

# COMMENTARY

Thursday, July 1, 2004



## Urchins unleashed

I've just moved into a house in a neighborhood on the west side of Eugene where everyone else owns, and my roommates and I are the only ones renting. I was really excited to spend the first night in my new house, looking forward to the quiet away from the fraternity I had as a neighbor last year. Finally, I don't have to wake up to Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back" at 2:30 on a Friday morning, and now I can look out my bedroom window without even risking seeing three or four fraternity guys urinating in the parking lot.

Yes, life is good. The night started off peacefully and quietly. It was about midnight and I was just about to turn out the lights and climb into bed. Suddenly there was a knock at my front door.

"This is strange," I thought out loud, "Who is it?" I called out, approaching the door slowly. There was no answer. I didn't know anyone in the neighborhood, and I didn't really wish to get to know anyone at 12 at night. I cautiously cracked open the door and peeked out. The darkness was thick and I couldn't see a thing, the sound of children's giggles surrounded me.

"Where are you?" I yelled into the darkness.

"In your house," came the reply in a pre-adolescent voice. I gasped, surprised at the audacity. I couldn't think of anything clever to say so I just said in my most grown-up voice, "Well, it's late, so



PORSCHA COLLETTE CAREY  
 WORLD ON A STRING

leave me alone." The next morning I awoke rather suddenly to the sound of rocks hitting the house's front windows. I climbed out of bed and ran to the living room, pulled back the curtains and observed several pubescent tween males throwing rocks at my home!

"I HATE KIDS!!!" I screamed in anger. I then proceeded to run outside in my pajamas, stand in the yard with my hands on my hips and yell, "Why are you doing this?! Where on earth are your parents?!" Since then, the rock-throwing and door-knocking have stopped, but the memory lives on.

Before I continue, I want to get something straight. This article is not about how much I dislike children; this article is about how much I dislike parents who have lost appreciation for a good belt-whipping as a form of discipline. I know, I know, physical discipline is so controversial nowadays, especially because the line

between discipline and child abuse is becoming thinner and thinner, but when your child is throwing a tantrum in the middle of an aisle in Albertson's because he can't have the Frosted Sugar Cubes until after dinner, I think it's time to realize that five minutes in the corner isn't cutting it. Then there are the parents who leave the educating and day care services with the duty of teaching their children good manners and tolerable public behavior. No wonder teachers are in such high demand right now, no one wants to be a full-time baby sitter!

I'm not a teacher, so I suppose I don't have monopoly when it comes to being irritated by youths, but I did work in a children's day care for a little over a year while I was in high school, and I also go out in public pretty often, so I think I've met my quota of child annoyances. The unnecessary turmoil I experienced the first night in my new house may have been a small incident, but I feel it is important to understand that undisciplined children terrorize the lives of thousands of people all over America. Parents, please! When the moment calls for it, take a stand and hit your kids (within the bounds of the law, of course). These little people are the future of our society; Before they become adults and wreak havoc on our culture, stop sparing the rod.

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## Women should rethink displays of overt sexuality

I have been thinking lately about skin and the enormous amount of it on campus. In particular, what it does to our respect for ourselves and from others as well as our place in American society. These thoughts were enlightened by a lecture I attended — "Women & Human Rights in Islam" — presented by the Muslim Student Association.

A significant portion of the audience was Muslim women, who displayed little skin. Their lack of displayed skin made me notice both my own and other Western women's attire. We wore tighter, smaller, shorter and skimpier clothes. The line of skin that peaks out from the bottom of my shirt to the top of my pants had never been more on the front of my mind. I like to think I am not a provocative dresser, but in comparison to the Muslim women, I definitely was less dressed.

Western cultures have evolved into rather sexually open societies where exposed skin is common. Western women epitomize this openness in our clothing: painted-on jeans, impossibly tiny tank-tops and skirts that stop two inches below our behinds. We see these clothes everyday on women in our classrooms, acting on TV, walking down the street, sitting on our couch, looking back at us in the mirror.

