

OREGON

COMMENTATOR

April 12th, 2012

Volume XXIX Issue VI & VII

A Journal of Opinion

Plus:
Candidate Origins
Revealed



Featuring:

Why Pot Should Be Illegal

Why Students Should Be Allowed to Go Bankrupt

Why Affirmative Action Doesn't Work

Why Facebook Is Not a Legitimate Means of Protest



THE RATIONAL DEBATE ISSUE



Founded Sept. 27th, 1983 Member Collegiate Network

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Mission Statement

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-six 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.

This issue is traditionally the ASUO Elections Issue. As you might be able to discern, this is not the ASUO Elections Issue. We've decided to forgo an entire issue devoted to the most unholy sacrament of the ASUO elections because A) no one wanted to do it and B) in these fast paced 24-hour news cycle times, elections coverage moves too fast for a monthly-ish publication such as ours to truthfully be called "news," (as the word implies that the information is in some way new). So instead we present to you the Rational Debate Issue, wherein we attempt to engage members of our campus community in--you guessed it--rational debates. We are an oft degraded magazine, called "worthless," "sophomoric," and "turd-burglers." (Although that was mostly by our older sister, Stacy. Fuck you, Stacy.) However, no one, literally no one responded to our invitation. Franklin T. Bains did promise to write something from either the perspective of a "Whig" or a "wig," he was never clear on which, but nothing ever arrived in our inbox--he had undoubtedly been swallowed by the filthy abyss that is the current state of the ASUO elections.

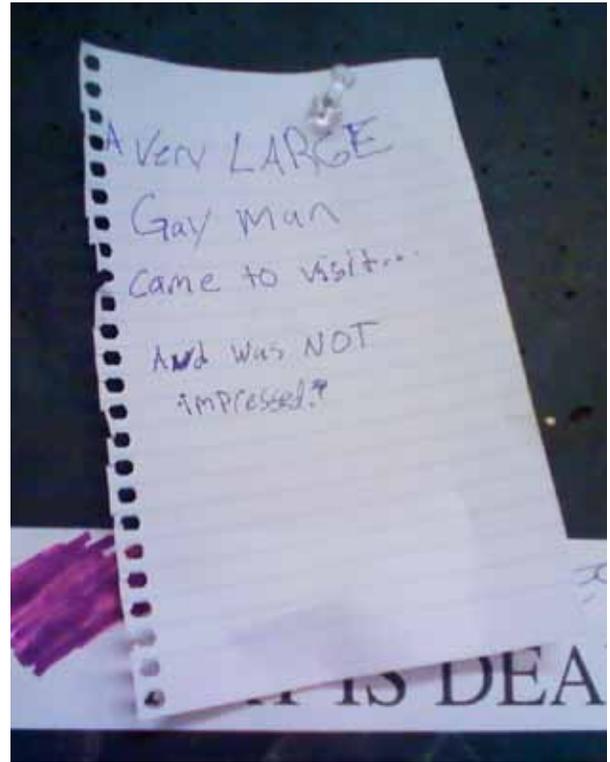
Massive fraud on the part of ex-OSPIRG Chairman and Troll-Doll impersonator Charles Denson has been exposed in the current elections. More details will undoubtedly unfold before this hits the stands, but as of yet he has been discovered tampering with the phone number lists of an opposing campaign (Ben & Lamar) and disabling Lamar Wise's email account via a "phishing" site (no, not the band, hippies.) This revelation is both enraging and ridiculous. It's infuriating to discover how truly entitled this snot-nosed little prick thinks he is, and how stupid he thinks we are. Then the incredulity sets in: someone really committed a federal offense to rig a college election?

Don't get us wrong, we understand how much our student government can affect our way of life and our wallet. However, in the grand scheme of things, the loss of this election will not have a devastating impact in anyone's life, much less the life of Charles' wife, Katie Taylor. Now his name will forever ping in the inevitable employer Google search as that of a fraudulent, cheating rat-bastard who feels that sabotage is an appropriate means for achieving one's goals.

But campus has not been lost to chaos, for once in the history of the ASUO, justice is being served. Con Court is calling a great big do-over and holding elections again, beginning with the primaries, excluding the Katie & Alex party but giving long-shots like Cinnamon Gillespie and our own write-in warrior Ben "FreshBen" Schorr another chance to dream (as well as Ben & Lamar and Laura & Nick, but whatever). The utterly ridiculous part of this whole debacle is that if Denson had just played by the rules, there is a high likelihood Katie & Alex could have won on their own.

Anyway, there could be a silver lining to this puddle of shit. Many followers of campus media have known for years about the depths of OSPIRG's depravity, but this clusterfuck is massive, too big for even the most disengaged student to ignore. Maybe now the degree to which OSPIRG's hand is shoved up the ass of the ASUO Exec and many senators will be made clear, and the student body will call for its immediate removal. But these are just the musings of a sophomoric collective of turd-burglers.

I hope this issue does provide some thought-provocation, or at least carries you through a tough lecture class. We're on the homestretch of the school year, let's finish strong.



