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## In my opinion

# Who's Watching Who?

Have you ever googled yourself? What about put a picture of yourself online? Are you a member of Thefacebook, Friendster, MySpace or LiveJournal? If so, you may be a participant in reverse voyeurism, a conceit-based cultural trend that is sweeping the nation.

Reverse voyeurism is a term I thought my friends and I had coined, but a quick search of the Internet proved otherwise. The term is used when a person feels compelled to put an aspect of his or her life online for public viewing. This could be as simple as an Internet journal (blog) or as potentially graphic as a camera in a room that sends constantly updated photos or clips to the viewer (a sort of image blog). There's no question that reverse voyeurism is out there; my quandary is: Why?

Reverse voyeurism seems to be mostly a product of our current online generation. We have the skills to use computers, the Internet, digital cameras and the like with minimum difficulty. People no longer need personal Web sites or any knowledge of HTML code to have a complete personal presence online. We have near-constant access to the Internet, and many young people are able to experience uninterrupted usage for extended periods of time. The tools are there; the access is there, and the savvy is there.

Everyone wants to be heard, and using a blog as a personal soapbox is a very common practice. An urge to



ANNEMARIE KNEPPER  
WORKS ON PAPER

politicize and prophesize still seems to be the genesis of many-a-blog. It's important to note that some causes and candidates have been aided by ardent bloggers with large readership bases, but an even greater number of journals are directed toward personal lives.

During the aforementioned googling of my name, I found some guy had written extensively about his crush on a girl named AnneMarie (in a state other than Oregon ... sad face using colon and parentheses keys). He wrote of how they met in class, how he had always liked her and how now that he was unattached, he was going to ask her out. Later posts show that he did ask her out, it went well and he was hoping to "get some" from her soon. Yet another post shows that he did indeed.

Now, if I were that AnneMarie, I would be a little red in the face over my beau's candor. Why did he feel that public forum, in this case a blogging and friend networking site, was an appropriate place to discuss him and his lady? I understand that guys talk, but the Internet is no locker room. Or is it? Have we

become so comfortable with the Internet that we no longer feel the need to self-censor our innermost thoughts and most personal encounters?

I live by the rule that if I wouldn't want my grandmother (a very hip lady) to read it, see it or hear it, I probably shouldn't be posting it online. Others, it appears, have no such qualms. Maybe it's the ease with which people can quickly pound out their feelings on a keyboard. Maybe it's the quasi-anonymity of the Internet. Maybe it's the pressure involved with our speedy American way of living and the constant emphasis on sending and receiving information quickly.

In the end, like most human endeavors, reverse voyeurism seems to be rooted in the intense need to connect and communicate with others. Instead of writing an e-mail or, heaven forbid, a letter (on paper with a pen and a stamp involved) to one's friends and family, a mass blog post gets the message out quicker and easier than any other mechanism. No longer simply a dumping point for unfounded political rants and bad poetry (okay, it still is, but also so much more), blogging seems to have permeated our lives in a profound way. But is that such a good thing? For this and answers to all life's problems, check out my blog at [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com). Hey, all my friends are doing it.

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## Guest commentary

# American obesity is as much a problem as other "thin" disorders

On Monday April 11, the Oregon Daily Emerald published a column titled, "Starving for Appearances." Ailee Slater's contention was that America's weight control pandemic is nothing more than a way to tell people how they need to look, that it masks awareness for eating disorders and health concerns and regresses women back to a state of objectification.

Is this true? It probably is. However, the baby should not be thrown out with the bath water.

The vast majority of Americans, according to obesityfocused.com, are overweight (64 percent). About one third of the country is defined as obese.

Also, while the number one killer of Americans is not "being fat," obesity is a major contributor to health problems such as heart disorders, high blood pressure, diabetes, os-

teoarthritis and many others. Losing weight doesn't just make one look better for the aesthetic enjoyment of others, it also reduces the likelihood of developing major health problems.

Dropping pounds also does something that most conventional drugs don't do: It treats the cause of health problems instead of merely the symptoms. But this doesn't solve the fact that corporate America's focus on weight is still telling women how to look.

