Commentary

OREGON DAILY EMERALD

Friday, March 11, 2005

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In my opinion

Gottiden words 11

Just when I thought I had achieved the political cynic's equivalent of Nirvana – a state in which you are absolutely at peace with your utter hatred for all politicians everywhere – I made the mistake of reading conservative strategist Frank Luntz's instruction manual for Republicans on how they can continue to advance their right wing agenda. Now I am no longer at peace.

Luntz's message in a nutshell: Embrace propaganda. The 160-page playbook features some real gems, like when Luntz advises conservatives to dodge questions of fiscal irresponsibility by bringing up terrorism.

"The trick then is to contextualize the deficit inside of 9/11," he writes. Whenever I hear a Republican engage in this kind of rhetorical game it makes me want to contextualize my foot inside of his or her ass.

But the highlight of the document – and the part that really screwed up that whole enlightenment thing that I had going – is a memorandum at the very end entitled "The 14 Words Never to Use." Luntz provides a list of words that he believes can undermine a conservative argument, and offers alternative words to replace them. "From today forward," he writes, "you are the language police."

For example, Luntz suggests that conservatives never say "government" and instead say "Washington," never say "privatization" and instead say "personalization," and never say "outsourcing" and instead say "look there's Paris Hilton" and then run away. No, actually he says conservatives should

Guest commentary



DAVID JAGERNAUTH CRITICAL MASS

blame outsourcing on "over-taxation, over-regulation and too much litigation." He adds, "Because it rhymes, it will be remembered."

Conservatives must think Americans are really stupid. Do you know why? Because Americans really are stupid. But let's not use the word "stupid" – that plays bad in the Midwest – let us use the word "innocent." Americans are so "innocent" that their opinions about an issue can radically change depending on the words used to describe it. For example, Luntz points out that 10 percent more Americans say they want to repeal the "death tax" than say they want to repeal the "estate tax."

In other words, if you give something a nice sounding name (i.e. Clear Skies Initiative) people will be less likely to care that they can't breathe. It is all about the branding.

With this in mind, Luntz tells his Republican brethren not to talk about "undocumented workers" and "immigration reform" because that leads people to believe that Mexicans are people. Conservatives should instead talk about "illegal aliens" and "border security," he says. These words remind many "innocent" Americans of the movie Independence Day. And who wouldn't root for Will Smith in his fight against those lousy space creatures?

Luntz also advises conservatives to never say "drilling for oil" and instead say "exploring for energy." I think Republicans can do better than that. Here are a few more suggestions: "Cleansing the earth of its toxins," "deep tissue massaging the land for God's bounty," and "finger banging Mother Nature until she oil-gasms."

The only problem with the list apart from offering a disgusting insider's view of the banality of politics is that it only appeals to one side of the aisle. I would like to see a list for ultra left-wing liberals. Until that day, I can offer a bit of advice: If you want to be as annoying and soulless as Republicans — and actually win for a change — you have to steal their tricks. Remember to contextualize everything that is wrong with the world inside of President Bush:

Never say: "Corporate media." Instead say: "Bush's legions of propagandists."

Never say: "Asian tsunami disaster." Instead say: "Bush's new tsunami weapon of mass destruction."

Never say: "Environmental destruction." Instead say: "Raping the earth like Bush raped my sister."

See how that works? It's simple. And when in doubt, make sure your words rhyme, because then people will remember. For example:

"President Bush / Can kiss my tush."

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Hate speech impersonating satire?

What was not addressed throughout the Oregon Commentator's funding process is a larger discussion about the issue of privilege and how it relates to publishing responsible news content. As one of the students most frequently "targeted" by the publication during the previous school year, I feel inclined to write this.

Unlike ASUO Senator Toby Hill-Meyer, I did not feel my physical safety threatened as the result of what the Commentator published about me. That's because for most folks, I fall within the following categories: white, male, and heterosexual. My social identity is represented, reinforced and legitimized by most media sources and can be loosely defined as the "norm" of this society. Because mine is an identity situated within this norm, I rarely feel insecure with this inherited privilege. Further, anything that potentially threatens my privilege would take recognizing that it comes at the expense of others, and "othering" what doesn't reflect the norm — say, if you identify as homosexual, transgendered, colored, etc. This realization might also lead me to sympathize, or even identify with that Other, perhaps, altering my perspective or behaviors, instead of hiding behind terms such as "satire."

There can be little doubt that the media — advertisement, films, television, music — is one of the most powerful socializing tools that exists within this society. From my own experiences with both the staff and content of the Oregon Commentator, it rarely deviates from this white, heterosexist model of journalism.

