

OREGON COMMENTATOR

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Radical immoderation

By CJ Ciaramella
Associate Editor

When the Oregon Commentator debuted 24 years ago in 1983, it was in the midst of the “Reagan Revolution.” The front-page article by Michael Rust, entitled “Radical moderation”, described the effects of this conservative tide on the liberal bastion of Eugene and the University of Oregon. As Rust explained,

“the most popular explanation seemed to be that some vast horde of religious fanatics had risen throughout the country with the general objective of wiping out tidy little citadels of progressivism such as Eugene.”

Now, 25 years later and far past those halcyon days of the Commentator’s beginnings, the situation seems very different and yet much the same. The roles have not changed; Leftist orthodoxy is still alive and well at the U of O, and the Commentator is still fighting against it, fighting for intellectual honesty and fiscal responsibility (and a wet campus). However, the momentum has shifted.

The years following 9/11 have seen the last nail in the coffin of small-government conservatism. In their time in power, Republicans managed to push through one awful idea after another – uncontrolled spending, dubious attempts at nation building, the erosion of civil liberties, an expanded, more powerful central government – until the word “conservative” became tainted with their brand of overbearing governance.

The general public became more and more disillusioned with these policies, culminating with the drubbing of Republicans in the 2006 mid-term elections. On campus, the effect was much the opposite of the great red tide of 1980. Conservative thought, never widespread to begin with, was more isolated and benign than ever.

When I arrived at the University of Oregon in the fall of 2006, I was a somewhat typical, if conflicted, liberal with radical leanings, and Eugene seemed like a happening place to be. There were more farmer’s markets, bike paths and Dark Star Orchestra concerts than

time in the day. Shuttles ran right to Country Fair in the summer, and some generous hippies would no doubt give me a lift to Burning Man, if I wanted to go.

During that fall term, I saw a lot of what the campus had to offer. I investigated the various campus publications, clubs and activities. I filled out an application to be a DJ on KWVA but never turned it in. I walked into the Insurgent “office” for approximately one minute before deciding I couldn’t handle the inherent irony of being part of an anarchist collective in a state institution.

By the end of my first year at the U of O, any radical leanings I had were quickly destroyed. I saw what all those noble, liberal ideas – to foster diversity, to create tolerance and acceptance, to fight racism and inequality – looked like in practice.

For example, take an opinion piece written in the Daily Emerald last year by Ty Schwoeffermann entitled, “UO must reject its culture of whiteness.” In his article, Schwoeffermann claims that “people of color cannot relate to teachers at a Eurocentric university because they view history and politics completely differently.” Furthermore, he writes that he often “get[s] the impression that white people don’t expect people of color to succeed or that they do not have the ability to do so.” I won’t even bother to quote anything from Schwoeffermann’s infamous “Jungle fever” piece, in which he claims that all inter-racial relationships are doomed because of still-prevalent racism.

This kind of attitude wouldn’t be problematic if it was confined to a few asinine opinion articles, but people like Schwoeffermann

have a loud and powerful voice in student government. Last year, several senators in the ASUO were accused of being racist for not increasing the funding for student union groups by enough. Note that they were not cutting funding; they were simply not giving groups as much of an increase as they wanted. Today at the U of O, if you don’t completely submit to the ever-increasing demands of diversity, you risk being publicly defamed and attacked.

That was only one of the more egregious incidents in the ASUO last year, though. Juvenile name-calling, crying, croneyism and blatant disregard of Robert’s Rules of Order were commonplace. Jerome Roberts, one of the members of Con Court, even continued to receive stipends after he was no longer a student at the U of O, which he has so far yet to pay back.

This year is shaping up to be another fine example of student government in action. Even though a new group of reform-minded senators were elected, many of the “old guard” continue to hold seats and push their agenda. Senate President Athan Papailiou was already berated by perennial problem child Nate Gulley for daring to bring up the Jerome Roberts issue. With this kind of precedent being set, it’s almost guaranteed that things will break down again when budgeting time rolls around at the end of the school year.

Amateurish, schoolyard tactics are not confined to student government, however. Even at the top levels of the university’s administration these kind of things go on. For

Continued on Page 3

Page 2

Page 5

Page 8

INSIDE

The bipartisan ASUO Senate still struggling to progress without crying.

How your money is being spent without limitations or responsibility

Cheap and easy Halloween costumes.

Bi-partisan ASUO Senate needs all voices to be equal

By Jake Speicher
Managing Editor

At one end of the senate table sits Nate Gulley and his cronies. His right hand man, Diego Hernandez, smugly smirks over the entire senate while ASUO Vice President SunOwen giggles and passes secret notes to Gulley. All the while they eat animal crackers and completely ignore the meeting that is taking place.

At the other end, Senate President Athan Papailou tries to maintain order while Neil Brown makes another long winded speech, and just like the other long speech he gave last time, no cares. No one is listening. And that's the key.

During your typical Wednesday night senate meeting, somewhere between chaos and hilarity—the word clusterfuck is always on the tip of your tongue. People always talk, but no one listens.

Recently Senator Kyle McKenzie noticed all this and asked the ASUO senators to put aside their differences and concentrate on the issues at hand. He said he no longer wants to see division between “two slates that have butted heads” for too long. Hoping that maybe, just maybe, the senate will listen to each other, and actually accomplish something.

However, ASUO history is steeped in petty politics and back-door deals. Just last year, Sen. Nate Gulley faced a grievance filled against him by former Commentator Editor-In-Chief, Ted Niedermeyer.

In what can only be described as a well-publicized debacle, the Constitutional Court ruled in favor of Gulley prompting him to label his political foes racist and telling Niedermeyer to “kiss my ass” in the Daily Emerald.

Despite the irony of a white man calling a bunch of other white people racist, the Multicultural Center rallied around

Gulley and staged an elaborate protest in the EMU board room.

This happened to coincide with election season when the “Campaign for Change” slate all but swept the senate. “Campaign for Change” ran on a platform of fiscal responsibility, and the MCC wanted to make sure they would still get their piece of the incidental pie.

