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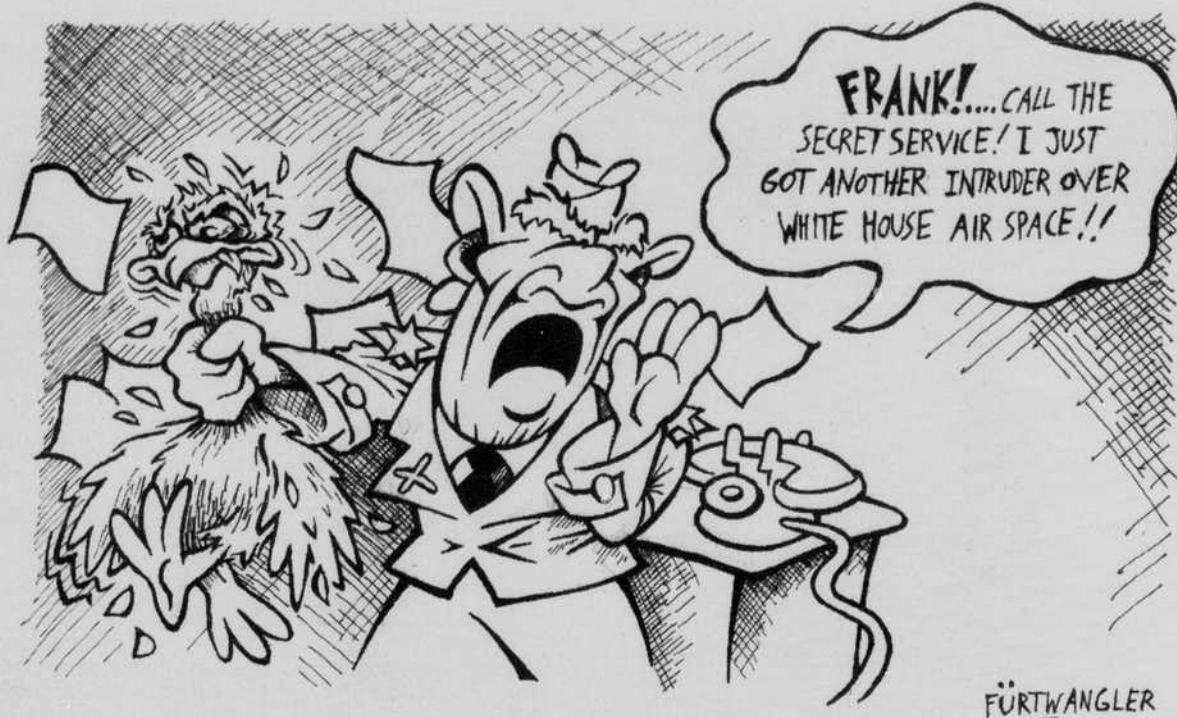
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■ In my opinion

The value of anonymity

There are a lot of things I don't understand in this world. For example, scientists in November were able to produce batteries powered by the properties of ground-up spinach. Apparently peas would have worked just as well, but professor Shuguang Zhang, associate director of the Center for Biomedical Engineering at M.I.T., said spinach is cheaper and more available. "You can buy nice bags of washed baby spinach, and you can get that year-round," he stated.

While Popeye might have considered spinach-powered batteries possible, I certainly hadn't. My admittedly limited capacities have also been baffled by the current events of this week.

I don't understand the recent riots commonly blamed on a hotly contested Newsweek article. The piece alleged that soldiers at Guantanamo Bay flushed a copy of the Quran down a toilet in the process of interrogation, though the story has since been retracted. Protests spread like wildfire across the Muslim world, from Indonesia to Pakistan to Palestine. In Afghanistan, unrest caused the death of 16 people and the injuries to many more.

If the allegations are true, which they probably aren't, flushing the Quran was a stupid move on the interrogators' part. Not only was it likely to increase general tension, but it also doesn't seem to be an effective technique. Why would such blasphemy encourage terrorist suspects to cough up information helping U.S. interests?

However, regardless of side issues, I think the Bush administration is trying to find a scapegoat that's not grazing in its own backyard.