A note left outside our door. Don't worry, large gay man. We've got stamina.

Sophie Lawhead

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The internet is a scary place.

Stay safe.

**Read the Oregon
Commentator blog.**

oregoncommentator.com

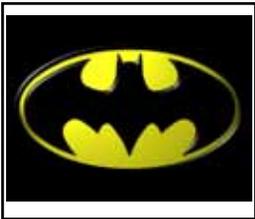
*Daily updates on the all the shit
you don't care about.*





asks ...

Who/What is Your Arch Nemesis?



[Batman]
Father's Day



[Synonyms]
Antonyms



[Stalin]
Whiskey dick



[Denson]
The prosecuting attorney

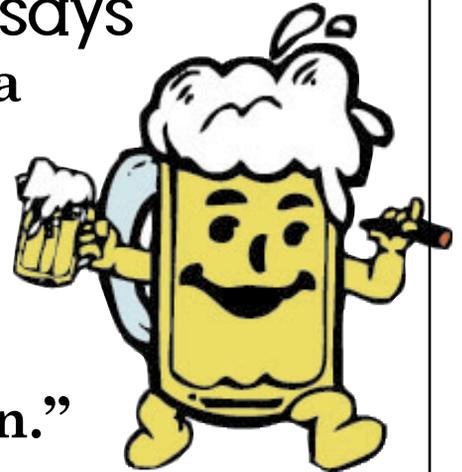


[14-Year-Old Penis]
Braces



[Jews]
Jews

sudsy says
“A vagina
is a gift
you can
open
again
and again.”



BARTENDING SCHOOL THE SANTORUM

Ingredients:

- 1 part vodka
- 2 parts self-righteousness
- 1 part semen
- 1 1/2 parts anal juices

Shaken, not stirred, and no cuddling. Garnished with the tears of moderate Republicans.



BEARD OF THE MONTH



This issue's winner is Frog Miller! He had to be in here eventually.

POINT/COUNTERPOINT

WALKING ALONE THROUGH THE CEMETERY

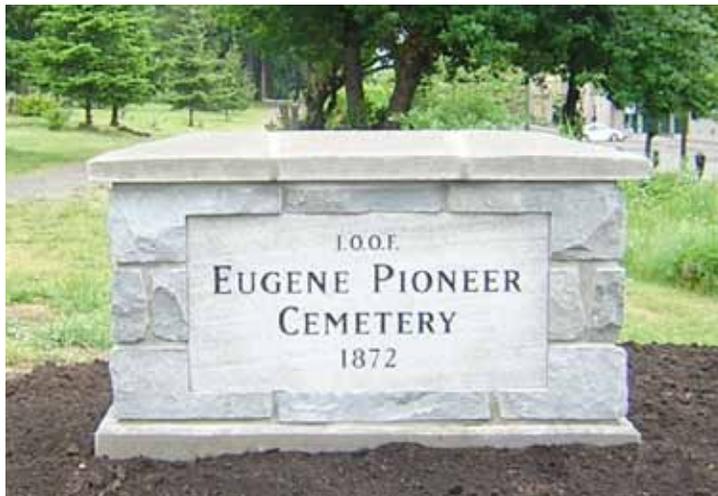
PRO

As spokeswoman for KlassyGurl Cosmetics, I assure you that walking alone, at night, in a cemetery, is the best option for any young woman no matter what race, color or creed. Yes, reports may show that one of the top locations for sexual assault on campus is in the Pioneer Cemetery, and that is rather scary. But you know what is even scarier? Having those little bags under your eyes that

even the cleverest make up tricks can't cover up! Those five exhausting extra minutes it takes to walk through the cemetery, as opposed to around it, could be the difference between being desirable or being an old maid ten years down the road!

Five minutes may seem like nothing to the average man, but that is because they have never experienced the hard work that it takes to be a woman. We keep ourselves up at night, tossing and turning thinking to ourselves, "How am I going to fit in the spinning class, the pedicure, and the waxing job and still have time for a successful career?" Five minutes is more important than the somewhat-consistent pattern of women getting attacked when walking alone, at night, in a cemetery.

Rape Shmape - as women of the world, we need the time to become the best we can possibly be. It's simple really. If time is money, and you are spending five extra minutes to walk around the infamous sexual assault zone as opposed to through it, you are losing money. Money is power, and what is this, a university that doesn't appreciate women's right to vote, or something? I strongly urge women to think about these issues, and hope that they continue to walk through the cemetery, knowing in their hearts that five minutes can change the world.



CON

Have to get through campus fast? A quick shortcut through the cemetery is your best bet. That is, if the bet is that you're gonna get raped. You may think you're saving time by cutting through the cemetery, but if you include rape-time it could cost you up to an extra 20 minutes!

(And while it's happening it'll feel like an eternity.)