So when this year began, Sen. McKenzie tried to reach out to his fellow senators, asking them to please put last year behind. The goal being that hopefully senators can put aside their differences and strive for a better, stronger ASUO.

This, of course, is very silly. ASUO senators thrive on their differences. Too often, senators put their personal agendas in front of what would be best for the students they supposedly represent.

However, the concept of democracy demands that every voice be heard. Whether that voice is challenging and insightful like Martin Luther King, or asinine and mealy-mouthed like Nate Gulley.

A government functioning on the same ideas, without contest, is doomed to fail.

Simply look at the current situation in Congress. For six years, Congress republicans operated without any real opposition. They got us into a war, increased the deficit and destroyed any international good-will. The whole time, democrats watched and insisted they could do a better job. They would curb spending, bring the troops home and make government efficient once again.

Democrats won the 2006 mid-term elections running on a platform of, “Hey, we aren't republicans.”

Now that they have power, what have they done with it? Nothing.

My point here is not to show the many

inadequacies of democrats or republicans, but to point out the inadequacies of a government where nobody is listening, except maybe to themselves.

This makes partisan politics a necessary evil in government. Without different voices, the same ideas will be recycled again and again.

This would be okay if the same voice was right every time, but if government has taught us anything, it is that politicians can be wrong.

The only way to curb the inherent fallacies in government is for another voice to stand up and say, “I disagree.” The whole point of democracy is to bring different ideas into the fold and somehow combine them in a way that is beneficial for everyone.

James Madison once wrote, “No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity.”

Nate Gulley should have this tattooed onto his forearm. That way he can read it every time before he opens his mouth in senate.

Madison is arguing against the kind of politicking perpetrated by Gulley and his cronies. They are not interested in the common good; they are interested in self-preservation.

Madison goes on to write, “the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority.”

Here again, we see Madison lambasting a government that doesn't listen. The “rules of justice and the rights of the minor party” imply that government must be rea-

sonable and open to new ideas.

This does not include labeling everyone racist when they disagree with you. Instead, it means compromise and the ability to think outside of yourself.

Earlier, I mentioned that Kyle McKenzie's plea for unity between slates was silly. I respect the idea, but government cannot function on unity. Government must be a place where different ideas can be discussed.

Otherwise things devolve into a totalitarian collective. Voices are not heard, and ideas go through unchallenged.

With partisan politics, every voice is heard. Again, I want to emphasize that partisan politics is not each side of an issue, huddling in a corner and hurling insults at the opposition.

Partisan politics occurs when all sides come to the table, present their arguments in a rational manor and reach a compromise. This is government in its truest form.

When interest groups like the MCC or OSPRIG get involved they corrupt the free-flow of ideas. Their agendas become more important than the common good, and they disrupt good government.

The ASUO stands for the “Associated Students” of the University of Oregon. Not the “associated students of color,” or the “associated students of privilege.” Government should function to serve the community as a whole and not the MCC because they make the most noise.

The MCC and OSPRIG deserve a voice; Sen. Gulley has the right to advocate for them. But no one has the right to say their voice is more important than any other.

In democracy, all voices are equal, and anything else, is a corruption of ideals.

University News

The University will be adding a Securities Analysis Center to its business school that will bring the investment industry closer to the students. The center, which will open Fall 2008, is funded by a \$2.5 donation split between six alumni and investment industry leaders - three CEOs, two founders and former presidents and one current president.

“This new center will be one of only a handful of such programs in the country and will provide a unique focus,” said UO President Dave Frohnmayer “The program's graduates will also help fuel the growing investment industry in Oregon.”

The center eventually will serve about 150 students a year, including about 30 graduate students, said Lundquist College of Business Dean James Bean. In addition to new course, the program will provide experiential learning opportunities such as

managing real portfolios and student internships with companies in the industry.

“There are three things that will make our program unique,” Bean said. “One, a balance between finance and accounting courses; two, students will learn about a wide variety of investment vehicles, not just stocks and bonds; and three, our program will take advantage of the UO's close ties to Pacific Rim countries by highlighting the investment landscape in Asian countries.”

Bean said that he hopes to eventually raise \$15 million to fund an endowment to ensure the longevity of the Center.

Noted author and environmental activist Bill McKibben will speak at the University of Oregon on Tuesday, Oct. 30 about the need to build a climate movement and precisely what is at stake.

The Oregon Humanities Center will host McKibben as the 2007-8 Luther S. and Dorothy Cecilia Cressman Lecturer in the Humanities. His lecture, “Building the Climate Movement,” will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom, 1222 E. 13th Ave.

“It's no longer time to debate global warming; it's time to fight it,” McKibben said.

For more information, or for disability accommodations, call 541-346-3934.

On Nov. 2 the Pacifica Forum will host a lecture in 129 Mackenzie entitled “Free Speech vs. Zionist Power” by Mark Weber, “America's most prominent revisionist historian.”

Weber is the director of the Institute for Historical Review, one of the larger anti-Zionist “institutes” around. This isn't unusual

for the Pacifica Forum, however; they routinely invite tinfoil hats, holocaust deniers and other mixed nuts to speak at their forum. For instance, a while ago they had a lecture on the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, a proven hoax that dumbasses still use as evidence of the Zionists' plans for world domination.

Portland State's Vanguard reported last week that OSPRIG is no longer considered a student group on campus because its mission statement refers to OSPRIG as a corporation. The PSU chapter of OSPRIG is no longer receiving the benefits that student groups get. As for its budget, the Student Fee Committee will hear opinions from students before decided what to do with the OSPRIG chapter's \$128,000 of student-paid fees.

The making of a non-radical

Continued from Page 1

many years now, the U of O has been working on a “new-and-improved” diversity plan, filled with subjective benchmarks and fuzzy goals. Unfortunately, the administration has been completely unresponsive to criticisms of the plan; in fact, it has gone to almost draconian measures to stymie any questioning of it.

