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■ Guest commentary

Professor should keep attacks free of unjustified claims of racism

In response to Professor Coleman's editorial ("Out-of-control football fan behavior is intolerable," ODE Nov. 9), I am one of the many students who is also disappointed with the behavior of our disrespectful students and fans. I completely agree that the University should not tolerate the behavior that occurs within the student section.

However, you seem surprised that the students booed the opposing band. No, it is not the best demonstration of sportsmanship, but it is not surprising. As a senior member of the Oregon Marching Band, I have been booed at every single away game I have attended for the past four years. I have had things yelled at me, thrown at me; I have been spit at, sworn at and physically pushed. The OMB has a tradition of clapping and cheering for the opposing band, and also creating gift bags for visiting musicians and are recognized as a classy organization.

I have friends in the UW and OSU bands that enjoy visiting our stadium because of the warm encouragement provided by our band. I have certain-

ly been embarrassed at the behavior of our student section, booing everything not in green and yellow, sneaking in alcohol and drugs, passing out and puking in the stands ... it is disgusting, but you, professor, shifted your attack in such random ways that I feel your argument has been completely invalidated. For example, the racial implications of booing some Husky band members. Our drum majors are booed along with our band as we travel, and our drum majors are all white!

The booing of the UW drum major, particularly after a dropped baton, was not a racial issue. The students booed before they could see who the drum major was!

Following the unjustified racial statement, you began to insult our band. Given that you are not part of the School of Music, it is perhaps justifiable that you do not understand how to compare marching bands. For clarification, the UW band is a traditional marching band, limiting their repertoire to marches and using a showy technique called "high step." They employ simple moves in order

to allow focus on stand-still music and drill visuals. Their uniforms reflect their traditional style.

The OMB is a contemporary marching band. We play many different tunes and do not limit our repertoire. Just think about the last eight years of shows, or maybe you haven't paid enough attention to the music, given the distraction of our shiny "military helmets." We also use a different marching technique to make our motions more uniform. A couple of years ago, it was decided that we would change our uniforms to something more contemporary: new and different, to reflect our style. Yes, our uniforms are very different than UW but so is our style and music. We are a very respectable marching band; one of the top in the country. But I guess you are probably too concerned with the racism in the student section and the shiny helmets on the field to listen to us play. Try purchasing an OMB CD and supporting the school that you so eloquently referred to as "well-respected."

Beth Overgard is a University senior, and four-year OMB member

INBOX

Your rights aren't on hold during confrontations

Thank you for publishing Jonathan Irwin's account of last month's Critical Mass bike ride ("Police hostility toward bicyclists hinders progressive movement," ODE Nov. 8). Being that I was one of the cyclists who got detained and cited, I'm glad the Emerald is helping spread awareness of the regularly occurring harassment that Critical Mass participants suffer by the Eugene Police. I would like to take this opportunity to remind readers of their rights, quoted from lawcollective.org:

"If an officer tries to start a conversation with you, find out whether you're free to go. If you are, then you should leave immediately, without saying anything else.

"If you're not free to go, the police may merely be 'detaining' you while they decide if they have enough evidence for an arrest. During this period, say nothing except: I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer.

"If you are arrested, you'll have to give your name and show ID to be considered for release. Except when an officer's asking for your name or ID, say: I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer. Don't answer any other questions or make any remarks.

"(When others are being detained) you have the right to observe and film the police. You can stay as close as is necessary to see and hear clearly, as long as you don't interfere with the officer's 'work.'"

The more people know their rights, the less easy it is for police to put false statements in the report. Keep this in-

formation in mind even if you think you'll never have to use it.

Ashley Wright
University Alumna

Do research before saying unfounded judgments

I would like to respond to Alex Deley's guest commentary regarding the Nov. 1 visit by Dr. Mitchell Bard that was sponsored by Oregon Hillel and the Jewish Student Union ("Narrow minds inhibit peace," ODE Nov. 10).

Mr. Deley should get his facts straight. Dr. Bard is not presently affiliated with AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee). Second, Mr. Deley's criticism that Dr. Bard refused to answer a particular question posed to him "immediately after the lecture" is also incorrect; we allowed Dr. Bard approximately 45 minutes after the lecture for questions, and no question similar to the one that Mr. Deley described was posed by anyone in the audience. If there were a private exchange with Dr. Bard as he was leaving, then the criticism is nonetheless unfounded and misleading.