But there's a solution. I interviewed a local man who's offering his services to keep students safe. His name is Ralph, he's 38 years old, lives alone, and has scratches all over his face. "I own a cat," he said, chuckling maniacally shortly after. "I park my van on the street, and I'm happy to give rides to young ladies who don't feel safe." But he does have some restrictions, only giving rides to thin females under the age of 25. He did not specify the minimum age. "I think I'm going to start a non-profit," he went on, "Ralph's Windowless Van Rides for Vulnerable Young Women and Girls after Dark, Just so Long as They Can Keep a Secret, or R.W.V.R.V.Y.W.G.A.D.J.L.T.C.K.S." Has a nice ring to it.

In the meantime, if you can't rely on the hospitality of good samaritans like Ralph, I would suggest taking the extra time to walk around the graveyard, or at least maintain situational awareness when going through it. Be safe, carry pepper spray. But your attacker may also have pepper spray, so carry a Taser as well. But they could have that too, so get a gun. Because you can have that on campus. A freaking gun. But that's a different story; I think we already talked about it...



SandraDee Greenhall is the Humor Editor of the OREGON COMMENTATOR and will be walking alone in the cemetery at 10:35 tonight. Come say hi!



Ben Schorr is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and hears Ralph's van is a great way to pick up chicks.

Origin Myths 101



Origin Stories and Insights into the Character of ASUO Presidential Candidates

As the ASUO elections churn ceaselessly on like the spirit-guzzling behemoth that they are, it's likely you'll hear some background on the executive hopefuls. However, we would like to take a page to honor those who (thanks to some estranged husband or another) didn't make the cut (or won't, in the case of our favorite spice), whose fascinating tales will otherwise go unheard. The Commentator would like to give these candidates one last hurrah, by telling their stories the only way we know how: awesome...ly.

Alex Sylvester

In the beginning, there was Zeus. Zeus was bored, so he changed his name to Alex Sylvester. Upon discovering that referring to oneself in the third person is not only annoying but also boring, he created the Garden of Eden and Man. Well, Man appeared to be bored, so Alex created Woman. Then, Alex became bored yet again and so created a tree. "This tree," he told Man and Woman, "is never to be fucked upon." Alex then assumed the form of a serpent and slithered down to earth. He attempted to seduce both Man and Woman, but Woman was more receptive. She followed the serpent Alex up the tree and, to much the dismay of her male counterpart, began to climax just as he found himself wandering under this very tree. Man was so enraged that he chopped Alex the serpent in half and kidnapped Eve and fled, ultimately settling down in the fourth layer of Hell. Alex Sylvester, being not-of-this-world, survived the amputation of his tail and continued his perplexing journey through life.

Eventually, Alex began to yearn for a change of pace. He had stumbled upon the musings of one Lewis Carroll, known to Alex as "Little Louie." Little Louie Carroll intoxicated Alex with his telling of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and "Jabberwocky." Unfortunately for Carroll, Alex ultimately convinced him to abandon the priesthood he had worked so hard to achieve in the Anglican Church in order to unofficially elope with the timeless minx and score a big burlap sack of Atropa belladonna and jimson weed. After a hallucinogen-filled honeymoon, Alex dumped Carroll's naive body off at his sister's house in Surrey, England.

Alex, seeking a change of scenery once

again, wandered the United States aimlessly for a few decades before laying his eyes on Amelia Earhart. She was unlike any other creature he had ever met. She was abnormally tall and could fly a plane. Alex loved her passion for advocating the unpopular but thrilling concept flying. Of course, she was a woman, making her even more of a thrill as a pilot. They began flying all over the world together, going to exotic places and doing erotic things. Their favorite sex position was the reverse cowgirl jumping over the moon. Indeed, they became very close. However, tensions rose when Alex allegedly started funneling funds from her baggage company into communist efforts. An argument in mid-air over the Atlantic on July 2, 1937 ended in a barrage of angry, cramped sexual acts during one of which Earhart lost control of the plane and crashed into the ocean.



For the longest time, we were all unaware of these historical facts. Now that the dust has settled from this year's fucked up Degrassi edition of ASUO elections, maybe we can all come to terms with the shocking truth of ASUO Vice Presidential Candidate Alex Sylvester.

Cims Gillespie

Cims Gillespie is a god among men! And, although the ASUO elections are over, I don't believe for a second that he won't win. Whatever goal Cims focuses his attention on becomes a reality.

What can I say about Gillespie that hasn't

already been passed down from generation to generation? The Mayans have a saying that directly refers to Cims. "Naw-gooch-E-Kahn," one who is hung like the jaguar.

Scientists have attempted to study Gillespie's ability to reproduce asexually, however the sight is too explicit for any mortal man. I've heard that, unlike George Washington, Gillespie can only tell lies, although he did tell me that himself, so I'm not sure if I can believe him.

Legend has it that Cims Gillespie won a debate purely through a combination of strategically timed shrugs and eye-rolls. When you sleep at night Cims Gillespie sneaks into your room and gently whispers in your ear, "everything's going to be alright." Which explains the sex dreams you've been having. Also, I've been told that when Gillespie trips his body naturally does a cartwheel.