Economics Professor Bill Harbaugh, a vocal critic of the diversity plan, was forced to file an ethics complaint to get access to supposedly public records on the university’s affirmative action plan. The administration found his repeated questioning so annoying that it sent him

a letter saying that any further questions would be ignored as far as the law allowed. As then Editor-in-Chief of the Commentator Ted Niedermeyer wrote, “it’s almost bitterly amusing to see a University attempting to squash discourse and inquiry, the cornerstones of its institutional *raison d’être*.”

On top of this, the U of O is still mired in the same fault that Rust described in his original article – what he called “the pestilence of historical illiteracy,” an almost willful disregard of the past.

For example, in the past few years the University of Oregon has invited both

Ward Churchill and Angela Davis as lecturers. Davis, a feminist figure from the 70’s, somehow manages to be both an outspoken supporter of prison abolition and the communist regimes of Cuba and the bygone Soviet Union. Churchill, on the other hand, is a fringe radical and pretend Native American who was recently fired from his professorship for research misconduct. He is most infamous for writing that the victims of 9/11 were not really civilians, calling them instead “little Eichmanns.” Both speakers were received with aplomb (and a hefty lecturer fee).

In the face of these problems, it would be easy to say that the Commentator is simply not relevant, that the masses have spoken, but now is not the time to compromise or fold. We can not afford to moderate in our criticisms, demands or consumption of alcohol. Rather, it is a time to reassert ever more strongly our principles, to call out our student and university leaders and not kowtow to the prevailing majority. In the face of these problems, the need of an independent and alternative voice on campus is greater than ever.

The culture gap is to blame for economic inequality

By Brink Lindsey

Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal

Cut through all the statistical squid ink surrounding the issue of economic inequality, and you’ll find a phenomenon that genuinely deserves public concern.

Over the past quarter-century or so, the return on human capital has risen significantly. Or to put it another way, the opportunity cost of failing to develop human capital is now much higher than it used to be. The wage premium associated with a college degree has jumped to around 70% in recent years from around 30% in 1980; the graduate degree premium has soared to over 100% from 50%. Meanwhile, dropping out of high school now all but guarantees socioeconomic failure.

In part this development is cause for celebration. Rising demand for analytical and interpersonal skills has been driving the change, and surely it is good news that economic signals now so strongly encourage the development of human talent. Yet -- and here is the cause for concern -- the supply of skilled people is responding sluggishly to the increased demand.

Despite the strong incentives, the percentage of people with college degrees has been growing only modestly. Between 1995 and 2005, the share of men with college degrees inched up to 29% from 26%. And the number of high school dropouts remains stubbornly high: The ratio of diplomas awarded to 17-year-olds has been stuck around 70% for three decades.

Something is plainly hindering the effectiveness of the market’s carrots and sticks. And that something is culture.

Before explaining what I mean, let me go back to the squid ink and clarify what’s not worrisome about the inequality statistics. For those who grind their ideological axes on these numbers, the increase in measured inequality since the 1970s is

proof that the new, more competitive, more entrepreneurial economy of recent decades (which also happens to be less taxed and less unionized) has somehow failed to provide widespread prosperity. According to left-wing doom-and-gloomers, only an “oligarchy” at the very top is benefiting from the current system.

Hogwash. This argument can be disposed of with a simple thought experiment. First, picture the material standard of living you could have afforded back in 1979 with the median household income then of \$16,461. Now picture the mix of goods and services you could buy in 2004 with the median income of \$44,389. Which is the better deal? Only the most blinkered ideologue could fail to see the dramatic expansion of comforts, conveniences and opportunities that the contemporary family enjoys.

Much of the increase in measured inequality has nothing to do with the economic system at all. Rather, it is a product of demographic changes. Rising numbers of both single-parent households and affluent dual-earner couples have stretched the income distribution; so, too, has the big influx of low-skilled Hispanic immigrants. Meanwhile, in a 2006 paper published in the American Economic Review, economist Thomas Lemieux calculated that roughly three-quarters of the rise in wage inequality among workers with similar skills is due simply to the fact that the population is both older and better educated today than it was in the 1970s.

It is true that superstars in sports, entertainment and business now earn stratospheric incomes. But what is that to you and me? If the egalitarian left has been reduced to complaining that people in the 99th income percentile in a given year (and they’re not the same people from year to year) are leaving behind those in the 90th

percentile, it has truly arrived at the most farcical of intellectual dead ends.

Which brings us back to the real issue: the human capital gap, and the culture gap that impedes its closure. The most obvious and heartrending cultural deficits are those that produce and perpetuate the inner-city underclass. Consider this arresting fact: While the poverty rate nationwide is 13%, only 3% of adults with full-time, year-round jobs fall below the poverty line. Poverty in America today is thus largely about failing to get and hold a job, any job.

The problem is not lack of opportunity. If it were, the country wouldn’t be a magnet for illegal immigrants. The problem is a lack of elementary self-discipline: failing to stay in school, failing to live within the law, failing to get and stay married to the mother or father of your children. The prevalence of all these pathologies reflects a dysfunctional culture that fails to invest in human capital.

Other, less acute deficits distinguish working-class culture from that of the middle and upper classes. According to sociologist Annette Lareau, working-class parents continue to follow the traditional, *laissez-faire* child-rearing philosophy that she calls “the accomplishment of natural growth.” But at the upper end of the socioeconomic scale, parents now engage in what she refers to as “concerted cultivation” -- intensively overseeing kids’ schoolwork and stuffing their after-school hours and weekends with organized enrichment activities.

This new kind of family life is often hectic and stressful, but it inculcates in children the intellectual, organizational and networking skills needed to thrive in today’s knowledge-based economy. In other words, it makes unprecedented, heavy investments in developing children’s hu-

man capital.

Consider these data from the National Education Longitudinal Study, an in-depth survey of educational achievement. Among students who received high scores in eighth grade mathematics (and thus showed academic promise), 74% of kids from the highest quartile of socioeconomic status (measured as a composite of parental education, occupations and family income) eventually earned a college degree. By contrast, the college graduation rate fell to 47% for kids from the middle two quartiles, and 29% for those in the bottom quartile. Perhaps more generous financial aid might affect those numbers at the margins, but at the core of these big differentials are differences in the values, skills and habits taught in the home.

