

Friday, June 4, 2004

When a strike could destroy summer plans

Eric Lindgren, a graduate student studying political science, is the president of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation.

Lindgren sat down with the Emerald for Quick Quacks — a short question-and-answer session aimed at giving readers a look at campus and community members' thoughts.

Emerald: What's the best part about being GTF president?

Lindgren: I guess I would say solidarity with other members.

Emerald: Where will Eric Lindgren be 10 years from now?

Lindgren: Hopefully teaching in Northern California.

Emerald: Any particular school?

Lindgren: No, just somewhere.

Emerald: What are the biggest issues right now that are still on the bargaining table?

Lindgren: Fees. Pay, I think that's still an issue; it's not exactly settled. Bargaining-unit protection, which is stopping the practice of hiring graduate students at hourly wages. ... The other issue is whether or not master's students are eligible for a step increase.

Emerald: This is the first strike authorization since 1977 — how likely is a strike right now?

Lindgren: I think that's pretty much unknowable. I think it's really going to depend on the University's willingness to be reasonable. We've made major, major concessions to get as close as we are, and I think we're now looking (to) the University. I hope that the chances are small, but I would have to say, that based on the way the University is arguing, that they're not zero.

Emerald: What are your plans for summer break, if there is a break?

Lindgren: Well, right now, they are planning getting the strike together. Otherwise, I was hoping to take a little vacation, considering that I passed my final comp(rehensive) and I'm getting ready to start working on my dissertation.

Emerald: Congrats.

Lindgren: So, yeah, I'd love to take vacation instead of strike.

Emerald: What's the best restaurant in Eugene?

Lindgren: The Lotus Garden; I'm a vegan.

Emerald: Dave in the GTF office said your name is Easy? Why's that?

Lindgren: I've been told that it's because of my golf swing. I don't know. Because my name's Eric?

Emerald: Would you ever work in University administration, the flip side of the coin?

Lindgren: I would be reluctant to work in administration. I'm pretty committed to being a union member. I have had, in my lifetime, a job in management.

Emerald: What's in your CD player right now?

Lindgren: Grateful Dead. Music from 30 years ago.

Emerald: Any particular album?

Lindgren: Live music.

Emerald: Rennie's or Taylor's?

Lindgren: I've probably been to Rennie's more often. I don't go to either one very often.

Emerald: When you do visit the bars, what do you like to drink?

Lindgren: Beer or vodka. With seltzer water or soda water.

Emerald: Why should undergraduates support the GTF?

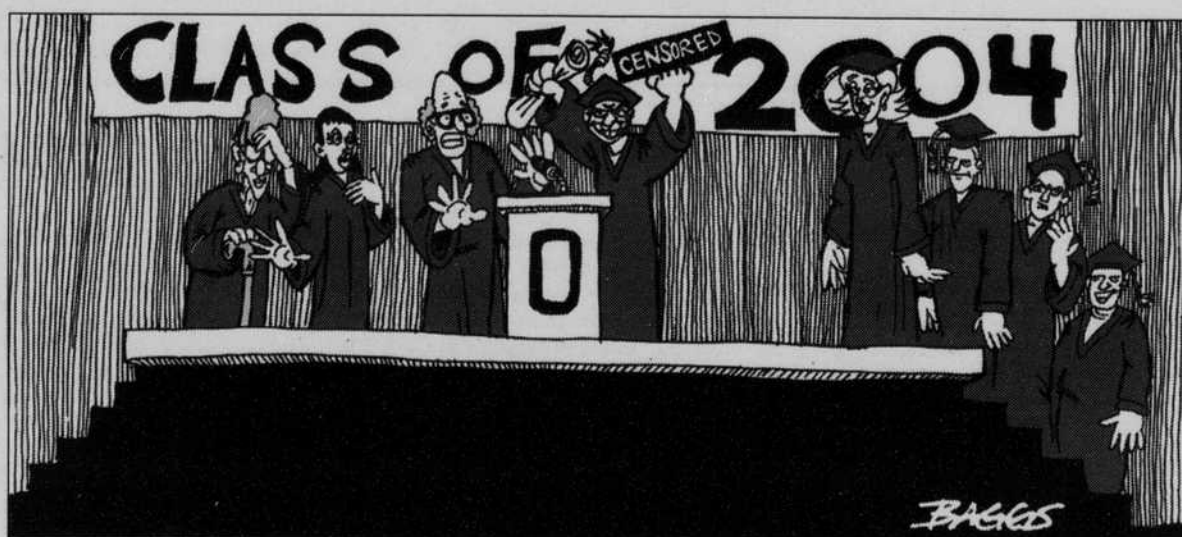
Lindgren: Well, I think because fundamentally our cause is just, in the sense that we aren't asking for outrageous demands. I've said this already, but we feel like we've made major concessions; we agreed to the wage freeze, basically from the start. We don't agree that we make enough wages, but we realize that the state is constrained by the governor's budget. But we felt like that was a major concession ... if you just look at our wages compared to our comparative schools, we don't necessarily stack up; we're not at the top. And so, we wanted some wage increases to try and get us closer. We made a major concession to take that off the table, and to start talking about fees. We pay 10 percent of our fees back to the University as a condition of our employment. So I would say that's the first reason.

The other reason is because we care about the undergraduates. The reason why we're fighting for good, quality compensation for GTFs is to get and encourage the best GTFs, the best graduate students you can get at the University to work here. That's going to help undergraduates, if you have better recruitment, because of better pay packages ... undergraduates are going to be taught better.

