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■ In my opinion

Progressives UNITE

In preparation for this, my final column, I did something I had never done before and will probably never do again: I reread all 46 of my previous columns. I couldn't help noticing a few emergent themes.

Many of my columns touched on what I perceive as the sorry state of today's progressive movement, of which I consider myself a member. I have criticized my peers for their inability to come to grips with their own racist attitudes and behavior, which is part of the reason the progressive movement remains largely white, elitist and politically ineffective. I'm talking about white people who would see nothing wrong with telling a black person to stop using the word nigger because it is offensive.

As these progressives are busy repressing their own racist attitudes, they



DAVID JAGERNAUTH
CRITICAL MASS

are also busily cleansing the media of all other expressions of racism, sexism, homophobia or anything else they disagree with. This acceptance of censorship as a legitimate form of activism is by far the most disturbing trend I have noticed in young progressives. It is particularly disturbing for somebody like me who believes religiously in freedom of speech, even racist speech.

We need to actively confront discriminatory opinions, but too often

progressives seem outraged solely by the fact that such an opinion was expressed. The person who expressed the unacceptable opinion is vilified, no matter how pervasive that opinion might be, and the media organization that allowed such an opinion to be expressed is also vilified and attacked.

People cannot stand for some freedoms (reproductive freedom, sexual freedom) and not for other freedoms (freedom of expression). The sooner progressives learn this, the sooner they will be taken seriously.

The reason I spent so much time criticizing progressives over the last year and a half is because Americans have powerful enemies, in addition to terrorists, who are trying to destroy America from the inside, and it is up

JAGERNAUTH, page 3A

■ In my opinion

Last but not least

My run has been a good one, I think. After 49 columns, about as many unsigned editorials, 10 consecutive terms, and more long days and nights than I can remember, I'm laying down my journalist's pen to work on my thesis. It's been palpably enjoyable in a way without substitute to participate in the public debate and to have you pick up the paper and maybe catch my column a few days a month.

But enough talk: A distaste for person-reference in my columns aside, there are end-of-tenure shout-outs to get to.

First and foremost, thanks for reading. Column-writers and opinion-mongers might be important to debate, but there is no public discourse without a public. Some of my readers have dropped me notes, e-mails and occasional incoherent, photocopied, type-writer-written three-page rants-come-manifestoes. Seeing e-mails from smart



TRAVIS WILLSE
RIVALLESS WIT

readers — the sort whose clever or far-sighted comments shed new light on a subject, or even demand another glance at a topic otherwise laid in my mind to rest — has been the most rewarding part of opinion writing.

(Those loyal readers of my column — both of them — who will miss my occasional fresh insights — both of them — can spend their now-empty Thursdays browsing the 1,000-some column inches of old Travis columns in the online Emerald archive.)

Second, I am also indebted to many

of my co-workers for their suggestions, insights and encouragement. Without them, none of this would be possible.

The most frustrating part of the opinion business is, in my words borrowed from another column, "everyone who has problems distinguishing between the realities of a real world and the sometimes incestuous, self-serving or just plain loopy rhetoric passed off as academic or otherwise intellectually meaningful discourse." Many people in the community — unfortunately, often loud ones — may have clarity of intentions but not of mind.

But for every person who contorts words like "hate speech" and "patriarchy" into false meanings to advance their agendas, there is someone who wields language instead to amplify truth. For every person who doesn't think the Bush administration ought

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■ Editorial

Winter term breakdown: The battles we fought

It has been a wild winter term for the editorial board. Here is a short rundown of a few issue highlights from the past 10 weeks.

Strange bedfellows

From the beginning of the term, the ASUO Programs Finance Committee's unjustified attack on the Oregon Commentator has put the editorial board in the strange position of defending one of its most vocal critics. It began with the rejection of the Commentator's mission statement during winter break ("Committee threatens free speech on campus," ODE, Jan. 5); it ended with the quiet approval of the Commentator's budget ("PFC quickly transforms into working committee," ODE, March 2). The climax of the story took place Feb. 1 with a PFC meeting that would eventually cost three student government members their jobs ("ASUO acts properly in Constitution Court case," ODE, March 9). We love happy endings.

Defending ourselves

After much discussion and serious contemplation, the editorial board decided to write a series of editorials concerning PFC's cut of the Emerald budget. The committee's unjustified budget decision, when paired with the attack on the Commentator, was a poorly veiled attempt to censor campus publications consistently critical of ASUO behavior. In the end, the PFC approved the Emerald's requested increase in an appeals hearing in February.

Get on the bus

The editorial board stood side by side with the Lane Transit District drivers in their battle for a fair contract ("Offering the ATU the aid and respect it deserves," ODE, March 8) and was overjoyed to hear the news Sunday that the strike was over and the buses would start running today. Additionally, kudos are in order for Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, former state labor commissioner Jack Roberts and local attorney Art Johnson who formed the mediation team that served as a negotiation facilitator and room-to-room messenger between LTD and union representatives during some tense times. The fact that both parties said they are satisfied with the contract settlement is in some ways a testimony to their skills.

Bush-bashing

As usual, the editorial board spilled a lot of ink criticizing the Bush administration. We criticized its insistence on abstinence-only sex education despite evidence that shows comprehensive sex education is most effective ("Government places ideals on top of smart sex-ed," ODE, Feb. 22). We criticized Bush's continuing attempt to stack the federal courts with ultra-conservative activist judges ("Conservative appointees drive wedge in Congress," ODE, March 7). And we criticized the administration's failure to adequately deal with the growing nuclear threat ("Is Bush hoping for another Cold War?" ODE, Feb. 17). As disappointed as the editorial board was when Bush was re-elected, incompetent government (both University and federal) makes our job easy.

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