Contrary to the warnings of the alarmist left, the increase in economic inequality does not mean the economic system isn’t working properly. On the contrary, the system is delivering more opportunities for comfortable, challenging lives than our culture enables us to take advantage of. Far from underperforming, our productive capacity has now outstripped our cultural capacity.

Alas, there is no silver bullet for closing the culture gap. But the public institutions most directly responsible for human capital formation are the nation’s schools, and it seems beyond serious dispute that in many cases they are failing to discharge their responsibilities adequately. Those interested in reducing meaningful economic inequality would thus be well advised to focus on education reform. And forget about adding new layers of bureaucracy and top-down controls. Real improvements will come from challenging the moribund state-school monopoly with greater competition.

“To compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.” --Thomas Jefferson

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Commentator philosophy

The Oregon Commentator is an independent journal of opinion published at the University of Oregon for the campus community. Founded by a group of concerned student journalists on September 27, 1983, the Commentator has had a major impact in the “war of ideas” on campus, providing students with an alternative to the left-wing orthodoxy promoted by other student publications, professors and student groups. During its twenty-four year existence, it has enabled University students to hear both sides of issues. Our paper combines reporting with opinion, humor and feature articles. We have won national recognition for our commitment to journalistic excellence.

The Oregon Commentator is operated as a program of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO) and is staffed solely by volunteer editors and writers. The paper is funded through student incidental fees, advertising revenue and private donations. We print a wide variety of material, but our main purpose is to show students that a political philosophy of conservatism, free thought and individual liberty is an intelligent way of looking at the world—contrary to what they might hear in classrooms and on campus. In general, editors of the Commentator share beliefs in the following:

- We believe that the University should be a forum for rational and informed debate—instead of the current climate in which ideological dogma, political correctness, fashion and mob mentality interfere with academic pursuit.
- We emphatically oppose totalitarianism and its apologists.
- We believe that it is important for the University community to view the world realistically, intelligently, and above all, rationally.
- We believe that any attempt to establish utopia is bound to meet with failure and, more often than not, disaster.
- We believe that while it would be foolish to praise or agree mindlessly with everything our nation does, it is both ungrateful and dishonest not to acknowledge the tremendous blessings and benefits we receive as Americans.
- We believe that free enterprise and economic growth, especially at the local level, provide the basis for a sound society.
- We believe that the University is an important battleground in the “war of ideas” and that the outcome of political battles of the future are, to a large degree, being determined on campuses today.
- We believe that a code of honor, integrity, pride and rationality are the fundamental characteristics for individual success.

Socialism guarantees the right to work. However, we believe that the right not to work is fundamental to individual liberty. Apathy is a human right.



OPINION DIGEST

Last year, Jerome Roberts served on the Constitutional Court while attending Lane Community College. Only students who attend the University and pay the incidental fee are allowed to participate in the ASUO. This was strike one. Strike two came when former Justice Roberts continued to receive a stipend after he left the university and was allowed to attend a conference in D.C. Topping off the absurdity, strike three is the fact that Roberts has not paid back any of the money he received illegally.

While Robert's should not be so inept to know this basic rule of the Green Tape Notebook, the ASUO should learn to keep track of itself. For those of you keeping score at home, the body that controls your money has allowed the Student Rec Center to rack up close to \$250,000 in debt, allowed almost \$1 million in over realized money to build up over ten years and allowed someone to receive a stipend that doesn't deserve it. This type of inefficient management occurs year after year.

The question then becomes who has oversight when it comes to the ASUO? The Senate is a mess and has been for years, the Con Court is unable to correctly interpret its own rule book and the executive allows unlawful actions to go unpunished. No system of government is flawless, but the ASUO as a whole is borderline defective.

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The Oregon Commentator accepts letters to the editor and commentaries from students, faculty and staff at the University of

Anyone want to talk about hidden fees? This year, OSPIRG will receive \$113,758 of students' money. Where does that money go? We don't know because the group is contracted by the ASUO, meaning it does not need to list items in its annual budget. Although, we do have idea where the money goes, as OSPIRG is tied to Oregon State PIRG, a non-profit organization that uses funds from several Oregon Student PIRGs to lobby its agenda. Also, the money goes to pay for street solicitors to ask students “do you have a minute for the environment?” That's right, the people that are on the street asking you for money are being paid with, gasp, your money.

Recently, Portland State University froze funding for its OSPIRG because its mission statement refers to it as a corporation. OSPIRG has been defunded by popular vote before at the University. The decision was overturned by a self-righteous executive.

OSPIRG is the worst example of fiscal injustice that happens at the University with the student incidental fee. Students are being forced to, in principle, pay membership to a political agenda run by partisan activists. The only way to stop this misuse of incidental fee funding is for students to take a stand. The students have voted to stop giving OSPIRG its money before, and it can, and should, do it again.

Oregon, or anyone else for that matter. Letters and commentaries may be submitted personally to Room 319 EMU or placed in our mailbox in Suite 4 EMU; phoned in to (541) 346-3721, or e-mailed to ocomment@uoregon.edu.

We reserve the right to edit material we find obscene, libelous, inappropriate or lengthy. We are not obliged to print anything that does not suit us. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Submission constitutes testimony as to the accuracy.

E-mails sent to individual authors that are directly related to the Oregon Commentator may be reused by the Commentator as it sees fit.

The continuation of an alternative student newspaper

By Guy Simmons

Publisher

The Oregon Commentator was created in 1983 by a group of students who were disappointed with the quality of publications found at the University. The founders created the Oregon Commentator to print the news that, as the original publisher Dane Claussen put it, “the other publications are unable to tell you because of the inexperience, incompetence or narrow-mindedness of their staffs.” The creators endeavored to have an impact in the “war of ideas” on campus and provide an alternative to the extreme left-wing orthodoxy so prevalent in classrooms, campus publications and student groups at the University of Oregon.