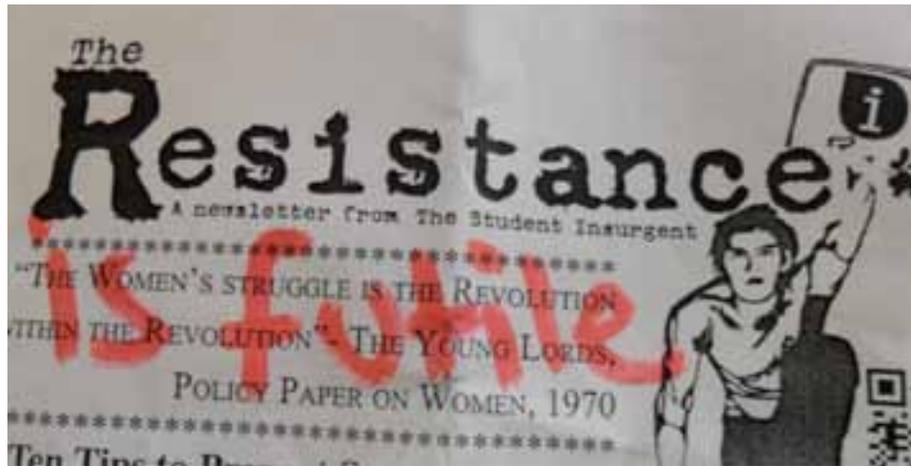
And such a gentleman! When Gillespie heard that chivalry was dead he revived it, took it out for a date, walked it home, and stopped at 1st base. In 2002, Cims Gillespie lost his virginity to three different women at the same time. At the moment of his climax the entire world population ejaculated and then passed out, seemingly for no reason. It was a fantastic day! I once went gay for Cims Gillespie. Then I went straight for him, then bi. Now, I just masturbate to inanimate objects that remind me of him. Well, that's not all I do...

If Cims were an animal he'd be a rhino, and an eagle, and a lion. An eagline, if you will. If you look him in the eyes your dick will turn into stone. If you're a woman then you will grow a dick, and then it will turn into stone. He has been called the most ethnically diverse man ever to exist. He is 50% Nigerian, 50% German, and 50% Filipino.

He's won every eating contest he's ever entered and some he hasn't. He literally shits bricks. Out of all the people I have ever met he is one of them. He is the most beautiful man that has ever existed, and if it weren't for the penis he would be the most beautiful woman. His first name is actually an acronym. C for courage, I for Is, M for Manly, and S for Snakes. I support Cims Gillespie for ASUO president, for University president, for US president, and for grand galactic overlord!

Katie Taylor

Katie Taylor was once a loyal priestess serving under the ASUO. However, the exposure of treachery and corruption in her heart angered her patron goddess, Athena, who cast a great spell from the peaks of Mount Olympus that turned Katie into a snake-haired demoness whose gaze turns anyone who looks into her eyes into a mindless, soulless OSPIRG canvasser. True story.



In preparation for the Rational Debate issue, the OREGON COMMENTATOR vied for input from many student organizations whose opinions differ with those of the OC, to create a platform for rational debate on topics of mutual interest. One of these groups was the Student Insurgent, who neglected to give the request any consideration. Therefore, in lieu of any thoughtful input from the Insurgent, we decided to go with some that was thoughtless instead--both from their latest publication, and their actions following out request. The COMMENTATOR appreciates this opportunity, and wishes to remind the Insurgent that they had their chance.

Looking for Logic in All the Wrong Places

I am a petty man and I have petty complaints. Accordingly, I am here to voice my complaints concerning the article titled, "Private Property, Government, and Anarchy," in the most recent issue of the *Student Insurgent*. The article attempts to convince us of all the wrongs of our governmental and economic systems, and goes on to propose one grand solution: eliminate capitalism. My personal disagreement aside, one would hope that in putting forth a manifesto denouncing the rampant manipulation by our capitalist system, the *Student Insurgent* would have the integrity to not fall back on the very same form of manipulation in order to try to sell you its perspective. But if one would hope that, one has clearly never read this magazine before. The *SI* falls on an alarmist emotionality in an attempt to convince us that they

have the solution to our social ills, a time-honored tactic of all those who are unable to defend their ideals with simple logic. It goes from claiming that government is exclusively responsible for such hits as "murder, war, genocide, rape, torture and slavery," (while claiming that "a world of true happiness, joy, love, caring, liberty, equality...can only come from the hearts and minds of the majority of humanity that toils" because individuals never do anything bad on their own . . . or maybe just farmers?) to vaguely generalizing what seems to be some sort of unspecified happening in Europe to back-up what appears to be a claim to hidden rule by the wealthy. "Thaddeus Achilles Griffin" effectively vomits out radical sounding ideas and tells us to take his word for it, making him guilty of the very same thing he decries. Thaddeus, if you're writing a persuasive article, learn who your audience is. Your writing comes off as just another pointless rallying

cry for those who are already on board to accept your "radical" ideas as the way, the truth and the life. Shouldn't you focus your time convincing the skeptics, who long for a good, solid, rational, logic-based argument to win them over? And if so, learn how to provide a concise line of reasoning. If you take on the task of writing an article to persuade me to accept your opinion on something as important as the nature of our society, you have taken on the responsibility to lead me to your conclusion by taking every necessary step. Nothing can afford to be taken for granted. Define your terms, back up every argument and supposed fact, and write with the cold, hard logic that is the only hope you have.