The Muslim women at the lecture made this pervasive sexiness even more apparent with their opinions. The topic of oppression and head scarves came up. In Western media, head scarves often symbolize Islamic oppression of women. However, the Muslim women felt otherwise. One felt liberated by her modest apparel because she has the freedom to choose the man who sees her body, rather than displaying it for any man on the street. She said Western style of female dress is oppressive because it forces women to display as much skin as possible, to be sexual objects. Further, Western activists will come to Muslim countries and decry the "oppressive burqa," but will not question their provocative clothing as a form of cultural oppression. It's an interesting point: Revealing our skin is a way to keep women subservient, as beings whose primary value is sex and how much we exhibit it.

This sexiness is, of course, defined by our culture and expressed through the media. Our culture tells us that women are liberated, equal participants in American society which values production, independence and hard work, while the media shows us that our value is primarily dependent on our appearance — how toned our abs are, how white our teeth are, how well-dressed we are. The travesty is, we all buy it to a certain degree. Some women spend hours in the morning primping themselves while others reject this value, spending little time in front of the mirror. Most women fall somewhere in between the two extremes.

I think we should try something revolutionary — putting our clothes back on. For just one day, check out of the hyper-sexualized culture that tells us to wear skirts seven inches from our knees and shirts two inches above our waistline. To women who already do not wear provocative clothing, tell others why you don't! To women who do wear provocative clothing, evaluate why you do and what tells you to. Then decide if you still want to participate in the overt sexuality of our culture.

Susan Goodwin is a freshman pre-journalism major.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Kerry's message 'fills a void' in America

I attended the rally for presidential candidate John Kerry in downtown Portland. It was one of the best political rallies I've ever seen. The speakers were enthusiastic, on-message and stimulating. I was moved when Senator Kerry took to the stage and the crowd of 20,000 cheered incessantly.

People in this country are so hungry for real leadership and Kerry's off-the-cuff remarks filled a void in the current political discourse and he won me over. Most of us have never seen Kerry in person, and he is indeed impressive — a great speaker with a message that it's time to get this country back on track.

I agree with Kerry on the need for health care for every American; that

we have taken the wrong direction in Iraq and with foreign policy in general; on the need for more research and development of alternative fuels and on needed improvements in the education system. I look forward to sending George Bush the 2,200 miles from D.C. to Crawford, Texas this fall.

Albert Kaufman  
 Portland

#### Abortion is humanity's 'greatest scandal'

With pride in America, and in our armed forces, I salute the vast majority of men and women who serve our country with honor in Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the world. May God bless them, and their families. To allow the few who dishonor our country to become a reflection of our entire nation, or to place the blame for their actions on their commander in

chief, is a form of treason.

Our soldiers in Iraq are not at war with the people of Iraq, but rather, they are peacekeepers who have become victims of revenge and hatred by an unseen enemy who will even kill their own countrymen if necessary. Without our military presence, mobs would rule a country that has lost its desire for peace. In comparison, allowing the Democratic Party, responsible for millions of deaths through abortion, to resume power at any level of political life, is a disgrace to every American who believes in the right to life according to our Constitution, which says we are all created equal. Scandal is all around us, but the scandal of deliberate, willful abortion is the greatest scandal ever witnessed by any people — civilized or uncivilized.

Vincent Bemowski  
 Menasha, Wis.

#### Reagan lied to and cheated his constituents

Ronald Reagan was the 40th president of the United States and a twisted partisan hack who took control of this nation despite lying to, cheating, and stealing from the people of this fair country. The Gipper was a black juju zombie master of the most inner circle. He built the modern-day conservative movement from the corpses of fallen ideology, reanimating them with a charisma that only a trained actor could deliver and a little help from his wife's astrologist.

He was so corrupt even his own mind jumped ship in the end, but thankfully for him this means he probably died with a clear conscience. Nevertheless: Rest in peace, Ron. I'll see you when I get there.

Ethan Firpo  
 sophomore  
 anthropology

#### Jones' column is misguided

As a first-year law student down at Stanford, I sometimes read the online version of the Emerald when I need a break from con law or property and want to see what's up with my alma mater. After reading Marissa Jones's article on May 10 ("Can I get you anything else?"), I'm not sure I'll be doing that anymore. I have never seen an article in any publication where the author was so obviously ignorant in respect to the issues they were "discussing" and employed such irrational logic and analogies while trying to make a point — which I assume is what she was trying to do. If Jones is really concerned about wasted tax dollars, than perhaps she should return any financial aid she receives.

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 class of 2003  
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