The Oregon Commentator has been providing this alternative now for a long time and against all odds (including numerous ASUO attempts at de-funding for content, despite very clear rules prohibiting such action) and has swaggered into its 25th year of existence. Not very many student groups have been around for so long, and the few who have been all have non-student administrators (paid annual salaries from your incidental fee) to organize and supervise the “student” group. For example, the Oregon Daily Emerald, which claims to be “the inde-

pendent student newspaper at the University of Oregon,” has in fact several full time non-student administrators paid big bucks to run the show over there. The Multicultural Center, which isn’t really that old being founded in the mid-90’s, is listed under the heading of “student organization” on the UO’s webpage. But if you look at the MCC’s budget you will find that the 2008 Tater Awards winner for Woman of the Year, Steve Morozumi, is paid \$38,466 dollars to be MCC’s “program advisor.” Another line item on their budget is the ambiguous “payroll assessment,” which totals in at almost \$24,000. One can only imagine what that useful purpose to students that money is put too. KVWA touts itself as the “student owned and operated” radio station, yet just last year it was looking to hire a non-student general manager (starting salary of \$38,000-40,000).

If an organization needs to have a non-student administrator paid an annual salary to keep it up and running, how much value does that group have to the student body? Moreover, how much does the student body care about that group’s mission and goals if no one will volunteer to be involved? To put it bluntly, these organizations aren’t student groups at all, but student funded university services that are run by non-student administrators, staffed by student volunteers

or, more often than not, students receiving stipends. The Oregon Commentator on the other hand utilizes the incidental fee as intended, by being completely student managed with an all-volunteer staff. The Oregon Commentator has been and always will be produced by students and for students with the least amount of cost to students possible.

The students running the 24th year of the Oregon Commentator have been very productive. We threw out the prehistoric fax machine. We updated and reorganized the hard copy archives. We tossed out the empty bottles of Old Crow and rearranged the desks, couch and filing cabinets in order to create a more efficient use of our office space. We recycled the boxes and boxes of undistributed back issues from years gone past. All this industrious hustle and bustle has created a feeling of optimism and hope. We think, “We’ve cleaned up the office and now we’re going to clean up the ASUO and expose all the assholes on campus!” Actually we don’t think that; it isn’t true. Someone once said, “Never try to teach a pig to sing, it wastes your time and annoys the pig.” We know very well that the ASUO will never sing, but being students we have time to waste and are glad to know that reporting its absurd antics annoys the people running it. So while there will be

no sonnets sung, there might be a slowing of that wasteful ASUO juggernaut and some sort of value can be had in that.

We here at the OC know that the world has never been changed by mass movements, but by small groups of committed individuals working to a common end. The masses only ever come on board after the battle is won. We are definitely a small group of individuals. Committed? Not all that much. Successful? Well, maybe a little. We earn our keep and do our part by publishing longer and more comprehensive articles, which provide insight and further the average student’s understanding of campus events. We provide a service to students here at the UO by exposing and relentlessly ridiculing the fools and jackasses on campus. Even students who may not completely agree with the Oregon Commentator’s editorial viewpoint of “free markets, free minds and free booze” can gain valuable understanding about the UO campus by reading the content provided in these pages. Because of this, the Oregon Commentator will continue to provide tasteful humor and satire along with “the news you can use” for another 24 years.

Enjoy the 24th anniversary edition of the Oregon Commentator, and let us know what you think. Email ocomment@uoregon.edu or write to Room 319 EMU P.O. Box 30128, Eugene, OR 97403.

The cultural and monetary monster that sucks us dry

By Ossie Bladine

Editor In Chief

In 1973, a gallon of milk cost \$1.31 and the student incidental fee at the University was \$20.75. Today, a gallon of milk costs about \$4 (a 305 percent increase) and the incidental fee is \$624 (a whopping 3,007 percent increase). A number of factors have caused the blasphemous nature of the fee. There is a more populace and diverse student body, leading to an increase in the number of groups recognized by the ASUO. Another, and the more unfortunate, factor is the relentless money mongering and unnecessary spending by student groups.

Why do groups spend an unnecessary amount of money? Because they can. The ASUO has allowed this fee to grow year after year with little resistance. What resistance that has occurred has been met with allegations of bigotry, humorlessly enough by bigots themselves. The problem goes deeper, however, as certain “student” programs have used intimidation in able to fill their greedy pockets with more money. Last year, the Senate set a incidental fee increase benchmark of 2.5 percent for the Programs Finance Committee. The PFC did not hold to this benchmark. When senators voiced their displeasure that its original fiscal policies were not met, they were publicly defamed in the Oregon Daily Emerald as racists.

“We were in a position to make some really important changes on campus this year and we didn’t do it,” Ashley Sherrick told the Emerald. “There are deep rooted structural inefficiencies within Senate and a large amount of disrespect. I don’t really want to continue my efforts on a Senate that is that inefficient and disrespectful.”

The several generations of the Oregon Commentator have opposed the high cost of the incidental fee; some have opposed the fee in principal completely. “It’s a First Amendment right not to be associated with an organization. I believe that money is speech, and that supporting these groups, they’re representing me, I’m supporting them, and fairly basic First Amendment right not to be associated,” said Commentator Alum Owen Brennan Rounds in a court case he brought on the Oregon State Board of Higher Education for allowing funding to go to Oregon Students Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG). The Commentator is not part of a right-wing conspiracy to demolish the minority voice, despite popular belief. It is a group of concerned students who understand the lack of responsibility and accountability on campus. Come budget time every year, certain ASUO groups decide how much money they can take from the students pockets, instead of deciding what is the actual and acceptable amount of funding it needs to

provide a valuable service to the University. This practice, when applied in the real world, is what leads to giant surpluses, poor distribution of wealth and divided institutions trying to better its own agenda rather than adding to the common good. The very fiscal and practical impotencies that plague our state and federal government is being allowed in our University community. As Commentator Alum Edward Matthews said, “College Students, as tomorrow’s intellectuals, need to face the facts of reality, recognize the consequences of the values they uphold, and determine which side of the road they will stand on.”

On September 9, ASUO President Emily McLain was featured in a New York Times Article about the growth of hidden fees in America’s Universities. As reported, fees aside from tuition at the University this year total \$1,542. The Oregon Student Association, which for the record is being paid \$107,374 of incidental fee money by the ASUO Executive, is making a raucous in the Oregon legislature by fighting to lower University-demanded hidden fees. “It seems that we have to have this separate calculator to figure out our whole cost of education,” McLain, who is serving on the fee committee, told the Times. “It seems just a little bit crazy.” Why Ms. McLain, I ask, are you not fighting for the same type of legislation on the home front, where the inci-

dental fee counts for over 40 percent of those “crazy” fees?

Some of students’ money goes to valuable services for the student body, but much of it does not. Many ASUO groups have “retreats,” which are basically paid vacations where group members throw a party on your buck, and many more offer paid, or stipend, student positions where the output of work involved is never checked or contested. Unfortunately, we at the Commentator practice a little thing called fiscal responsibility. We do not have a retreat and we do not have stipends (even though we qualify for four positions); our budget goes to printing with some loose change going to office supplies. We are trying to take it one step further. Beginning next issue, readers will begin to see more ads as we attempt to bring in a cash flow outside of the incidental fee. We will also attempt to earn grants and, perhaps, in the future seek private donations. The legacy of the Commentator is one that believes in laissez-faire economics. My hope is that the future generations of the Oregon Commentator are able to ween itself off of the corrupt incidental fee, and set a shining example of how business is meant to be handled in America, through hard work and risk/reward, not through thoughtless spending, misappropriation of funds and, worse of all, government handouts.

The American Dream is more than just a dream

By Sean Jin
Contributor

What is the American dream? What is this ray of hope that sits in the back of my mind? At the principle level, it is self-determination, and self-determination is the core of the American identity. The American dream is the idea that someone can come here with nothing and make something out of their lives. Rags to riches. America, the land of opportunity. The immigrants that were greeted by the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, so long ago, came here to seek adventure, prosperity, and new lives for themselves. But was that all in vain? As comedian George Carlin once said, "It is called the American Dream because you have to be asleep to believe in it." This 'dream', is it all a myth?

My parents were born in China during the Cultural Revolution, and lived relatively poor lives. It was a time when being rich or educated meant being persecuted or 're-educated' in labor camps. My mother's family never had much, and my father's family was in academia, so they were re-located to the countryside. There was no way my grandparents could support my parents through college, so they got scholarships to Peking University, one of the most prestigious schools in all of China. Coming to America for graduate school, they set their feet on American soil with less than a hundred dollars in their pockets. In between struggling to survive as poor immigrant students and being in a Master's program, they had me (pleasant surprise, they say).

Now, 20 years later, they are putting me through college, supporting my two younger siblings, working only part-time, secure, and most importantly, happy. The story of my family is one built on the back of hard work and undying perseverance.

With the odds stacked against them since day one, they made the American dream come true. And that is what I was raised to believe was possible: the life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without needing to have inheritances, accumulated wealth, welfare, or affirmative action quotas.

Looking at our nation, the American dream and its principles have been undermined by both the right and the left.

On the left, government intervention in citizen's pursuit of wealth has taken away personal responsibility. People feel like they are entitled to help and special treatment from the government, regardless of what they have done for themselves first. Whatever happened to taking responsibility for your own life?

The two institutions that the left advocates for that I have the most issues with are welfare and affirmative action. These are two systems that have good intentions and potential for good, but are poorly implemented. Welfare rewards people for being poor, and does not give them the proper incentives to pull themselves out of poverty. What's more is that it conditions people to expect the government to help them out at every little bump on the road. Affirmative action is a more difficult issue. Some kind of system with the same idea as affirmative action is necessary in certain parts of the country to enable higher education for certain demographics. However, I find it insulting personally and to minorities to suggest the idea that we need some kind of special treatment in order to get into universities or get high paying jobs in society. I would like to think that my achievements in life are due to just that - achieving - not because I am a minority. If I am successful, I want to be known for being successful in terms of the entire society, not because I am relatively successful for my race. This is institutional racism in its truest form.

On the right, the neoconservatives have

continually endeavored to maintain wealth and prevent others from climbing up the ladder. The elites are solely interested in cementing their place in society, with no regard to the good of society. They are of the conviction that success is only attainable through money, inheritance, or moral righteousness. Corporations, firms, and their large R&D banks stifle entrepreneurship and individual innovation, which is a key facet of American self-determination. Conservative economic policy refuses to look at people as people, but as automations that respond predictably to prices, taxes and supply. While true conservatism is about smaller government and fiscal and personal responsibility, the political right and politically powerful corporations have twisted government institutions and policies to help in their greed and retention of wealth.

What's more disillusioning is that fact that the American Dream as I like to think of it never even existed for a lot of Americans, namely minorities. The nation's history with respect to this was explained to me with the analogy of the game of Monopoly. Before the Civil Rights Movement, minorities were not even given a piece to play on the board. Now, they have been given their piece, but have begun to play only to find that all the board has been bought and settled. Here's an example: in Oregon, which many like to view as a progressive state, non-whites were not allowed to own land before 40 years ago. For many kids living in the slums, who are disproportionately minorities, the American Dream does not exist as it should. It is easy for me to stand in my position and wonder why they haven't pulled themselves up by their bootstraps yet. Their perspective on the world is completely different, and they have a lot more stacked against them.

During the research I did for this article about the notion of the American Dream, I slowly came to the realization that this

idea of success and prosperity through self-determination and hard work alone was a very optimistic ideal of mine. It was an optimistic ideal that had not been fact so much as a creation of already-settled people in the East Coast trying to convince new immigrants to move west, to 'seek the American Dream'. The story was so weaved as to prevent the immigrants from over populating the east. It was disappointing for me to discover this, but I believe that the American Dream, as an ideal, can still exist despite its origins. In fact, I believe that the idea has manifested itself as a much greater driving force and source of hope than when it originated as a ploy to lure immigrants to unsettled lands.

My preconceptions about the American Dream have been changed since my initial idea to write this piece. It has been made painfully obvious that the romantic notions about the origins and universality of opportunity are not true. The case of the disproportionate percentage of minorities in poor neighborhoods has made it clear that opportunity for success and prosperity is not exclusively conditional on hard work and self-determination for them.