Ethan Bendau is the publisher of the OREGON COMMENTATOR, and likes a lot of things that are good, solid, cold and hard.

The Student Insurgent Says, “Fuck Your Freedom of Speech.”

So one sunny, cool winter day as my COMMENTATOR pal and I were walking around campus to distribute advertisements for our coming issue, we decided to stop by the Survival Center: a messy but amusing room which houses many student groups, set across from the Women’s Center and next door to the Arts and Craft Center.

Rather innocently we popped in to put some of our advertisements on the table, but were confronted by none other than my favorite person in the world, Cimmeron Gillespie. Much as I like to give good ol’ Cinnamon the benefit of the doubt, every encounter I’ve had with him has continued to confirm my suspicions that he wants to destroy 99% of humanity and have the rest live under his rule. At this meeting, he immediately informed my companion and I that we couldn’t leave our papers in the Survival Center because we, as COMMENTATOR members, were “spreading hate and lies.” These were actually calls for people to send commentaries to the magazine if they had something they disagreed with us about, which is why we stopped by the Survival Center. No sooner did he attempt to kick us out than he also took the papers we had put down on the table and threw them in the recycle bin. Perhaps the garbage bin, just to make the point how much he didn’t want us there.

My point is that, for the love of God, reader, please do not become one of those people. By that I refer to several prominent voices in the anarchist community (aka the *Student Insurgent*) who continue to express the conviction that the only morally correct opinion is their own. By disallowing political and social conversation, people like these do the exact opposite of what they claim to

do. Instead of building communities, they break them, or force people to take extreme sides. In a country as dichotomous as the United States, the only real hope for change and progressive behavior lies in compromise, understanding and discussion.

Another issue, perhaps far more important, about this attitude, is that it’s the exact same standpoint that led to the creation of the Third World, and one that continues to enforce inequality and poverty. West Africa, for example, was not always full of impoverished and starving people. That happened when the French came over and said, “Hey, your way of life sucks. Ours is great. Let us show you how to fix it.” It was quite a bit more complicated than that, but there’s the general idea. The idea that, “Everyone should agree with me, and anyone who doesn’t is wrong.” It’s to blame for poverty in the developing world, it’s to blame for a million other problems, and it’s to blame for the *Insurgent’s* incredible arrogance.

You absolutely have the right to your own opinion. This is the United States, and I damn well believe the right to an individual opinion is vital to a democratic and equal lifestyle. But by not listening to or ignoring other opinions that are just as valid as your own goes against everything that makes democracy great. Always remember that those who claim their belief system is the ONLY valid one there is are not people you want to get involved with. It’s the same speech that dictators and murderers use.



Maggie Brees is the art director of the OREGON COMMENTATOR, and eats anarchists for breakfast.

Talking Out Your Ass: Why Capitalism Works and Your Anti-Capitalist “Utopia” Doesn’t

“There can be no talk of ‘progress’ here, or any place on this earth, until each and every person on this globe advances morally. We must take every moral idea that has ever been spiritually, philosophically, or politically-inspired to their logical conclusions...”

“Theater, art, literature, cinema, press, posters, and window displays must be cleansed of all manifestations of our rotting world and placed in the service of a moral, political, and cultural idea.”

“[After our movement succeeds]... then, there will come a peace across the earth.”

One of these quotes was said by Adolph Hitler. Another came from the lips of Josef Stalin. The third was penned by a *Student Insurgent* writer, in an article from their latest issue. Can you guess who said which? Because I can assure you, the amount of thought you devote to Googling these quotes is more thought than the *Student Insurgent* put into the entirety of the article from which one of these came.

Titled “Private Property, Government, and Anarchy,” and penned by one Thaddeus Achilles Griffin, this article could probably balance the amount of critical thought eeked into it on the rim of an organic guava-juice jug. It begins its argument in tried and true *Insurgent* form, calling for the destruction of capitalism in store-bought ink on factory-processed paper hot off the professional presses (and presumably written on the God of capitalist abominations, the Mac). If that were the extent of the inanity,

however, it would hardly be worth writing about. It's when Griffin begins to get into the concept of what exactly constitutes a blood-sucking capitalist that the crazy begins to balloon: "Whether the institution is large, medium, or small in size is only a matter of degree, but in principle they are all the same: they are private tyrannies that are completely unaccountable to those who serve under them and those outside the institution who are impacted by them." I don't know about Griffin, but I have personally been within fifty feet of a small business owner, and they are hardly the slathering bastions of destruction he seems to believe they are. I know a man who started a small brewery to chase a life-long dream, treats his employees fairly, and creates a product that vastly improves the lives of those who need a goddamn drink. I know another man who owns two successful bars (you should be noticing a pattern here), regularly lives through the hell of bartending on Saturday nights alongside his employees, and makes strides to run a clean, safe, fun establishment. Even my own mother owns a business, where she slaves away balancing checkbooks for people who probably couldn't count their fingers and toes with a calculator, all at a decent price. If these people are screwing anybody, it's themselves, as they try to stay competitive while offering the best possible service to their customers.