Finally, I would say that, even if a strike happens, we are currently trying to find ways to minimize the impact on undergraduates. We don't want to strike, we don't want to hurt undergraduates, we don't want to hurt the University. Really, the way we see it is, we've compromised again and again. The ball is clearly in the University's court.

Emerald: Last question, where can we find Eric Lindgren on a Friday night?

Lindgren: Friday night, I'm going to be home with my wife. But if there's live music in town, I may be out checking it out. I love live music.



Steve Baggs Illustration

Rhymes with *duck*

I wrote two weeks ago that managing the Emerald's commentary section this year has proven as enjoyable as it was challenging. Editing my fellow columnists' writing has been rewarding; I have gotten to read styles and philosophies that range from Marissa Jones' sober, modern conservatism to Joe Bechard's conscious and distinctly Eugenean social progressivism.

Because the writing in this space is opinion, my approach this year has usually been one of laissez-faire: Check for flow, the logic of arguments, and potentially libelous assertions; trim where possible, but don't change the author's (denoted or connoted) meaning. Sometimes, exceptions to this rule of general compositional autonomy are those of obscenity, profanity and vulgarity.

The Associated Press Stylebook gives this general guideline (which applies to news more than opinion): "Do not use (obscenity, profanity or vulgarity) in stories unless they are part of direct quotations and there is a compelling reason for them."

The Stylebook suggests, too, "If a full quote that contains profanity, obscenity or vulgarity cannot be dropped but there is no reason for the offensive language, replace letters of an offensive word with a hyphen." (The rest of this column proceeds in this spirit, at least with regard to the more offensive words.)

The Emerald has, in general, followed this rule, varying alteration according to the



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severity of the word in question, and with perhaps a broad interpretation of "compelling": Since the beginning of the volume, the Emerald has printed 36 stories using some form of the word "damn" (not including this one) and nine that use some form of the word "sh--."

The F-bomb, of course, is the interjection (or noun or verb or adjective or adverb) that here demands the greatest justification for use (and thus scrutiny). This paper has published only eight stories that use some form of the word "f---": In a reference to campus provocateur Don Goldman's so-labeled speech (one that ended with a conflict that landed him an arrest); in a quote from Courtney Love in, of all things, a column about media attention and the Rwandan genocide; in an interview with hip-hop pair Non-Prophets; in a cinema reference in a column on language (penned by yours truly); in a quoted lyric from a track by folk-rocker Hamell; in a book title proposed by a friend of columnist David Jagemouth; in

a later Jagemouth column referencing the one just mentioned; and in a column by Jessica Cole-Hodgkinson about offensive language.

Arguably, the decisions to publish the word in question were justified in the above stories (all of which, incidentally, appeared in Pulse or commentary). But the potency of the word in the above contexts is maintained only because it appears in justifiable context, and because it appears so rarely. And so it should be. In an adult-oriented publication, vulgarity can be a powerful tool but is overused in print media (which, for regulatory and historical reasons outside the scope of this column, has drawn less fire than television media in recent months).

Contrast the Emerald with Portland State University's relatively foul-mouthed Daily Vanguard, which deserves commensurate congratulations for winning first place in the General Excellence category in this year's Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association awards. Over the same period, that paper published articles using forms of "damn," "sh--" and "f---" some 69, 54 and 64 times, respectively.

All that said, have a (damn) good summer.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

University students have ally in mascot debate

I recently heard about students at the University seeking support from others regarding the school's athletic teams not playing teams with Native American mascots. I am a student at the University of Illinois, whose mascot is a source of great division and hostility within our campus, and I want to say that I support you in all of your efforts to help end the blatant stereotyping and misrepresentation of Native Americans. It warms my heart to know that this issue is not one that only the students here on this campus are fighting, but one that others around the country are fighting as well. Maybe with your help and the help of other schools like yours, our school will finally listen, and start giving Native Americans the honor they really deserve.

Kristen Reid
Urbana-Champaign, Ill.
resident advisor
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Illustration misrepresents Viewing Project

The scene presented in Eric Layton's illustration (ODE, May 28) is a ridiculous fabrication of what occurred during the Viewing Project on May 26. No such scene occurred. There were no simplistic "No War" signs present. There were no participants yelling "Ha! Like I Care!" to the mothers of fallen soldiers.

In fact, the general tone of the whole project was one of incredible respect and reverence for the people who have died in the Iraq War. Perhaps Eric Layton should have noticed that this wasn't the typical Eugene-like "I'm a dumb hippie against war" kind of a protest. Instead, this protest was a dramatic and wonderfully done art display representing the casualties and realities of war.

The Viewing Project was motivated by a respect for the people who have died in Iraq. It was also a response to our disrespectful government and media who have made a concerted effort to censor the concrete realities of war: Human deaths. I assure you the people concerned with this reality do not have some kind of nefarious

"political agenda" — rather, they are motivated out of a deep respect for human life.

If the Viewing Project offended you, then perhaps you should honestly look at the motivation of the participants instead of marginalizing them as certain types of hostile anti-war protesters.

Thomas Woodard
senior
mathematics

Streaker raises questions

The University journalism student streaker's photo on the front page of the Oregon Daily Emerald ("NAKED ambition," May 28) convinces me that following the "rules" in the "real world" isn't the best path to achievement of one's goals, if the latter includes getting the name of the manufacturer you tout in a place of prominence and receiving the rewards that go along with that achievement.

I'm not yet convinced that colleges and high schools instruct students down that path.

Ed Wilson
Eugene