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In my opinion

Return to the Moon

Last week, NASA announced a plan to begin sending astronauts back to the moon by 2018. For \$104 billion, NASA plans to build and launch a craft that resembles a combination of the Apollo rockets and the current generation space shuttles.

While the engineering behind these proposed flights is ingenious, the public relations for the project has gotten off to a rocky start. NASA decided to announce the plan in between two major humanitarian crises — Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. From a PR standpoint, that is a major no-no. As a result, some in the media have balked at the price of the project and questioned its value. How, they ask, can we possibly afford to go back to the moon while we are busy fighting a war abroad and trying to rebuild a major city back home?

However, the first thing we need to understand about the new moon project is that NASA is not asking for more money in order to do this — the money is already there. The new moon voyage is one component of the new space program first announced by President Bush on Jan. 14, 2004.

This plan has been in the works for a while. Despite the unfortunate timing of the announcement, the moon missions are already in the budget.

Furthermore, we need to understand that space exploration has major benefits for our daily lives. While most of us will never leave Earth's orbit, the general advancement of human understanding has immensely practical benefits. There are, of course, the numerous biological and chemical experiments that can only be conducted in space. Moreover, there are numerous unintended consequential byproducts of space travel.

History has shown that whenever you



GABE BRADLEY
THE WRITING ON THE WALL

put a group of smart people together to solve a problem, they end up inventing or discovering some pretty useful stuff in order to solve that problem. Research for space travel has already brought technological advances in medicine, communications and transportation. If you have a relatively new car, there are most likely several components in that vehicle that have their origins in space research.

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about the new moon voyage, though, is that it is an investment that will ultimately save billions of dollars on future space voyages.

The idea is to use the moon as a lily pad from which we will leapfrog further into space. By establishing a presence on the moon from which to build, launch and supply ships, we will ultimately save money on voyages to Mars and beyond. Also, the moon is an ideal place to conduct certain phases of training and research for future space voyages.

For all these reasons, I enthusiastically support NASA's plan to return to the moon. This weekend, though, I was reminded of another reason.

I was in Portland on Friday and on my way back, I decided to stop by the IMAX theater at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. It was opening day for a new documentary produced and narrated by actor Tom Hanks, who

played astronaut Jim Lovell in the movie "Apollo 13."

Using a combination of NASA archives, re-enactments and computer generated imagery, "Magnificent Desolation: Walking on the Moon 3D" showcased our journeys to the moon in an astounding light.

Dedicated to those who have given their lives in the exploration of space, this documentary shows the viewer what the moon might have looked like for those few explorers who received the chance to take the "ultimate road trip," as astronaut Buzz Aldrin calls the lunar voyages.

As I watched this film, I was struck by the words on the plaque that the Apollo 11 astronauts left on the moon. "We Came In Peace For All Mankind ..."

Journeying to the moon was once the province of science fiction. Now it is fact. Establishing a moon base to launch longer voyages is currently the province of science fiction. Soon, that will become fact. Science fiction is becoming science fact. But in science fiction, space is usually a battleground. So far, that has remained science fiction. Space is not a battleground. Space is virtually the only sphere of human influence that has not been scarred by war.

Space is international territory. And efforts like the International Space Station seek to keep space exploration as a joint, peaceful venture with benefits for all humanity.

In order to fulfill and continue that noble vision, we ought to journey not only the moon, but beyond.

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INBOX

Columnist advocates facism in a new century?

I don't imagine Jessica Derleth would describe herself as an opponent of democracy, but she may not realize how closely her opinion column (ODE Sept. 19, "public displays' and 'venus opinion traps' Destroy Discourse") mimics arguments for facism from the last century. Where democracy has been lost, its opponents have often employed rhetoric of order, decorum and sanitation. Derleth does likewise. She describes her experience at a parade for President Bush's second inauguration, where protesters "shouted obscene language while families and children attempted to peacefully watch the parade." Derleth couches the rhetoric of order in think-the-children terms.

Even the title on Derleth's article is a sneaky bit of Orwellian doublespeak. Stripped of its artful language, "public displays' and 'venus opinion traps' Destroy Discourse" could be easily recast as "Free Speech Destroys Free Speech."

Derleth assures us she supports expression. "I think everyone has the right to protest, but these people were taking things too far," Derleth says, noting also that the actions of the protesters "were completely unnecessary." Advocates of facism often claimed the citizens had gone too far in exercising their freedoms and called for a strong leader who could restore society to its former greatness and civility. That restoration is a bit less complicated if free speech is viewed as an unnecessary vulgarity.

Free speech is often vulgar. Democracy is often messy. We can change all that. We can sanitize and disinfect, but

the bits of rubbish we will sweep from the streets will be our liberty.

Paul Hood
Graduate Teaching Fellow

'Mainstream America' degrades minorities

As the tragedy in New Orleans deepens, people are discussing the role of racism in how the emergency was managed. An example, I keep hearing is that the term "refugee" demeans the displaced.

In broad terms, some people most certainly are seeking refuge, so what's the problem? Supposedly, "refugee" implies a fleeing from one's country, which associates hurricane survivors with foreigners, and therefore exacerbates apathy and disconnection regarding their plight.

What should disturb us is racism toward actual refugees, which makes the previous point valid.

The association between foreign refugees and U.S. citizens of a minority race is only degrading when we leave unchallenged the less human status of non-American refugees. Must we remind ourselves that hurricane victims are citizens in order to feel an urgency about their well-being? Is their suffering dissimilar to that of refugees from the tsunami, or Rwandagenocide? For that matter, is the grief of a child dependent on whether she was orphaned by U.S. fire against Iraqi insurgents, or the subway bombings in London?

Constant reminders that the darker faces on TV belong to U.S. citizens makes sense, considering what the marginalized have known for centuries:

"American" implicitly equates with white, moneyed, English-speaking, Christian, heterosexual, able-bodied, male patriots. If I was left in the floods of Katrina pleading for help, I'm sure I'd emphasize any connection I had to "mainstream America." Let's not forget, however, that rallying support behind a red, white, and blue banner feeds xenophobia, blinding nationalism and global racism.

Lucas Spiegel
Eugene

CORRECTION

In the Sept. 19 Emerald article "Protesting for Peace," the Emerald should have clarified that the list of University research projects provided by graduate student Brian Bogart were not classified by the military.

• The Emerald should have reported Department of Defense grants constituted about 2.5 percent of the University's federal government grants in the 2004-05 school year.

• The Emerald should have reported that all funding connections with the Pentagon or Department of Defense have paper trails.

In Monday's Emerald article "Eugene explores proposed police officer audit system," the Emerald should have reported Eugene Police Department Officer Roger Magaña was convicted of raping and sexually assaulting more than a dozen women in July 2004, and his trainee, Juan Lara, received his sentence in February 2004.

The Emerald regrets the errors.

Editorial

Mosaic's definition of diversity misleading

In the final days of spring term, the School of Journalism and Communication quietly distributed new copies of Mosaic, a publication devoted to exploring diversity issues in college newsrooms.

But the periodical, which purports to use journalism to explore a tremendously complex and sensitive issue, got it all wrong. Mosaic neither provides a balanced view, nor does it provide an accurate picture of the diversity in the Emerald newsroom. Yet it does warn of the dangers of advocacy journalism.

Advocacy journalism seeks to bring about change by arguing a stance, and we feel it has no place in any journalism-school-sponsored program. Reporting through a lens does not clarify — it distorts.

First, Mosaic ignored key journalism precepts. Avoiding conflicts of interest, a cornerstone of objective journalism, was swept aside as Emerald staff members working on Mosaic were asked to shoot photos and contribute interviews about the Emerald. Similarly, many "reporters" for the publication held ties to advocacy groups on campus, a clear conflict of interest and a violation of ethics.

Second, at least in the case of the article regarding the Emerald, the reporting was not only flawed but openly biased. We understand that, "It was simply not feasible for (Mosaic) to mount our own comprehensive survey of newspaper staffs."

Yet making concessions that your reporting is not up-to-snuff does not excuse it — it should invalidate it.

Proudly, the Emerald was the paper where "one student editor simply refused (to disclose racial data), arguing that minority status was not a criterion for employment and that furthermore, it was an invasion of privacy."

The Emerald values talent, not skin color. The Mosaic reporter used an undisclosed method to calculate that minorities composed "6.5 percent of the newsroom staff," and he did not contact many members of the staff who consider themselves minorities. The article reported that "students of color make up 16 percent of about 16,000 undergraduate students at the UO," but those figures, based on two-year-old data from the National Center for Education Statistics, also included international students.

We agree that international students increase diversity, but if Mosaic can argue that diversity can come from a different world view, then it's not a stretch to say that diversity is more than country of origin or race.

The Emerald employs nontraditional students, students from different ethnic, religious, political and economic backgrounds, and students of different genders and sexual orientations. These factors all contribute to the diversity of our coverage.

We acknowledge that this University has serious inequalities and deficiencies in regard to racial minorities, and we should all call for the rectification of such problems.

However, Mosaic makes one last logical fallacy — that "parity" between the ratio of ethnic minority students and those on college newspaper staffs leads to better coverage. It's certainly easier to report on things you know personally, but the reporter's job is to think beyond his or her personal bubble.

Many journalism professors espouse framing stories properly — considering all of the possible viewpoints within a story and how they will be presented. It's unfortunate that the Mosaic staff chose to frame this story in such a narrow and misleading manner.