That in mind, I'm at a loss to understand what Griffin finds is worth salting the earth over in regard to small business owners. Who exactly are they taking advanced of? Is my mother's accounting business some kind of dictatorship where she requires a blood sacrifice from her two employees every Wednesday by 10:00? Is the bar owner not treating his employees right by paying them fair rates and providing them with a decent job

during a time of economic turmoil? Is the brewer to be shamed for providing people with a product that makes a shitty day at work a lot more tolerable? That's ignoring the fact that the sorts of actions Griffin decries (such as setting up sweatshops, taking advantage of foreign populations, and polluting at will) are really limited to corporations, perhaps suggesting that Griffin is making massive generalizations and has no goddamn idea what he's talking about. He seems to hate these people on the basis that they have *something* to do with capitalism, which is, again, about the extent of the critical thinking going on here.

But the article's true degree of thoughtlessness only comes to light when Griffin presents his "solution" to the scourge of capitalism. The description of what is apparently supposed to be a workable system is so overwhelmingly out of touch with reality that I'm going to have to take it in chunks:

"Under the banner of self-governing civilian administration, workers would come to decisions democratically—either through a simple majority, full consensus, or whatever is appropriate to the group in question based upon their size and sensibilities."

These sentences are about half a page away from a section where Griffin states that, "Government simply cannot be reformed." I'm not particularly sure what he else he thinks we should call a body that has an administration and an established voting system, but apparently it's radically different, or something.

"In order to plan the production and distribution of wealth on an equal basis (without a monetary system), various committees of recallable representatives."

Oh-kay. Within one sentence, "self-governing administration" has gone out the window, and we now have government by representation. Again, not sure what else to call it

besides that apparently heinous word "government," and I've been supplied with no rational reason to call it anything different. Also, jot down that "without a monetary system" thing, because that's going to be critical in the clusterfuck that is to come.

"Working in this economy is participatory in any capacity that the individual sees fit. However, those who take from society will be required to contribute to it as well in some fashion. No lazy folk behaving parasitically by milking off the sweat and hard work of others and not giving back (as in the case of the capitalists)."

So. Hold on a second. People are allowed to participate in this society in any fashion they want, regardless of whether that ability or skill is actually in demand, and have their needs subsequently met? So if a guy decides to make funny hats for a living, can he then trade a half-assed fedora for life-saving brain surgery? Isn't the doctor going to be a little miffed at all the time he has to devote to his profession, while he gets no more from his efforts than basket-weavers and professional jugglers? And what about the jobs that nobody wants to do? Do toilets remain clogged for eternity in this world?

"When times are good, all members of society may take what they need freely. When times are tough, we may decide to divide all wealth up equally in a work-voucher system to guarantee that the individual is working and contributing to society, and is therefore entitled to their equal share of the wealth produced from society."

Yeah, they may decide to divide resources equally. Or, alternatively, the biggest and strongest can do what they've done for thousands of years and take all the resources while the weak starve. Griffin is assuming a lot of things about human nature here, none of them based in observation or sound science. It gets particularly bad when we get to this next part:

"They shall retain the full right to bear arms, there shall be no police...no

prisons or institutions shall exist, only community-based care...”

Oh, okay. So now everyone has guns, but there are no cops, prisons, or any means of social control, and you expect everybody to play nice and share? What if everyone “democratically” decides to run in fear as mob rule takes hold and resisters are dragged into the streets and shot? Holy shit, this “utopia” is apparently a Kolkhoz version of the Road Warrior.

And yes, I said Kolkhoz. Because you know who else traded labor for resources, only to find the fruits of their efforts striped away by a representative body that could not deliver on the promises of happiness and freedom (read: from capitalism) it put forth?



These poor motherfuckers. For those of you who can't tell, these are Soviet citizens breaking their backs for a broken dream. Griffin may rightly decry this method as non-functional and tyrannical, yet the distinction between his utopia and the Soviet dystopia is no greater than the difference between “pre” and “post.” Idealism abounds in his vision, as it did in the minds of revolutionaries that overthrew the Czar. However, it simply doesn't take into account that humans can be complete dicks, and will often behave selfishly for no other reason than they want to. Basing your system of government on the assumption that humans will always do good is inherently flawed. “What this system advocates

for is nothing less than freedom not only for the individual, but for the collective as well.”

Freedom. That's one word for it. Another is “hellhole.” A third, fancier term is “dystopia.”

Let me give you an example from history of a system that truly worked. Back in the 1600's, there was an Ottoman city called Istanbul which, for its time, was very forward-thinking on religious and social issues. While the Jews were being chased out of Spain and people of various Christian sects were fleeing slaughter in other European nations, people from both groups were free to live, work, and worship in Istanbul. The city also provided a myriad of social services to its people, including public baths, libraries, and the equivalent of soup kitchens today. They even offered opportunities for upward social mobility to individuals of other religious and ethnic groups—even the Greeks, and we all know how much the Turks hate Greeks—in a display of tolerance that was virtually unheard of at that point in history.

