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## In my opinion

# Might of the masses

"The death of Yasser Arafat is a significant moment in Palestinian history," reads President Bush's written statement issued after Arafat's passing. "We hope that the future will bring peace and the fulfillment of their aspirations for an independent, democratic Palestine that is at peace with its neighbors."

The president and his men might not openly celebrate the death of Arafat, but they clearly see it as an opportunity to create lasting Middle East peace. "I think we've got a chance," he told reporters, when asked about finding peace with a new Palestinian government.

It's a pretty bit of wishful thinking, to dream that one man was the single impediment to loving harmony between Palestinians and Israelis. After so many deaths, a single funeral, no matter how prominent or problematic Arafat might have been, will not go an inch toward bridging this bloody rift. We must not forget that part of the reason Arafat turned down the historic peace deal offered by then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak, which would have satisfied most of the Palestinians' demands, was because he felt he could not persuade his people to accept the plan. "If I accept what Barak has offered, I will go and have coffee with (the assassinated) Yitzhak Rabin in heaven," Arafat said to President Clinton at the time.

Time and time again, broken treaties prove how worthless pieces of paper are without the support of popular or military strength behind them. Therefore, the new Palestinian leader's goal will not be signing an agreement with Israel; it will be



JENNIFER MCBRIDE  
QUASHING DISSENT

persuading terrorists and their sympathizers, with logic and with force, that an end to violence would be in their own best interests. Given the history and the divisions of the Arab world, this task is probably impossible.

The successor of the Palestinian Liberation Organization will be facing an electorate more divided than the United States' own, as proved by the recent protests against PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas. Gunmen of extremist factions shot and killed two security guards when the former Prime Minister Abbas was at a gathering, mourning Arafat's death. Though Abbas denied the gunmen were firing at him, they shouted slogans accusing Abbas of being an agent of the Americans.

Even if a moderate manages to attain victory in January's election, the PLO leader will be hampered by extremists in any attempts to deal with Israel. Israeli ministers last week refused to comment on which candidates he thought Sharon would work with for fear of them being voted against in the election for being supported by Israel. If Sharon's suggestion that he is able to meet with someone results in a Palestinian backlash, it is difficult to see how

the new leader can work with the Israelis at all without being accused of being a Jewish pawn. Until a leader can consolidate his own power, no treaty will be forthcoming, and unifying moderates and extremists under one harmonious government is most likely hopeless. Even Arafat himself professed powerlessness at dealing with the members of more extremist factions, and his heir will not have the same broad, popular support Arafat had.

Prime Minister Sharon's task is to not pull back the olive branch. Not exactly a hippie peacenik himself, Sharon has made small concessions by withdrawing Israeli settlers from Gaza. Any headway toward peace at this stage will probably be incremental, and if Sharon can face down the discontents in his own party and continue making these small gestures, we can hope peace is not as far away as I think it is.

Paradoxically, the best the thing the United States can do right now to support the next Palestinian leader is to not support the next Palestinian leader, yet not undercut his government either. But the Bush Administration has demonstrated that it has the patience of a 3-year-old when it comes to foreign policy. In both North Korea and Iraq, the president refused to deal unless he got everything he wanted when he wanted it. It is important that Condoleezza Rice not show this customary heavy-handedness and disregard for nuance when she prepares to meet with Arafat's successor.

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## Editorial

# ASUO should have developed proper policy

The ASUO has made some pretty big mistakes in the past, but the malignant and continuous attempts by the ASUO to pull the wool over the eyes of their student constituents marks an all-time low. Students who care about how their money is being spent by elected representatives should call, e-mail, kick and scream until the ASUO sits up and pays attention; right now they have every reason to believe that the student body just doesn't care.

As reporters dig further, more and more issues are beginning to surface. Student Senator Toby Hill-Meyer has told the Emerald that there was a strong possibility alcohol was transported in a state-owned vehicle. The Green Tape Notebook states that a violation of the state guidelines for use of state-owned vehicles could allow the ASUO president to revoke the group's use of the motor pool, and President Adam Petkun should do just that.

Additionally, sources from within the ASUO have said that the alcohol policy was not made clear prior to the retreat. But ASUO Accounting Coordinator and retreat director Jennifer Creighton-Neiwert has denied the claim that there was an implied acceptance of drinking.

Whether the drinking was condoned or not, it is a gross oversight for the ASUO to not have formed proper policy before it spent student money on a retreat. Creighton-Neiwert has also said that the ASUO doesn't have rules and regulations regarding what goes on at the retreats, but that in the future this will be a factor to be considered.

Our officials cannot be trusted to be caretakers of our hard-earned money. Although the ASUO craves the respectability of a large-scale turnout for its election, the members' relentlessly immature actions prove they don't deserve to be treated as serious politicians — or as adults for that matter.

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## INBOX

### Bush Administration should not cut down Roadless Rule

I'm outraged about the changes to the Roadless Rule the Bush Administration is proposing. The Roadless Rule currently protects 58 million acres of public forests, most of which are pristine ancient forests. The Bush Administration wishes to, in effect, gut this law, allowing states to open up public land to logging industries. It's possible to avoid old growth logging by embracing sustainable forestry practices within the logging industry. Ravaging old growth forests is not among these practices. There are plenty of resources outside of the land set aside under the Roadless

Rule that, if used efficiently, could last indefinitely. Once an old growth forest is gone, it's gone forever. More than just a few old trees are lost: habitat for native species, recreational areas and a vital part of our heritage disappear along with these majestic trees.

Instead of using up the few precious resources we have left, why not explore alternative sources for fuel and construction materials? We all know it's possible, it's just a matter of taking the first step by putting our foot down and upholding the Roadless Rule as is.

Adrienne Green  
Eugene

### Vegetarian, vegan foods healthy for humans, animals

Kudos to Richard York for encouraging his students to examine their individual roles in ecological conservation by adopting a vegan diet ("Environmental class studies human relations with nature," ODE, Nov. 11).

The Worldwatch Institute, Union of Concerned Scientists, and National Audubon Society all recognize that raising animals for food depletes and pollutes our land, water, and air perhaps more than anything else we do. Quite simply: Raising massive quantities of crops to feed animals is grossly inefficient. Every meat-based calorie you eat

represents 20 calories fed to the chicken, pig, or other animal whose flesh you're consuming — it's equivalent to throwing 20 plates of food into the trash for every plate you consume. And a meat-based diet uses up immeasurable amounts of ozone-depleting fossil fuels while poisoning the Earth with billions of tons of untreated animal waste.

Choosing vegetarian or vegan foods is the simplest and most practical way to reduce our resource use and fight pollution. And it also benefits animals, 10 billion of whom are horribly abused and violently slaughtered each year for their flesh.

Erica Meier  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals