

simplistic reviews. How surprised and delighted she would have been with *Eugene Weekly's* intelligent, sensitive art and theater reviews.

Your reviewers thoroughly research their subjects, mining theater productions for historical relevancy and art exhibitions for cohesive themes. They avoid lazy analysis based on "this is good/this is bad" reactions to a work of art, instead providing readers with intelligent information and allowing us to make up our own mind about a production or exhibition.

Thank you for your thought-provoking and respectful arts coverage. It's much appreciated.

Melissa Hart
Eugene

CONFUSED CAMPAIGNS

The feature story about PFC James Burmeister and the war in Iraq ("Back to Iraq?" *EW* 5/22) was a provocative and personalized piece. As a veteran of military service in Afghanistan, I appreciate it when editors and journalists will research and break a story that carries the force necessary to shake the ambivalence that we often show toward the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, toward the foreign policy of the U.S. and toward veterans. However, the force and effectiveness of your efforts are undermined by your sloppy proofreading and fact-checking.

Your article described soldiers in Iraq firing "762 millimeter rounds" and cited "Operation Enduring Freedom" as "the official title of the U.S. invasion of Iraq." While the deletion of a period in what should have been reported as 7.62 millimeter rounds is a relatively minor mistake, confusing "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (the invasion of Iraq in 2003) with "Operation Enduring Freedom" (the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001) is irresponsible and only adds to the conflation of the two separate theaters and the reasons behind the two separate invasions.

Veterans and nonveterans alike will appreciate your attention to detail when discussing the effects and practices of war and when venturing to inform debate about the justness or injustice of our wars and the personal and collective accountability to ethics and morals.

Josh Grenzsund
Eugene

WAR IS HELL

I am writing in regard to the cover story (5/22) by Camilla Mortensen. The article could have started and finished with its first sentence: "PFC James Burmeister enlisted in the military because he thought he would be doing 'humanitarian work' in Iraq."

I am not sure what the point of this article was. Was it a travelogue of an individual's poor decisions, or was it an indictment of military practices in a combat theater? From the information offered in the article, I do not see Burmeister's actions as an orchestrated protest.

The anecdotes and descriptions of the battlefield and the associated atrocities should not be surprising to anyone remotely familiar with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Spanish American War, Boer Wars, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the war

in Vietnam, military action in Grenada, Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf War or the American Civil War. Even someone with no education is likely to have seen *The Deer Hunter*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Big Red One*, *The Thin Red Line* or any of the thousands of war and anti-war films that have been released since the 1950s.

I am empathetic to Burmeister, and I hope that his situation is resolved quickly, peacefully and satisfactorily.

I enjoy your newspaper and hope that Mortensen is able to produce more meritorious articles in the future.

Craig Murk
Waldport

ARROGANT RESPONSE

In the past few weeks, I have engaged in an email conversation with County Commissioner Bill Fleenor. My original email informed him I am a constituent of his and asked him to do everything in his power to fund public safety first, funding other services after public safety was sustained. His replies in the following days began with political doublespeak and ended with arrogant, condescending responses. He enlightened me by telling me that my emails were "indignant," I wouldn't be satisfied until "every single penny of tax payer money is placed in your pocket," and that he hopes I "get what I deserve."

I have looked at Fleenor's biographical information. It appears he's well educated and even has a master of science and doctorate in animal physiology from the University of Arizona. Apparently within that coursework he was not taught communicative skills, humility or tact. While I only have a bachelor's degree, I have a basic understanding of American civics. One of the fundamental principles of our democracy is permitting citizens to give their opinions to elected officials. Elected officials should then, in theory, take the information gathered from their constituents and make informed decisions.

I have suggested to Fleenor and encourage his supporters that his campaign slogan for his 2010 re-election should contain one concise slogan to articulate his sentiment towards the citizens he represents. This slogan should simply declare: "Vote for Fleenor: If you don't, you're greedy, indignant and you will get what you deserve."

Dustin Barton
Eugene

MOVE CEMETERY?

I have a friend who sometimes comes up with damn good ideas. His latest: Turn Mac Court into a "columbarium," that is, "a vault with niches for urns containing ashes of the dead" (American Heritage Dictionary). Why not? Enterprising individuals did that with the old, discarded Tillamook lighthouse; why not the old, discarded UO basketball arena as well?

There's even a ready source of starter material just across the street!

Doug, you're a freaking genius. Now: Get us out of Iraq, OK?

Bill Smee
Springfield

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