As to the content of Dr. Bard's talk, Oregon Hillel invites speakers with a wide variety of viewpoints in order to foster dialogue and discussion; I am happy that we were successful in provoking discussion.

Together with that, I might add that it is ironic that Mr. Deley's anguish and disagreement of Dr. Bard's description of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization comes in the same week that the Argentinean government connected Hezbollah directly to the 1994 bombing of the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 and injured 200 civilians — the worst terrorist attack in Argentina's history:

www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/america/11/09/argentina.bombing.ap/.

Thank you for the opportunity to set the record straight.

Hal M. Applebaum
Executive Director
Oregon Hillel

Professor's letter implies racism at football game

Emeritus Professor E.L. Coleman's letter ("Out-of-control football fan behavior is intolerable," ODE Nov. 9) takes an admirable stand against recent behavior at Duck football games, and correctly calls for the censure of those fans who display unbecoming conduct.

Where Coleman goes wrong, however, is in the insinuation that a chorus of boos following an African-American drum major's fumble were racially motivated. While in no way discounting the centuries of very real enormities endured by blacks, frankly, it is absurd to presume that race played any factor in the case at hand. Indeed, someone of Coleman's impressive accomplishments in the field of African-American studies (he is listed in "Who's Who in Black America") should know better than to resort to a wholesale characterization of all the fans who laughed at the drum major's mistake as having done so on the basis of racial prejudice.

And while it's worth noting that I harbor no misconceptions of racism as solely a thing of the past, it is disingenuous for Coleman to impulsively assume that racism was at play here. In doing so, Coleman does us all a disservice, and does nothing to further advance a productive dialogue on the state of race relations today.

Miles Church Kane
University student

■ Editorial

Mutual respect is necessary for change

After an extended period of near-silence, French President Jacques Chirac has finally come out with a statement addressing the root cause of recent rioting in France. During his first major speech since the youth riots began, Chirac called attention to the "deep malaise" and discrimination within French society, which led to underprivileged community members taking matters into their own hands.

He pledged to create a civil service that would offer jobs and training for 50,000 youths by 2007. With this move, Chirac is providing his country with options and ideas besides deportation and curfews. Perhaps Chirac has realized that the root problems of the rioting stem far beyond youth unrest and the desire to burn things.

Thankfully, Chirac has promised to work toward equal opportunity for French youth. Unfortunately, there is still much work to be done. He must acknowledge and also pledge to deal with the state of impoverished French suburbs, as well as the issue of discrimination faced by many Muslims in France. Chirac's recent statement that foreign rioters ought to lose their French citizenship is probably not the best way to quell religious, ethnic, or racial tensions.

Chirac is correct in his belief that "[If] one belongs to our national community one must respect the rules." In order to create a nation of people who respect the rules, those citizens must first be secure in the knowledge that they are an important part of their national community. Now is the time for Chirac to prove his regard for the underprivileged, and encourage a mutuality of respect.

Congress' voting-rights review should consider immigrants

Next week, Congress will complete its review of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and decide which portions of the act should be renewed. One provision, debated before the House Judiciary Committee earlier this month, mandates bilingual election material for certain jurisdictions. If an election jurisdiction's voting population includes more than 5 percent (or, at least 10,000 citizens) of people who speak a single minority language, then bilingual ballots, pamphlets, etc. must be offered.

Those who oppose renewing the bilingual voting provision claim that the government shouldn't waste resources translating election material, because the test to become a U.S. citizen already mandates a knowledge of reading and understanding the English language. If voters have become U.S. citizens, they must already have a comprehension of the language; therefore, bilingual ballots are unnecessary.

This argument, however, fails to take into account the fact that people without a firm grasp on the English language will be at a disadvantage if election material includes complicated wording or colloquial phrases. Why take a step to make voting more difficult for any portion of the population?

When deciding which parts of the act should be renewed, Congress ought to remember the United State's historical position as a nation of immigrants. Approving a decision that decreases minority participation in democracy would be a decidedly un-American move. Financial ramifications, and minimal ones at that, should not dictate the disappearance of bilingual election materials.

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