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■ In my opinion

You call this a protest?

Monday's Emerald had a picture of a war protester wearing a big, stupid-looking grin on his face as he was led away by the Eugene Police Department to be charged with criminal trespassing ("Nonviolent Iraq War protesters arrested on University campus," ODE, Nov. 21). This fellow was one of seven people arrested at a protest outside the University's Military Science building on Friday morning. Four more from the same group were arrested at another demonstration later that day.

As I look at the picture of the protester being led away, I can't figure out what he's grinning about because this has got to be one of the lamest little protests I've ever heard of. In a community with more than 190,000 people, this protest had a grand total of about 50. Of those, 11 volunteered to commit a crime as a publicity stunt to bring attention to their little tea party.

I'm a huge fan of the First Amendment. I think it's great that people are allowed to express all sorts of ideas in all sorts of ways. Having said that, I'm going to use my First Amendment right to discuss just why this protest registers an 11 out of 10 on my lame-o-meter.

First, the message of this protest was poorly planned. By protesting first in front of an ROTC building and then later in front of a military recruiting station, these protesters were a world away from the policy makers who actually make the decisions they're protesting. ROTC cadets do not make policy decisions — they don't decide when and where to go to war. ROTC cadets are merely college students who are training their bodies and minds in order to serve their country when the time comes.

Ever since the disgraceful displays of the Vietnam era, the cardinal rule of war protesting has been to protest



GABE BRADLEY
THE WRITING ON THE WALL

the policy decisions, not the troops. By protesting in front of these facilities, though, the protesters have broken that rule. They're no longer protesting a decision made by a group of politicians in Washington; they're protesting the decisions made by the brave men and women who choose the defense of freedom as their profession.

While there are many Americans who disagree with our nation's current foreign entanglements, there are hardly any who think the finest among us should be discouraged from enlisting or seeking commissioning in our armed forces. These protesters are putting out a muddled message that simply will not resonate with many Americans.

This brings me to my second point about the lameness of Friday's protest: The melodramatic rhetoric was laughably out of proportion to the actual effect of the protest. "It was time to take a stronger stand — this does make a statement to the public about what we're willing to risk," protester Karla Cohen told the Emerald.

What the community sees is that a group of people too small to fill a school bus were willing to stand in the cold for a couple of hours on a weekday morning. I've put more effort than that into getting tickets to a football game.

Moreover, 11 retirees and college

kids were willing give up their lunch hour in order to get a small citation. Big deal. I've seen bigger police crackdowns targeted at a handful of freshmen carrying a case of Mike's Hard Lemonade.

This protest was barely a ripple in the ocean, but those involved talk about it like Ghandi himself made the fliers.

Protest organizer Peter Chabarek was quoted as saying, "We are openly breaking the law in order to bring attention to the much greater injustice of the Iraq war." What bunk.

The bottom line is the stakes are just too small in this protest. This is not like the civil rights movement, where there was an absolute right or wrong being debated. The civil rights movement was led by philosophers and a minister who were fighting for a fundamental and absolute sense of justice — trying to preserve the God-given dignity in every person that some people were trying to steal. That was a high-stakes moral issue that shook a whole country to its core. It was an epic and historic struggle that continues to this day.

So you'll forgive me if I laugh at the Michael Moore book club when it tries to use the same tactics and rhetoric to tell a group of young people that they disagree with their career choices.

This protest was not anti-war; it was anti-military. And if there had been any significant support at all for such a demonstration, it would be sad. However, the "little protest that couldn't" had so few people and such a small effect that it's just plain funny to me. I look at the picture of the protester grinning while he's led away. It seems to me that the joke is on him.

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■ Editorial

University must protect and defend faculty

When a professor decides to publish as an academic and as a representative member of this University, he or she does so with the expectation that such rigorous participation is expected and protected. After all, there is the old faculty saying that professors must "publish or perish." Sadly, at this institution, it might be better deemed "publish and perish."

When University law professor Merle Weiner referenced a court case in an article published last year, she found herself facing a defamation lawsuit from someone mentioned in her article. Because the University would not aid Weiner in the case, she had to seek private council.

