the vehicle code; and (b) When the term 'vehicle' is used the term shall be deemed to be applicable to bicycles.

"(3) The provisions of the vehicle code relating to the operation of bicycles do not relieve a bicyclist or motorist from the duty to exercise due care."

It appears that bicycles do not, in fact, belong on the sidewalk. According to another relevant statute, ORS 814.430, a cyclist is required to ride "as close as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway" except "when reasonably necessary to avoid hazardous conditions including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, parked or moving vehicles (...) or to avoid unsafe operation in a lane on the roadway that is too narrow for a bicycle and vehicle to travel safely side by side."

(For the record, I realize that the behavior of many cyclists on campus and elsewhere is entirely unlawful and often idiotic; however, this does not give drivers the right to scapegoat anyone on a bike.)

Here in Eugene, there is no shortage of "parked or moving vehicles" and no shortage of narrow roadways; hence, there is no shortage of lawful reasons why a cyclist may choose to take up more of the road than a hurried driver might prefer. So, a word to the wise: Before you harass a bike commuter simply for using the road, make sure you're on the right side of the law.

Erin Bolles is a senior majoring in philosophy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sports deals equate to sanctioning alcohol use

The University is marketing a leading cause of college student dropouts, violence against women and student death by subcontracting its broadcast message formation to ESPN. The University receives money to sell the University's image to sports networks, which leads to commercial broadcasts of University events becoming 100 percent supportive of alcohol use. Furthermore, the exclusive deal terms that the University representatives broker with Anheuser-Busch are kept secret from the students and public that supports the institution at the request of the beer company.

As a student and member of the Eugene community, I feel that the result of this lack of responsible regulation by the University is the polar opposite of the University mission statement. The college states it supports diversity, caring, civic responsibilities, learning and anti-discrimination. Yet no other messages involving alcohol are supported by the University on its commercial broadcasts other than the support of using the product. The result of University contracts clearly discriminates, thwarts learning and stifles diversity.

Until the University invests 50 percent of its name to commercial broadcasts that question the use of alcohol or eliminates the ads, it is in gross violation of its mission statement. A learning institution has no business validating its most disruptive influence, especially without investing in a diversity of ideas about it with a portion of the beer ad profits. Please contact Student Life to add your voice to this issue.

Mike Meyer
 senior
 family and human services



The Passion of the Sequel

For a nation that has long embraced creativity and a rugged individualism, we Americans savor consistency like we eat McDonald's. Regularity might be as stimulating as the puzzle on a Happy Meal box, or sometimes about as wholesome as a Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese, but it's at least familiar.

But nowhere is this predilection for the known more evident than in the Great American Sequel. While successors to our favorite pop culture products are nothing new, the Sequel has swelled in recent decades from the occasional case of a summer blockbuster (or bomb) to a full-blown epidemic. We have sequels to movies: 20 canon James Bond films, 10 "Star Trek" movies and yes, more than 100 "Girls Gone Wild" movies. Television? The 38-year-old "Star Trek" franchise boasts six series. And if just two "CSI" series and three "Law & Order" series aren't enough for crime series junkies, fear not: the 'character-driven' "CSI: New York" is set for a September premiere and "Law & Order: Trial by Jury" (starring series veteran Jerry Orbach) will debut January 2005. Even soft drinks are sequels — witness Mountain Dew Code Red and LiveWire.

That television network executives are leaning on franchises shouldn't be a surprise. Offering viewers something they know gives a spinoff series an edge over other new programs during the September premieres. But sometimes, fresh programs aren't even making it far in the approval process. CBS Chairman and CEO Leslie Moonves has, he told CNN, seen only one new pilot this spring.

Of the 53 movies that have grossed more than \$200 million at the American box office, at least 17 are sequels and at least 16 more spawned a series. Most of the others either are new enough that a timely sequel is still possible or upcoming (2003's all-time No.

10 "Finding Nemo," 2002's No. 5 "Spider-Man"), don't lend themselves to series (1994's No. 42 "Ghost," 1982's No. 3 "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial") or both (2004's No. 7 "The Passion of the Christ").



Travis Willse
 Rivalless wit

That good original movies are rare enough is unfortunate; but that sequels are becoming the norm leaves even less room for them.

This trend has gotten worse in recent years, too. In 2000, one of the 10 top-grossing movies in America was a sequel (No. 3 "Mission: Impossible II"), and one was a remake (No. 1 "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"). In 2001, three were sequels and two were remakes. 2002 saw five sequels, and 2003 had six (including No. 1 "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," and both "Matrix" sequels, which finished in the No. 4 and No. 9 spots).

Movie sequels have mushroomed from a low-risk business decision and good way to spend a summer afternoon into a mass medium artistic crisis. If creativity and newness are the lifeblood of a healthy entertainment culture, too many sequels are a hemorrhage.

Interactive media have the same problem: Of the top 10 best-selling video games between Jan. 1 and Nov. 1, 2003, according to amazon.com, seven were sequels (including the rousing top seller "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" and No. 6 "Madden NFL 2004," the 14th season of the series). The three that

weren't? They were PlayStation 2 titles No. 2 "Kingdom Hearts", a not-exactly-a-sequel role-playing game that blends the successful "Final Fantasy" and Disney franchises; No. 7 "Enter the Matrix", based on the Matrix franchise; and No. 10 "The Sims", the adaptation of the best-selling PC game. In Japan, where the numbers are more dramatic, merely two of the top 100 games of 2003 were original titles.

At March's Game Developer's Conference, Toru Iwatani — best known for creating the super-hit "Pac-Man," which has spawned many sequels in its own right — lamented, "The gaming industry will shrink unless we start to see new games."

But there's something to be said for the market value of originality, too. Because the above rankings for the top-grossing movies aren't adjusted for ticket price inflation, they're weighted heavily toward modernity. Compensating, which gives a reasonable estimate of the number of tickets sold, only five of the top 53 movies are sequels (three "Star Wars" sequels, "Thunderball" and "The Return of the King"), although several became the first in a series (No. 9 "The Exorcist" and No. 21 "The Godfather").

In closing, I should disclose that I'm guilty of a degree of hypocrisy here: I like sequels. I grew up on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and "Deep Space Nine." One of the finest game cartridges of all time, I still maintain, is Super Nintendo's "Super Mario All-Stars," a collection of four games in the Super Mario Brothers series. I'm resigned to sequels, and even if having so many is a bad thing, that won't stop me from paying for them — fueling more sequels — and enjoying the better ones.

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