In David Jagernauth's Feb. 4 Emerald column, he writes, "Until we have mastered the technology whereby printed words are able to leap off the page and slap you in the face, no story has 'directly hurt' anybody. And even so, is 'hurt' now the standard for acceptable and unacceptable speech?" Yet, words do have an effect, whether "indirect" or "direct." The power of the printed word disseminated across a large viewing audience does shape attitudes, and a campus publication does influence the campus it reaches. So it is not unexpected that Commentator staff members would turn to the First Amendment instead of taking responsibility for their privilege. And as the microcosmic vanguard for white, patriarchal America on campus, the law fully supports the publication's position. Of course, "feelings' aren't considered within a system of law that prides itself on supposed

"rationality" and "objectivity."

After all, if we were to consider feelings in our decision-making process, how it feels to have your privacy invaded might count. For example, how I felt when staff members of the Commentator carried on a debate about my physical appearance, or my choice of notebook paper in class on their Web site's blog. Or, when responding to one of my articles about Valentine's Day, one staff member referred to me as a "rock fucker." We might also consider that one of the first times my writing was republished in the Commentator (volume 20, issues 7 and 8), they were juxtaposed with pictures of bound and gagged women. We might also queswhy a publication claiming not to promote hate speech entitles their quintessential, year-end issue "The Hate Issue." I hope for a continued presence of conservative and liberal journalism on campus. But the challenge for all concerned is to look beyond this spectrum, and even the rules themselves, to take responsibility for creating a safer campus and a more tolerant community.

Out loud

"He was full of life. He was vivacious. He was optimistic. He was really future-oriented, even in the face of really naughty problems, like Chernobyl. ... That was one of the reasons I really enjoyed working with him. I'll miss him." — University landscape architecture professor **David Hulse** remembering his friend and co-worker, University Planning, Public Policy and Management associate professor John Baldwin, 54, who died in his sleep at home Monday night of unknown, natural causes.

"The commitment we made today is that these won't just be strategic plans laying on a shelf but actually be action plans that will guide work that we will accomplish. They're going to take some time; they're going to take some resources, and they're going to take keeping this a priority over time." — City Manager **Dennis Taylor** at the City Council meeting on Tuesday reviewing a report with 57 recommendations to improve the Eugene Police Department.

"Out of crisis comes opportunity." — Police Chief **Robert Lehner**, answering questions Wednesday at City Hall about the recent audit of the Eugene Police Department.

"What I'm worried about ... is that it affects who has the ability to run for ASUO president in the first place." — ASUO President **Adam Petkun** expressing concern about a planned reduction of the ASUO Executive's stipend from \$700 to \$175 in next year's budget and noting that the planned decrease might make the ASUO a "place where only the privileged can work."

"It was talked that the money that's in reserves was waiting for a rainy day — at 12:01 it's about to pour." — Amalgamated Transit Union Division 757 Vice President **Jonathan Hunt** on Sunday just before union members went on strike.

"This is a sad day for Lane County. We are out on strike, and we will stay out on strike until we can get a fair contract." — **Hunt** on Monday about the ensuing Lane Transit District strike.

"People are not comfortable with change. That's why our profession exists — we're here to manage change." — University Planning Director and Architect **Chris Ramey** on University land acquisition and development.

"A fight for environmental justice is really a fight for the protection of all of us. Pollution doesn't stop at a particular street. The air blows everywhere." — **Beverly Wright**, founder and director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Xavier University in Louisiana, at a weekend University conference on environmental law.

"He was the kind of student that I saved stuff for. I would see something and think 'Oh, Tim would be interested in this.' He found everything interesting, he was a really fun student." — **Renee Irvin**, assistant professor in the University Public Policy, Planning and Management department, on University senior Timothy D. Buras, 22, who died Saturday after falling down a chimney shaft in Portland.

Jay. And who davajagernaan@aanye

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon. Eugene. Ore. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. Unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Aaron Shakra is a former Pulse Editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald

"She lived life her own way." — Eugene Police Officer **Randy Ellis** at a memorial for Hatoon Victoria Adkins, a longtime campus resident, who died last week.

"It would have been much easier to keep us in the door in the first place than to get us back in the door." — **Carol Allred**, executive board officer for ATU Division 757 and LTD driver, at a union rally Monday night at the LTD downtown station.

"My personal opinion is rules can sometimes be completely useless in finding a good solution to a problem." — **Dan Kieffer**, former PFC member, in response to the ASUO Constitution Court's Monday ruling.

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OREGON DAILY EMERALD LETTERS POLICY

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