

NEWS STAFF

(541) 346-5511

JEN SUDICK

EDITOR IN CHIEF

STEVEN R. NEUMAN

MANAGING EDITOR

JARED PABEN

NEWS EDITOR

MEGHANN CLINIFF

SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

MORIAH BALINGIT

AMANDA BOISINGER

ADAM CHERRY

EMILY SMITH

EVA SYLWESTER

SHELDON TRAYER

NEWS REPORTER

CLAYTON JONES

SPORTS EDITOR

JON ROETMAN

SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

STEPHEN MILLER

BRIAN SMITH

SPORTS REPORTER

RYAN NYBURG

PULSE EDITOR

AMY LICHITY

SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

JOSHUA LINTEREUR

PULSE REPORTER

CAT BALDWIN

PULSE CARTOONIST

AILEE SLATER

COMMENTARY EDITOR

GABE BRADLEY

ANNEMARIE KNEPPER

CHUCK SLOTHOWER

JENNIFER MCBRIDE

COLUMNISTS

ASHLEY GRIFFIN

SUPPLEMENT

FREELANCE EDITOR

DANIELLE HICKEY

PHOTO EDITOR

LAUREN WIMER

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

NICOLE BARKER

TIM BOBOSKY

PHOTOGRAPHER

ERIK BISHOFF

KATE HORTON

PART-TIME PHOTOGRAPHERS

BRET FURTWANGLER

GRAPHIC ARTIST

DUSTIN REESE

SENIOR DESIGNER

ELLIOTT ASBURY

WENDY KIEFFER

AMANDA LEE

JONAH SCHROGIN

DESIGNERS

SHADRA BEESLEY

JEANNIE EVERS

COPY CHIEFS

KIMBERLY BLACKFIELD

PAUL THOMPSON

SPORTS COPY EDITORS

GREG BILSLAND

AMBER LINDROS

NEWS COPY EDITORS

ADRIENNE NELSON

ONLINE EDITOR

WEBMASTER

(541) 346-5511

JUDY RIEDL

GENERAL MANAGER

KATHY CARBONE

BUSINESS MANAGER

LAUNA DE GIUSTI

RECEPTIONIST

JERED NAGEL

PATRICK SCHMERBER

HOLLY STEIN

PETER STEPHENS

JANA SWANSON

ROB WEGNER

CAROLYN ZIMMERMAN

DISTRIBUTION

ADVERTISING

(541) 346-3712

MELISSA GUST

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

TYLER MACK

SALES MANAGER

MATT BETZ

HERON CALISCH-DOLEN

MEGAN HAMLIN

KATE HIRONAKA

MAEGAN KASER-LEE

KELLEE KAUFITHEIL

MIA LEIDELMEYER

SHANNON ROGERS

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

CLASSIFIED

(541) 346-4343

TRINA SHANAMAN

CLASSIFIED MANAGER

KORALYNN BASHAM

AN DO

KATY GAGNON

KERI SPANGLER

KATIE STRINGER

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

ASSOCIATES

PRODUCTION

(541) 346-4381

MICHELE ROSS

PRODUCTION MANAGER

TARA SLOAN

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

JEN CRAMLET

KRISTEN DICHARRY

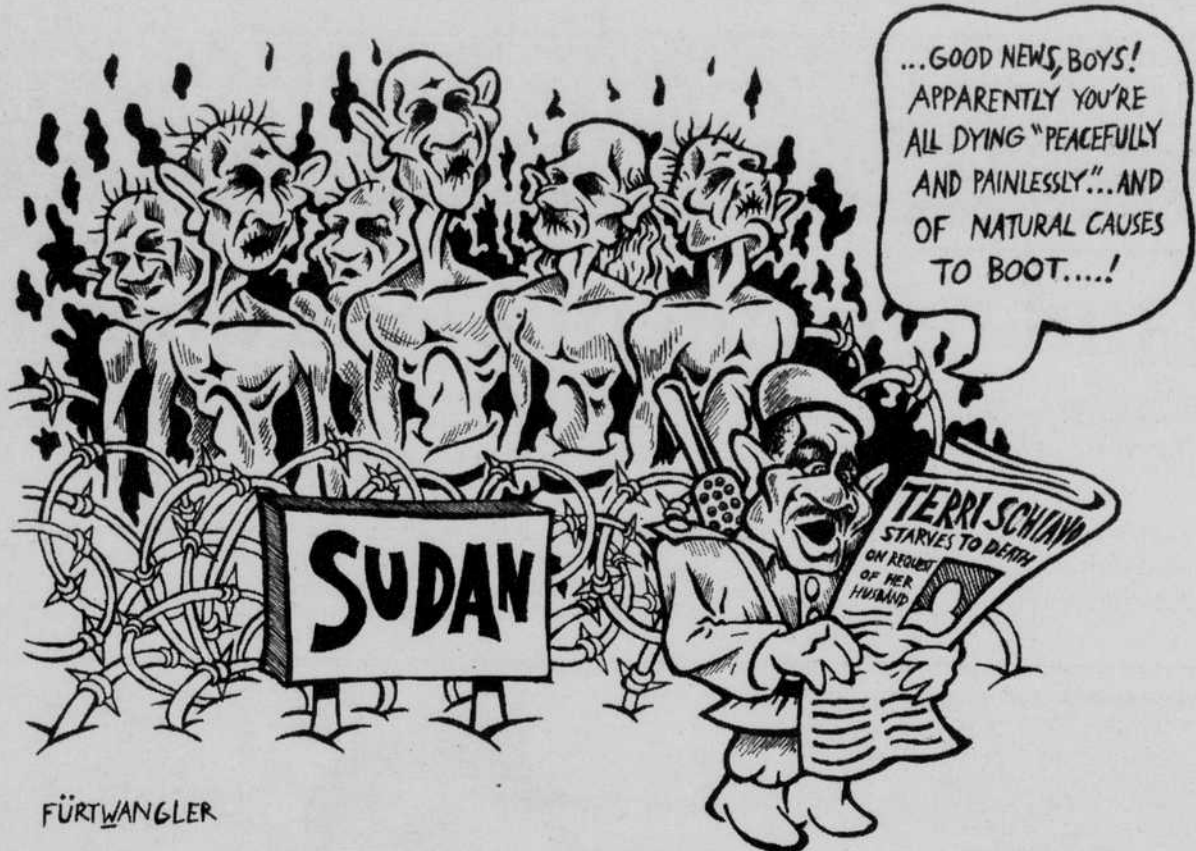
CAMERON GAUT

SABRINA GOWETTE

JONAH SCHROGIN

DESIGNERS

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.



FURTWANGLER

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

■ In my opinion

All hearts are created equal