However, what I've realized is that the opportunity for success and prosperity is not exclusively conditional on hard work and self-determination for anyone. There are always uncontrollable factors that affect the opportunities for anyone. There are always losers and winners, no matter what. But I stand by my initial conviction that this is the land of opportunity. No, it is not perfect. Yes, some have been pushed down more than others. But the principles exist. The possibilities exist. If you doubt this, read the second paragraph again. The very idea that one can pull oneself up after being pushed down, or even have the chance to rise above the conditions one was born in, is hope and opportunity.

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Time to stop coddling illegal immigrants in the U.S.

By Greg Campbell
Contributor

Idiocy is bred when emotion conquers intellect. It's important to have a balance of both, sure, but at the end of the day, it is more important to think rationally than to do that which will make you simply "feel good" about yourself. With that being said, you should know that as you read this article, criminals are pouring into this country. Though they are but people, the very act of their immigration is precisely what makes them criminals. It is what they do once they are here that make them parasites.

While considering the idea of illegal immigration it is important to remember a few key facts. First, no matter what spineless politicians who pander to the Hispanic voting block say (I'm talking to you, Giuliani), it is illegal; thus the name.

Second, allow me to be very clear: I could not care less about one's race. I care about conduct. I care about the triumph of reason over emotion. That being said, there is no plausible explanation as to why Americans should accept that people are bypassing American procedures to simply do whatever they want. I understand that in years passed we allowed for easier immigration into America. However, America used to make decent cars and Jane Fonda's tits didn't hang to the floor. What can I say, times change; roll with it.

Let's approach this by looking at the economic standpoint. Think of the American economy as a life raft. Sure, it can support some. However, as 12 million illegal immigrants try to climb into the raft, as well as countless lazy Americans, the raft will surely buckle. Therefore, doesn't it make sense to forbid the admittance

of people which will cause it to buckle? The American economy used to be based around the concept of individual responsibility. However, that has been replaced by a bastardized version of Socialism. In this clusterfuck of an economy, we are expected to pay outrageous amounts of taxes to fund social services. Meanwhile, illegal aliens pour into this country to help create a much larger lower class to bring down the economy. This wouldn't be so bad if America had stuck with its "sink or swim" fiscal policies. Instead, that shithhead Lyndon Johnson duped us into believing that by supporting those that are otherwise too incompetent or lazy to support themselves, we would create a "great society". Now, we have a lower class that is a putrid mixture of lazy Americans and opportunistic aliens.

There is no reliable figure for how much illegal aliens gain from federal and state social service dollars. Many illegals have falsified documents or find other loopholes in the system. What is certain, however, is that states that border Mexico have much larger social service programs. What's more, to offer these handouts, these states are often forced to cut other aspects of governmental functions which leads to more crime from less police, crowded schools from less funding and inefficiency in governmental tasks due to understaffing. And that is with the Federal government allocating money as well. Then people wonder why crime is up, the education system sucks and our government is inept. People, start paying attention!

Now that we have seen the damaging effects from a financial standpoint, let's just think about this from a realistic standpoint. I understand we are a "melting pot of diversity". That's great. However, the

idea of a melting pot is that in that pot there are many ingredients that blend together. When ingredients blend together, the value is in the flavor it creates. If these people really were coming here to embrace America, they would melt into the American experience. They would identify themselves as American, while still honoring their heritage. They would all learn English and assimilate themselves to American traditions; but they don't. Diversity of ideas and ethnicities is great, as long as we are all decidedly American. But instead, we have two societies, America and those that are here to exploit our country. Why the hell should I have to press "1" for English? This is America, correct? We didn't lose a war that I was unaware of, did we? No? Then I feel we should be speaking English when conducting business. But then again, maybe I'm just a crazy cog in this whole "vast right wing conspiracy" to persecute the poor criminals who flood into this country to exploit our country rather than embrace it. Melting pot, my ass.

To make matters worse, the illegal aliens have adopted characteristics of social parasites. I know, it sounds like name-calling, but it's not. There is truth in my politically incorrect analogy. They invade the country, have offspring, establish a presence and when enough of them have their anchor babies, create a voting block to sway policies in their favor. How is this not like a parasitic attack?

So now it is nearly impossible to get politicians to lift a finger to stop this most serious of problems. They are all too afraid of offending the Hispanic voting block. And they should be. It is certainly a force to be reckoned with. However, as we allow the Hispanic voting block to bring their culture here to eradicate our own, we

should not forget that these people are fleeing a country that is utterly dysfunctional in every conceivable way. Yet, they seem hell-bent on adulterating our country in the same way they have fucked up their own. It's like moving into someone else's house once yours is too dirty to live in any longer, and then trashing that one.

I know some may think, "But we need them to do the work we will not". To these puppets of CNN, I say "Bullshit"! That is the classic argument by those who refuse to think for themselves, but instead, recycle trite, and incorrect, ideas. So let me get this straight: We should support an economy that is based around the principle that we cannot function without the help of illegal workers who avoid taxes, abuse social services and export money to another country, thereby weakening the economy. And all the while, we should support welfare programs that give money to unemployed people who cannot find work. Does this sound right to anybody?

I know, it sounds heartless. That may be. But I value reason over emotion. Though it sounds nice to liberals to say, "Your ancestors immigrated here", it is a very different story. Most of our ancestors came here, and saw that this was the land of opportunity. That meant that nobody was going to support them, that they had to do it themselves; so they did. The immigrants who flooded through the gates of Ellis Island came to this country and worked to flourish. Not to mention they did it through legal means. So fine, give us your tired, your hungry and your poor; so long as they are here legally and are prepared to work. Otherwise, feel free to continue screwing up your own country and leave mine alone.

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Halloween Costumes for the fat and poor

By Drew Cattermole
Contributor

Halloween is the most anticipated holiday on college campuses. It is the best excuse in the world to look ridiculous while getting completely wasted. As a normal college student, I am lazy and poor. I have no problem getting drunk for five dollars, but buying a costume at 40 oz. malt liquor prices is not so easy. So I have come up with some costume ideas that will ensure a good time with minimal effort and money spent. I have put several costumes in different sections since not all costumes are one size fits all.