And why exactly did the Ottomans set up this lovely social experiment?

Well, it wasn't out of the goodness of their hearts—Constantinople got the works for a reason. No, there was actually something a lot more practical at play: they knew that no matter if you were Greek, Christian, Turkish or Jewish, that didn't affect if you could sell hummus. Then-Sultan Suleiman understood that to create a diverse marketplace and bring as much money into his country as possible, he needed the best talent available—regardless of borders or what symbol they worshipped. That desire led to the creation of a place where people would *want* to live, and achieved what Communist societies since then have failed to grasp. All in all, Griffin should really heed his own words here: “Capitalism and Government...

are not moral agents.” It's true that horrible things are done in the interest of making money, and people being screwed by corrupt, money-hungry corporations is hardly news. Those moral failings, however, do not fall at the feet of capitalism itself. Like science, capitalism instills no morality; it takes on the morality we give it. If that means screwing people out of their life savings or handing out law books in common language so the citizens can know their rights (another thing Suleiman implemented, that magnificent bastard), capitalism *reflects* morality, rather than creating it.

There's a contemporary fellow that I think sums it up nicely, a man more deserving of respect than any of the men quoted above: Jon Stewart. In a statement to Congress' Tea Party population, he said, “Government isn't perfect, but some people wish it was better, not gone.” Yes, there are problems with the system, but if your answer is to tear it all down—after all, according to Griffin, neither capitalism nor government can be “reformed” to his liking—and replace it with a mediocre, poorly thought-out version of a hippie commune, you're going to sound like an idiot. How about, for a change, come up with an idea that actually might work. Read a history book, take a psychology class, think critically about what you say before you say it. That way, maybe you won't get caught accidentally echoing the words of a Nazi. Because that would just be embarrassing.



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Slacktivism



And Why It Sucks

It all starts while you're checking Facebook. All of a sudden your feed is saturated with information about the Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony and Invisible Children. There are a variety of embedded YouTube videos and thousands of "likes" and "shares" underneath each link. With YouTube views over 86 million and 16.6 views on Vimeo, Invisible Children's "Get Kony" campaign is one of the most successful pieces of viral political activism, gaining national attention and garnering the sponsorship of Bill Gates, Rihanna, and Kim Kardashian, to name a freakish few. And now you can help end the dragooning of young Ugandan children by clicking "like" on Facebook.

This is dangerous. This is immoral. This is Slacktivism.

"Slacktivism" refers to any sort of political or social campaign where practical work and concrete contributions are replaced by "simulated" support, such as "likes" on Facebook. Slacktivists come in all shapes and sizes, whether it's the sorority girl with the "Stop Genocide in Darfur" shirt or the intellectual who thinks Twitter was responsible for the Arab Spring. It transforms laziness into activism, neglecting and insulting the millions of activists who hit the pavement every day, trying to gain support for their cause. It traffics in propaganda, a fuzzy understanding of the facts, and a general ignorance about the full complexity of a given situation.

The tagline "Get Kony" is a perfect example. The fact that Joseph Kony isn't even *in* Uganda seems like an important point to bring up – he and his followers are probably hiding out in the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of Congo

(a country whose name grows less and less true with each adjective).

There's also a question of how many child soldiers Kony actually has. The video implies that over 30,000 children have been kidnapped and are currently forced to fight, while the reality is that Kony's forces have been spread out around neighboring countries with only a few hundred soldiers at most. This blatant blanketing of the facts indicates that members of the Invisible Children organization are either bad researchers and reporters or, even worse, deliberately obfuscating the truth in order to receive more "likes."

This kind of Slacktivism is intimately tied to white guilt, paternalism, and what Nigerian-American writer Dinaw Mengestu calls the "infantilizing version of Africa that is so prevalent we don't even notice it." Slacktivism is primarily motivated by a sense of guilt and obligation, classic white people emotions. Therefore, if you don't contribute to starving children in Africa, you're clearly a monster. Combine this guilt with the assurance that contributing to a cause will prove your altruism and make you feel better, and you've just created a political monster and one hell of a cash cow. The beauty of this in the age of new media is that you don't even have to leave your home: you can support a variety of causes with the click of a button.

This is throwing money down a well. According to the Guardian, only about 20% of the money Invisible Children receives goes directly to Ugandan refugees. That leaves 80% for travel, rent, production and filming costs, salaries and insurance. Thus it's clear that contributing over the internet,

especially to an untrustworthy company like Invisible Children, is problematic because it gives contributors no way to track where their money is going.

Slacktivist campaigns also tend to oversimplify complex political, social, cultural, and historical issues and address symptoms of an issue instead of its underlying systems. The "Stop Genocide in Darfur" shirts are a good example of this. The genocide still going on in Darfur is a direct result of religious fundamentalism and post-colonial restructuring, and attempting to stop genocide with a t-shirt is like trying to clean up a severed limb with a Kleenex. The twenty-year conflict in Uganda is conveniently portrayed as a childlike problem, something that needs to be "fixed" by white American saviors. Comparisons between the labor strikes in Wisconsin and the rupture of democratic movements in the Middle East were credited to social networking sites, with some commentators even going so far as to equate the two movements.