When the hearts that beat inside us are weighed and valued, treated like any other consumer good, do our characteristics make them less priceless? If I were a supermodel or a rocket scientist, wouldn't it still be the same red pump filling me with oxygen regardless of my social status or race or any other skin-deep difference?

Some hearts, however, are apparently worth more than others. Political administrations, scared by their own flickering shadows, let innocents die because of twisted, stereotypical assumptions.

One of the most harmful U.S. policies toward homosexuals is the U.S. Federal Drug Administration's ban on homosexuals donating blood and organs. There is a shortage of blood, especially of rare types and universal donors. Anyone who doubts there is a need should glance at the mile-long lists of people who will lose their friends and families to genetic flaws. These flaws could be fixed if we opened the doors to all people willing to give parts of themselves in compassion and mercy.

What does it matter if the person who gives that gift is homosexual?

There is the obvious and cliché response of AIDS protection. The blood ban was placed in the United States around 1977, when HIV was spreading through the homosexual (as well as heterosexual) community like wildfire and there was a notable danger of contamination.

Today that threat has lessened, and the bans on homosexual blood donors are already ridiculous in nature. One homosexual act, no matter what kind (and the blood donor form is quite vague), disqualifies someone from being a donor. It doesn't matter if you dabbled, if you did it thirty years ago, if you were monogamous, if you were



JENNIFER MCBRIDE
QUASHING DISSENT

safe. The mere fact that you are who you are makes you different.

Furthermore, non-homosexuals, often less safe as blood donors, are not placed under the same brutal microscope. Prostitutes, promiscuous heterosexuals and intravenous drug users are only deferred from donating, not banned, despite the fact that their lifestyle choices may be more threatening to public peace and lives.

The ironic twist is that the myth that homosexuals are the main carriers of AIDS has persisted in the face of truth. Only about 8 percent of the U.S. male gay population is HIV positive. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the infection rate for heterosexual females has increased by the highest degree, making heterosexual females the largest threat group.