Although Weiner said the University would not defend her because writing the article was not directly related to her job, such scholarly work should be protected. The University's faculty handbook explicitly promises to defend and aid professors against charges brought against them within the normal line of duty, and this article should qualify for those protections.

She also presented the Emerald with an e-mail from University General Counsel Melinda Grier, in which Grier suggests Weiner remove the reference to the plaintiff from her article. As Weiner argues, removing information from her article would cheapen it.

The University's cowardice in the face of litigation is disgraceful. Publishing is one of the key tenants of academic life. Unfortunately, in the present day, so is going to court. We believe that publishing an article that regards one's chosen discipline is well within the reasonable boundaries of one's role as a University faculty employee. We urge the University Senate to take action to protect faculty members who are working to enhance our reputation as a research university.

Judge's conservatism conflicts with needed objectivity

As Judge Samuel Alito's January judiciary committee questioning slowly approaches, some Americans may begin to take it for granted that he will be appointed to the Supreme Court. He may well be appointed as a justice unless someone from the Democratic party can stand up and rightly attack Alito for his laundry list of unappealing characteristics.

Samuel Alito believes that women should be required to notify their spouses before having an abortion; he has written praise of himself for contributing to cases that argued "the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion." We have no guarantees that he would honor the precedent set by Roe v. Wade if appointed.

Alito once wrote in a job application, "I am and always have been a conservative." Judges are not supposed to have views that put them on either side of the party line. Judges are expected to fairly apply the constitution to real world situations, and political or religious viewpoints should never be a factor in judicial decision making. Alito's personal definition of his own political leanings makes the judge unfit for the Supreme Court.

Alito is, like Miers, an old friend of President Bush. Alito might have more judicial experience than Miers, but hiring your friends to run the country is still not a good idea. The fact that words such as "cronism" have entered our lexicon to describe Bush's recent appointments betrays the foolishness of this move.

This week, Sen. Ken Salazar, a Democrat from Colorado, said in an interview that there is still a small chance that Democrats might filibuster the Alito hearing. Comparing Judge Alito to the what a Supreme Court judge should be, it is apparent that a filibuster may be the best choice.

■ Guest commentary

Duck football game security and fan behavior need an upgrade

My father had bought me football season tickets to my alma mater, Oregon State University. To reciprocate his kindness, I paid an exorbitantly high price for a pair of Civil War tickets. This would be my father's first trip to Autzen Stadium, and it was my chance to say thank you.

We came dressed in orange and black, knowing it would be a hostile crowd. But this was in all good fun, right? It was just a football game.

What ensued from the kick off was constant barrage of harassment from multiple Duck fans. Three different fans were actively trying to pick fights with myself and my 60-year-old dad.

At halftime, two Duck fans just couldn't handle the fact two Beaver fans were in their presence. They got

in my face and both sucker punched me, once in the back of the head. In the ensuing melee the security came down and broke up the fight, but that was it. No warnings. No investigation. The only proactive thing security did was throw my dad's OSU hat in the garbage.

My dad and I, wanting to watch the last moments of Beaver season, went back to our seats after halftime. Numerous Duck fans came by to check on my dad and me. They all said, "Not all Duck fans have that little class." Yet as the game deteriorated into a rout, the surrounding Duck fans continued to hurl a constant barrage of insults and profanities at the two of us. My father, having had enough, turned to me and asked if we could leave.

I know that not all Duck fans are

that bad. It was heartening to have a group of total strangers come up and check on us. But the overall culture in the section we were sitting in was to ignore the actions of the local bullies. Compounding the problem was the total incompetence and ineptitude of the University of Oregon security.

I really went to the game hoping to have a good time with my dad. Instead, I ended up with a concussion, and we both had the worst sporting experience of our lives. I'm sure not all Beaver fans had such a dismal time at the game, but I would recommend that until Autzen Stadium significantly upgrades its security no visiting team fan attend a game there.

Josh Balloch lives in Salem.

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