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## INBOX

### Chilingerian needs to brush up on reviewing skills

I just read Natasha Chilingerian's review of Lord Leebrick's "Tempest" ("Shakespeare's 'Tempest' proves intricate, hard to interpret," ODE, Nov. 24) and was simply aghast. Did she really suggest that people shouldn't see Shakespeare because it might be hard to interpret?

Also, she might want to look at how theater reviews are generally written, at least in all those "drama junkie" publications I read like The New York Times. It's usually a good idea to note who directed the show, how long the show is running, all of the main actors and also to analyze why things happen, not just note that they might be confusing.

Leebrick's "Tempest" was directed by University theater professor John Schmor, two years ago named the best director in Eugene by Eugene Weekly. It stars University art professor Leon

Johnson as Prospero, one of Shakespeare's most beloved characters. It runs through Dec. 11.

Furthermore, she might want to brush up on all that language that "might as well be German" if she plans to write more theater reviews. Shakespeare is, and will probably always be, the single most produced playwright in the entire history of the world — and, I think most people will agree, a pretty damn good writer.

Greg Heaton  
Theater Arts

### Condoleezza Rice rises to her level of incompetence

Is this a great country or what? Thanks to President Bush, we will now have the first secretary of state who once had an oil tanker named after her. No kidding. Chevron put Condoleezza Rice's name on a tanker when she served on its board of directors, from which she resigned just

before the 2001 inauguration.

But that factoid is overshadowed by her career since moving from Chevron's board. Does she deserve this career move? Set aside her lack of experience as a diplomat. Except for some time spent as provost of Stanford University, she was a specialist in Russian studies. Also set aside her weak management skills, which were manifest during her tenure as national security advisor.

Can she learn to tell the truth to the American people? Her record is not encouraging. Rice was one of the key administration people in the massive deception campaign leading up to the invasion of Iraq. The U.S. government refuses to keep count. More than once, Rice stood before the American people and blatantly lied to them. It was Rice who told us shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks that she and the rest of the national security apparatus never dreamed

that Al-Qaida would ever fly airplanes into buildings. We learned later that the CIA had warned of this. And Rice played on the American people's fears of a nuclear attack from Iraq. It was she who said, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

So now we have an interesting situation: The woman who played so important a role in deceiving the American people into war has been nominated for the most prestigious job in the U.S. government. Some years ago Laurence Peter formulated the Peter Principle: "In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." If Rice is confirmed as secretary of state, Dr. Peter's principle will have to be revised. The question is not, "Does she deserve it?" No. The question is, "Do we?"

Sheldon Richman  
Fairfax, Va.

### Professors worked hard over Thanksgiving holiday break

I am writing to take issue with your Dead Week editorial ("Unheeded rules make Dead Week truly killer," ODE, Dec. 1). First, I personally honor Dead Week. The final term paper for my class was due this week, but a full draft was due two weeks earlier, and everyone had full warning in the syllabus.

Second, I do not know any faculty who did not work most of the "holiday," contrary to the editorial comment: "When it is almost assured that few professors will spend the same time preparing for their next week of school." Before you say things like this, I recommend you try a day or two of our lives. Have you ever graded papers or prepared lectures? Most students who do these things gain a much better appreciation of their faculty.

Let me fill you in on how I spent the holiday: (1) I graded papers, which is time consuming and non-trivial; (2) I prepared lectures; (3) I prepared a study guide for the final; (4) I wrote a lot of letters of recommendation; (5) I read application files for a faculty search; (6) I worked on a grant proposal that, if funded, includes money for both undergraduate and graduate education.

I slept fewer than five hours each night because I was working hard to catch up. I wasn't the only person in my department working either — I saw most of my colleagues at work over the holiday.

Bitty Roy  
Associate Professor of Biology

## ■ In my opinion

# Bush, can I say censorship?

As a writer there is nothing I cherish more than my right to free speech. That is why every report of censorship in the media really gets my blood boiling. Now that President Bush has secured a second term, a trend appears to be emerging in America. The gatekeepers at our television and radio stations and newspapers are going out of their way to avoid anything at all that might be interpreted as morally progressive or anti-administration.

Whether they fear retribution from the public or the president, or both, is hard to say. Recently, CBS and UPN (both owned by Viacom) refused to run a church's pro-gay advertisement, arguing, in a letter to the church, that "because this commercial touches on the exclusion of gay couples and other minority groups by other individuals and organizations, and the fact the executive branch has recently proposed a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, this spot is unacceptable for broadcast on the networks."