Even if there are more gay people with AIDS than straight people with AIDS, a disputed fact on its own, the Red Cross and other organizations sift blood through at least three different sensitive screening tests. An HIV-infected specimen will slip through only once in 1.2 million times. The Red Cross doesn't ask about homosexual behavior in other nations. Belgium and parts of Spain take all organs and blood donated, yet their rates of AIDS infection have not skyrocketed. The Dutch and the Swiss are also reconsidering their policies of banning homosexual donations.

The Hemophilia Foundation

opposes the ban, saying that if people who had homosexual sex are allowed to give blood after a five-year deferment, an estimated 62,300 donors would be added to the list of eligible candidates. Lifting the policy, in their words, is "crucial to the donor pool."

If each blood donation could save three people, as we are told when we line up for the shot and the cookies, then another estimated 186,900 lives could be saved if the policy against homosexual donors were altered. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to tell you that those lives saved outweigh the one-in-a-million chance of getting fatally sick.

My father's recent health problems have made this prohibition even more ludicrous in my eyes. If a short-sighted, discriminatory and dehumanizing policy is the only thing that separates his life from his death, I would spend the rest of my life in pain, wondering "what if?" What if there had been a donor out there with a good heart who was denied the chance to give blood because his personal life made the Reagan administration and every administration since a little uncomfortable?

The question is: Is it ethical to lie about your sexuality on the donor forms if you know you don't have AIDS, circumventing the tools of the tormentors to give a life-saving gift anyway? The point is, no one should have to. No one should be forced into a closet just to be kind.

If nothing else, the ban perpetuates the myth that homosexuals are somehow sick and should be kept separated — an apartheid of organs. Maybe it's time to stop thinking with our Bibles and start thinking with our hearts.

Let all hearts be created equal, and let them beat strongly.

jennifermcbride@dailyemerald.com

■ Editorial

Denial of free access to records inexcusable

Sharing.

It's one of the first things we're taught to do, and it provides a framework from which many people choose to lead their lives. House the poor. Feed the hungry.

For journalists, it's a word that also means the promotion of access to public information.

In a nation where our First Amendment touts freedom of speech, and democracy is the cornerstone of government, it is a wonder why access to government information has become such a "dirty" endeavor. It is often scary and difficult to look beyond what the Department of Homeland Security tells us to think about national security. Words such as risk, danger and protection are splashed into the reasoning for dismissed Freedom of Information Act requests. To a certain extent — for public safety — this is understandable.

But there is no excuse for the mockery the Bush administration has made of records disclosure, a sad situation that culminated this past week in yet another failed attempt by a news agency to obtain copies of President Bush's military records. A March 20 Associated Press article reported that the federal government refused to release the records, deemed public information by the courts, because officials were unwilling to search boxes filled with rat excrement. Texas National Guard spokesman Lt. Col. John Stanford was quoted as saying it was tough to search through the boxes because they were full of dirt, bugs and the aforementioned droppings.

We just can't resist: What a load of crap.

This came after months of litigation with The Associated Press, which filed numerous lawsuits during the 2004 presidential election to gain access to records that might shed light on the scope of the president's 1972 service in the Texas National Guard. After government officials swore under oath that they had released all documents pertinent to Bush's service, 31 pages popped up, apparently covered in so much dirt and excrement that they couldn't find them during the first search ... or rather, the documents were "discovered" after pressure from an AP and Guard agreement to look again.

This is just one of many disappointing examples of state and federal agencies spending more time protecting secrecy than promoting access, a sentiment recently highlighted by AP attorney David A. Schultz. The government has used national security and outrageous search and copy fees (such as hundreds of thousands of dollars just to agree to search for documents) to undermine the power of the Freedom of Information Act.

However, FOIA requests reached 4 million this past year — an all-time high — and we couldn't be more pleased. This validates the incredible necessity of the act and the desire of citizens to understand the inner-workings of the federal government; or, more appropriately, the actions and spending of the officials they have elected to serve them.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jennifer Sudick

Editor in Chief

Steven R. Neuman

Managing Editor

David Jagernauth

Commentary Editor

Shadra Beesley

Copy Chief

Adrienne Nelson

Online Editor

OREGON DAILY EMERALD LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged, and should be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com or submitted at the Oregon Daily Emerald office, EMU Suite 300. Electronic submissions are preferred. Letters are limited to 250 words, and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submissions should include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style. Guest submissions are published at the discretion of the Emerald.