While there is little help that can be offered, it should be pointed out that weight issues are not the only societal concern to which women are subjected. Women are told what to think regarding skin care, make-up, hair care, hair color, changing fashion, plastic surgery, men and how to get them and even what type of orgasm

to have. Pick up any standard women's magazine, and any number of these topics will canvas the cover.

Yet, obesity is a problem getting worse every year, and not just in the United States. Worldwide, the overweight people outnumber those that are malnourished.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." While it may be painful to admit, corporate America is the medium that must be used. Though commercialism coats the message, this is a necessary message all the same. America has a weight problem and ignoring it will just make it worse.

So, let's get out the message and let the consumer decide what it means.

*Matt Hansen lives in Eugene*

## INBOX

### Radio station needs public affairs talk

Campus radio station KWAX-FM deserves financial support. I try to give it within my limits. I also am willing to tolerate on-the-air fundraising necessary to keep it afloat.

Less tolerable is the chatter I heard one afternoon about how the station's format changed years ago to full-time classical music. It was hard

to accept the pro-classics comments (which I share) of the two male voices whose on-the-air persona, I feel, reveals that neither may know nor care much about classical music. Listeners continue to enjoy the music despite the anachronism of these two male announcers not in tune with the classics.

Their recall of times distant past did remind me of the one area in which KWAX remains inadequate

today. Its absence of any public affairs broadcasting ignores the major resource it has of faculty specialists who could comment authoritatively about global and national developments. The music would be enhanced, not hurt, by a brief hour daily — or maybe just on weekends — during which campus experts could be tapped for valuable insights.

*George Beres  
Eugene*

## OREGON DAILY EMERALD LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged, and should be sent to [letters@dailyemerald.com](mailto:letters@dailyemerald.com) or submitted at the Oregon Daily Emerald office, EMD 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.

## Editorial

# Iraq 'victory' plans target taxpayers, not terrorists

When the United States made the decision to go into Iraq, there were a few purposes of that expedition: remove Saddam Hussein from power, attempt to rid the country of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist action and help set up a democratic system of government for Iraqi citizens. More than two years later, Saddam has been removed from his hole; as for the other U.S. goals ... well, let's just say Saddam's not the only one with his head in the ground when it comes to dealing with the nation of Iraq.

It was reported today that terrorist acts worldwide rose sharply in 2004, and most of the additions occurred because of insurgents in Iraq who were angry because of heavy U.S. presence. Earlier this month, tens of thousands of Iraqis gathered to protest the ongoing presence of U.S. troops. Although it is impossible to determine whether terrorist acts would have risen or decreased had the United States never invaded Iraq, the fact remains that as long as our country stays at the helm of Iraq, terrorist acts are not likely to recede.

There is no timetable for a reduction of troops, and U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has said that "we don't have an exit strategy; we have a victory strategy."

Rumsfeld fails to mention that achieving this so-called "victory" will take a lot more than strategy: Rumsfeld and the rest of the Bush administration are advocating a victory built on the backs of U.S. soldiers and taxpayers.

Although soldiers sign a contract upon entering the military that determines the amount of time they will spend working for the armed forces, the United States has prevented about 14,000 soldiers with expired contracts from leaving the military. Under the U.S. "stop-loss" program, soldiers who signed a contract and failed to read the small print are basically required to continue military duty as long as the army deems necessary.

If you thought that the draft was a thing of the past, the stop-loss program will surely make you think again. Many military families, upset over the forcible extension of loved ones' armed service, continually use the term "backdoor draft."

Furthermore, the United States has already spent more than \$300 billion to occupy Iraq. According to the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, unless U.S. troops are drastically reduced, a total of \$646 billion will have been spent by 2015. It's no secret that our country is currently experiencing a severe deficit. Rumsfeld's hotheaded ideal of victory is funding itself straight from the pocketbooks of current and future U.S. taxpayers.

There is no way to erase the past: The United States has invaded Iraq, and that is that. However, the time has come for our country to develop a new strategy, or at least form some sort of exit plan that will be beneficial to the Iraqi people, the U.S. military and the taxpayers of our nation. If we stick around Iraq long enough to glimpse Rumsfeld's "victory strategy," the end result will likely be anything but victorious, for both nations involved.

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