Husky Division

The Kool-Aid Mascot

This costume is great for cheap fat guys. You do not even have to wear a shirt. All you need is red and black paint and the ability to smash through walls. Just apply the body paint a few hours before you go out so you do not smear red paint all over the dance floor and be ready to yell "Oh Yea!" all night and you will be ready to be the hit of the party. Warning: You might want to check the weather reports on Halloween before you brave the streets of Eugene, rain is detrimental to the body paint.

Fat Chance

If you are fat and have a white shirt that fits you ever so snug, this costume is the one for you. Just right "CHANCE" in big letters on your shirt. Be prepared and come up with things that have no chances of happening — Dennis Kucinich Presidency, Tara Reid looking classy, etc. — and just say those every time someone asks you about your shirt. Fucking brilliant, I know.

The Fat kid from Superbad

Are you fat with curly hair? Then the fat kid from *Superbad* is the way to go. Pop culture is a great place to shop for costume ideas. This costume will not be as annoying as Borat costumes were last year since not everyone can pull it off. No real need to buy clothes with this costume either. Just make sure to add a red stain to the upper thigh of your pants in order to complete the look.

Bonus Extra: If you have a nerdy skinny white friend, you and McLovin will rule the party.

Really Poor division

Just happy to see you

This costume is cheap and original. All you need is an unnecessary amount of pockets and enough bananas to fill them. So when people ask you if you have a banana in your pocket you can reply with "no I am just happy to see you." People will be amazed at your ability to turn a stupid joke into an even stupider costume.

Bonus Extra: You can eat the bananas after you are done with your costume.

Raoul Duke From Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

The famed author is a favorite among many students on campus and surely his most loved character will be the life of the party. All you need is a Hawaiian shirt, a cigarette holder and a bowler hat. This costume is perfect if you want to get all drugged up, because it will just add to the costume. If you have a 300 pound Samoan friend he can be Dr. Gonzo and you are set; maybe even go that extra mile and shave the top of your head bald.

And while we are on the subject of shaving.

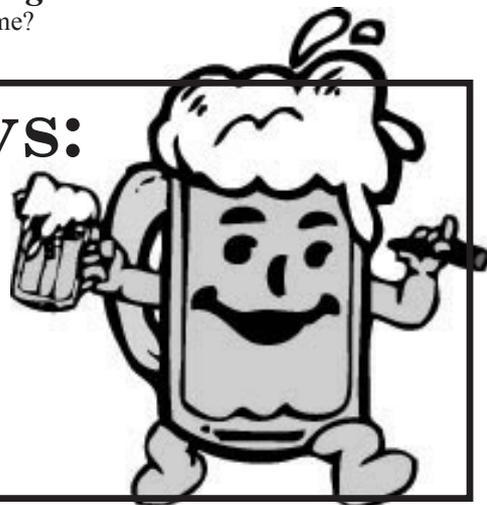
I recommend shaving your head if you are too poor to buy a costume. Just by going bald your costume is made. There are tons of minimal and cheap costumes to be done with a bald or semi-bald head. Stone Steve Austin, Larry David, Creepy Principal, Dickie V. the list is endless.

For girls

School girl outfit. Just do it, c'mon, for me?

Sudsy Says:

Here's a radical thought for you: get a haircut and get a real job you dirty hippies.



SPEW...

Excerpts from an Oct. 23 article in the Oregon Daily Emerald, "Seeking justice for Jena"

"What's happening in Jena is not just happening in Jena," said University junior Diego Hernandez. "It's happening everywhere. Even right here in Oregon. Jena just got lucky with some media coverage."

-Because that's the point of activism, getting media attention for yourself. (Alternative joke about "gettin lucky" with some media coverage.)

"Oregon has been known to be a primarily racist state," (Rachel) Cushman said.

-Funny, I thought it was known as a primarily rainy state.

"Its like the old saying goes: the squeaky wheel eventually gets heard," said Cushman, who was wearing a T-shirt that read "Eujena" across the front.

-Actually, the saying goes "squeaky wheel gets the grease," but then you just "got lucky with some media," so please stop subjecting everyone to your mindless posturing now.

"We're here because we want to show people that we know what's going on," said University senior and Black Student Union Co-Director Ty Schwoeffermann. "People in Oregon are very active; we are activists. We are aware, we are social, we are progressive, and we know what things are important."

-Ty Schwoeffermann proves Hernandez' point. It's pretty obvious who Ty's really concerned about (hint: it's Ty).

"I want to say to the University of Oregon, to the students and faculty and administrators, that is a sad day when there's a rally for justice, for mankind, and it is so small. But when there's a day to give away football tickets, students will miss class and line up for hours and hours," (advising coordinator from the Office of Multicultural Academic Support, Lyllye Parker) said.

-Attending a rally equating a 6-on-1 beatdown to the Selma to Montgomery March, or getting tickets to the biggest game of the year? Hmm...

OC asks ... Gettin' any?



Ward Churchill:

I only hook up with Native American chicks, but they all hate me. Stroke my hair. Stroke it!



Nate Gulley:

Hey where the white women at?



Puddles:

Since I teabagged that cougar real good, my beeper has been blowin' up with honies' digits.



Sudsy O'Sullivan:

Are you kidding? I'm like walking rohypnol.



T Rex:

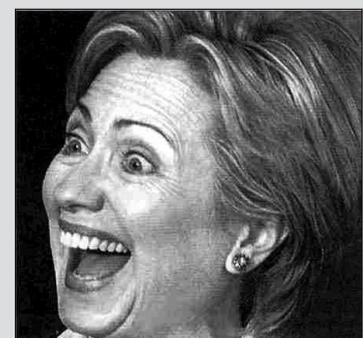
Tis hard to pick up girls when you have arms like a developmentally challenged hobo.



Bill Richardson:

Dear Hillary, Your flatulence turns me on.

XOXO Billy



Hillary Clinton:

I just gave John Edwards a Cleveland Steamer last night!