Granted, I'm not Newsweek's biggest fan. I consider Newsweek, TIME and U.S. News & World Report



JENNIFER MCBRIDE
QUASHING DISSENT

as the big three "McNews" of the magazine world, serving pre-processed lard completely devoid of nutritional value. However, I do not think that Newsweek truly erred in running the article. In matters of national security and secrecy, it's important to consider that sources are often anonymous for obvious reasons. Newspapers must often rely, as Newsweek did, on one anonymous source. If only one whistleblower comes forward, it doesn't mean the story is untrue; sometimes bringing uncorroborated details into the public light is the only way to encourage others to come forward. I hope this incident will not make reporters hesitant to jump on wrongful acts perpetuated by the United States, even if the sources are anonymous.

It would, of course, be nice to see such allegations reported as rumors, not facts. Even so, Newsweek went above and beyond the normal call by submitting the article to the Pentagon for comment before it hit publication. Mark Whitaker, editor of Newsweek, said the news item came back with no dispute about the Quran detail until days later, just hours before Newsweek's deadline. The fact that the Pentagon took so long to verify this story suggests to me there was something to investigate and something worthy of public interest.

Additionally, no one could have anticipated the furor the story would cause. Stories about Quran abuse have been printed before without unleashing massive protests.

Whitaker also notes that there was a time lag between when the story first appeared and when the protests began, adding that the Newsweek article was one of many elements leading to the riots.

Despite these mitigating factors, White House spokesman Scott McClellan seems to be putting most of the blame squarely on the shoulders of Newsweek's staff, continually discussing the serious consequences of the report and detailing lives lost as a result.

It's all well and good for Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to claim that people need to be just as careful about what they say as what they do, but the uproar over Newsweek's use of anonymous sources is misdirected at best. Riots did not occur in a vacuum but were the result of a pressured buildup that was exploited by extremists. Clearly, the policies of the United States in Guantanamo Bay and the world in general need to be addressed. Anti-U.S. sentiment only endangers our lives, creates instability and derails peace processes essential to world harmony.

I only wish that mistakes, when made, could be less fatal. Mark Whitaker is not denying that his magazine could have been more careful. Let us hope that we, the general public, don't make the mistake of allowing a debate over sources to overshadow the terrible incidents that have occurred at interrogators' hands.

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■ Editorial

Fees without perks unfair for students in Portland

How would you feel if, after stepping into the Student Recreation Center and preparing to swipe your student ID card, you were instead told to shell out \$5? What if you got onto the city bus, just as you do every morning, and had to pay full fare? You would be rightfully mad, because the truth is that you have already paid for these services with your incidental fees. To pay more money for the use of buses or student facilities is double taxation. And yet, this is exactly what a group of University students is forced to deal with.

Last week, the Emerald reported that students at the University's Portland Center had filed grievances with the ASUO ("Students at Portland satellite file grievances," ODE, May 10). Angry about paying incidental fees without receiving the same benefits as students on the Eugene campus, these students want their money back.

Although concerns among Portland campus students were brought up earlier this year ("Committee formed to advocate for equal perks," ODE, Jan. 5; "Students doubt justice of fees," ODE, Feb. 23), neither the administration nor the ASUO took steps to address the problem.

The Portland Student Action Council, created in early 2005, rightly strives to give Portland students the perks they deserve. Here in Eugene, our incidental fees allow us to ride the local bus system, use the rec center, ride with Assault Prevention Shuttle or Designated Driver Shuttle and access sporting events, all for free.

Students at the Portland satellite campus receive none of these benefits. Each time their incidental fee money goes toward one of these Eugene services, Portland students are paying for someone else's free ride.

Interestingly, students at the University's other satellite campus in Bend are not required to pay incidental fees. It therefore seems that the Portland campus fiasco is based on some strange University oversight. Administrators obviously realize that satellite campuses should not be forced to fund perks for Eugene students, and yet nothing has been done to remedy the situation.

Likewise, the ASUO has been unwilling to seriously evaluate or solve PSAC concerns. In January, ASUO Vice President Mena Ravasipour said that student government was simply unaware of the incidental fee situation and promised that students' concerns would be addressed.

As of yet, the ASUO has done no tangible work to correct the problem. Although student government may not have the power to decide how much students pay in incidental fees, the ASUO should at least use its power as a major figurehead to advocate for the Portland campus students. PSAC's wise decision to file grievances shows that the issue of equality in benefits will not go away on its own. We hope that this time the University will not try to use time as a device to shove the concerns of PSAC underneath the administrative rug.

It is costly enough to put oneself through an education. The University is making these Portland students throw away money on unusable services, and that is just plain wrong. Until comparable perks can be offered at the University's Portland Center, those students should not be required to pay money toward benefit that benefit someone else.

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