The ad is for the United Church of Christ and features bouncers outside of a church refusing to let gay, minority and disabled worshippers in. The text reads, "Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we." And then a narrator says, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." (See the ad at [www.stillspeaking.com](http://www.stillspeaking.com).)

The first question is: What does a church saying it accepts gay and lesbian parishioners have to do with the Federal Marriage Amendment? The second question, best articulated in an article on Media Matters for America (<http://mediamatters.org>), is: "How does CBS justify rejecting an ad that purportedly conflicts with the Bush Administration's views, given CBS's apparent willingness to air advocacy ads that support administration policies?"

Think about this for a second. Just because a commercial "touches" on the idea that gays and lesbians should be treated equally, which is a progressive concept antithetical to the administration's



DAVID JAGERNALUTH  
CRITICAL MASS

homophobia, it is "too controversial" and "unacceptable for broadcast." Inclusion is too controversial of an idea. Even suggesting that being gay or lesbian is not a sin is totally out of line on network television. What if kids are watching? Think about the children! On a side note, ABC Family, Hallmark, Nick at Nite and many other stations have agreed to run the spot.

Moving to the world of newspapers, Jim Goldsborough, a senior columnist at The San Diego Union-Tribune, resigned after his column was pulled by the publisher for being "offensive." The article discussed the fact that Jewish voters are overwhelmingly Democratic.

"The column is not offensive to Jews. Maybe to Bush," Goldsborough said in a telephone interview with Editor & Publisher. His columns are often more liberal than the editorial board. "I think this was payback," he said.

In another recent example of censorship, a Nov. 30 Associated Press article was edited by FoxNews.com and the Chicago Sun-Times to hide the fact that the Ohio secretary of state, who oversees elections in Ohio, was also the co-chairman of Bush's re-election campaign in Ohio. What would compel an editor to delete this blatant example of a conflict of interest? I wonder.

Now don't get me wrong. Censorship isn't just a conservative habit. I wrote a column for the Eugene Weekly recently where the word "feminists" was edited out of a paragraph listing moralizing prudes. Not surprisingly, they left in "religious zealots" and "an increasingly oppressive government."

For most people, one disappearing word here or there, one description, one column and one ad are relatively

insignificant examples of censorship. But these examples merely hint at the real issue. Censorship is an institutional problem that is massive in scope. Why, for example, is hard-hitting investigative reporting nonexistent today? Take one part litigation and add two parts corporate monopolization looking out solely for the bottom line, and you have your answer. Costly, time-consuming and politically risky stories will never get published because of the structure of the media business, even if the will exists among journalists.

Furthermore, since journalism is now a commodity to be sold, it must be like every other product that the public consumes: safe, sanitary, branded and appealing to one of our base emotions. The news has to act like a horoscope and tell us what we want to hear. That's why CNN reports about the war in two different ways: first, a critical version for overseas markets and then a sugarcoated version for Americans. The funny thing is, CNN is still blasted by Republicans for anti-American coverage. And with every complaint the news becomes sweeter and sweeter. Eventually they'll just say, "What war?" and leave it at that.

Examples of censorship today are too numerous to list completely. The administration is removing politically damaging facts from government Web sites under the guise of legitimate homeland security precautions. This includes removing everything from scientific facts that fail to jive with the president's religious beliefs and economic imperatives to removing flubs from transcripts of Bush's speeches. Furthermore, the administration is restricting federal scientists from communicating with World Health Organization officials and manipulating federal advisory committees, all in an effort to politicize the scientific establishment for partisan ends. This too is a form of censorship.

What can we do? I really don't know. I can only think of one thing to do: keep writing.

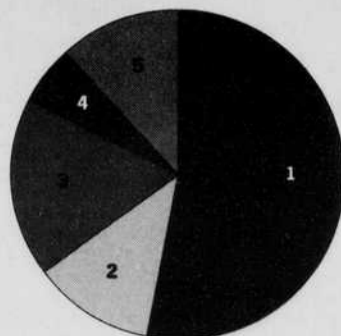
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## ONLINE POLL

### THIS WEEK'S POLL RESULTS



Do you enjoy holiday shopping? (34 votes)

1. Yes, it is a good way to show others you care for them. 53 percent
2. Yes, there are great deals. 11.8 percent
3. No, I don't have any money. 17.6 percent
4. No, it is too much stress. 5.8 percent
5. What, it's the holiday season? 11.8 percent