These are all perfectly good examples of Slacktivism's attempt to brush over complex political issues in favor of a white-friendly, U.S.-friendly political cause. We need to find a better way to make a difference, and this doesn't involve volunteering to yell at people on campus about Greenpeace. There needs to be a concentrated effort to transcend the now-defunct strategies of 1960s activists and integrate these practices with technology in a way that places less emphasis on individual reward and superficial social approval.

It's easy to fight a war from an armchair, and Slacktivism is the comfiest Laz-E-Boy of them all. Don't give in. Get off your asses, go outside, and make a difference.



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UNION FRAY

On January 24, in order to ensure that they retain a voice as the University grows and changes, faculty here at the UO formally began a campaign to unionize. As the gap between administration and faculty widens, many faculty feel that they have no ability to express their opinions regarding major decisions that affect how the University functions. In addition, unionization could intensely help the faculty negotiate salary and benefits, thus bringing transparency to the handling of our tuition and tax dollars. External organizations helping organize this effort are the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Comparatively, most other state schools in Oregon already have faculty unions, including Southern Oregon University, Western Oregon University, Eastern Oregon University, and Portland State University. Oregon's red-headed step-child (Oregon State University) has also recently began forming a union; however, not surprisingly, their efforts are coming along much slower and more inbred than ours.

UO's proposed faculty union would include just about everyone but Frrog: professors (both tenure and non-tenure), associate professors, instructors (both full and part time), librarians, researchers (even if funded 100% by grants), and non-managerial administrators.

Thus far, the campaign's success has exceeded the organizers original expectations. To determine faculty opinion, the organizers opted for a card count rather than a secret ballot, which are the two options allowed by Oregon law. If a majority of the faculty (that's 50% +

1 for those of us pursuing a B.A.) voted in favor of authorizing union representation, then the union would be certified to represent 100% of faculty by Oregon law. As of March 13, organizers reported, "We are VERY pleased to announce that...United Academics filed union authorization cards – signed by a clear majority of UO tenure-track, non-tenure-track, and research faculty - with the state Employment Relations Board (ERB)."

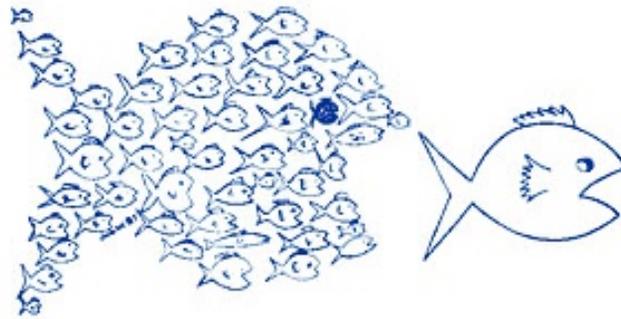
There are many valid reasons for our faculty to unionize. They receive some of the worst pay of any univer-

sity in Oregon, and are similarly at the bottom of the money-barrel when compared to similar-sized universities across the county. By most ways of looking at it, faculty at the University are underpaid and under-benefited, and could potentially gain serious bargaining power from unionization. We also have many faculty that feel as though they are being tossed around by administration, as we have an high amount of part-time instructors who feel helpless. College of Education professor Deborah Olson, for instance, says that UO faculty are "fairly powerless" in decision-making that affects the entire university, and English professor Gordon Sayre claims that,

"faculty input is not respected in budgeting or in campus planning" according to Inside Higher Ed. A union could make it harder for sudden drastic decisions to happen, like the firing of our Sanskrit speaking ex-president Lariviere. (Or, to play devil's advocate, it could mean a shitty ass burnt-out tenured professor not being fired, though that would depend on how the union framed its contracts.)

Although they do tend to argue a lot, Law professors have shown a general disinterest in unionization, because they are in a significantly different situation than the rest of the University. They may actually have a point--the law school follows a different academic calendar than the rest of the University, has a smaller and thus more organized administration than the UO's, and is a statewide program, thus having substantial structural differences from the UO which may justify abstaining from unionization. However if you're reading the **OREGON COMMENTATOR** you probably have no interest in law school, so I don't know why I wrote this paragraph.

As with any service, they will be required to pay monthly union dues, regardless of if they are for or against the union. In comparison, students pay a required Incidental-Fee of \$178 per term (6% of the in-state cost of a 16-credit course load, or \$2685), which supports shit you not may use or like (the **OREGON COMMENTATOR** for example). If efforts to form a union were successful, faculty union dues would be voted on by the union members; based on the workings of similar organizations, such dues could be anywhere in the ballpark of 1.25% (which is what faculty pay at Western Oregon University), 2.1% (which is what our current G.T.F.'s



ORGANIZE

pay their union), to 3.5% of their salary (which Portland Community College faculty pay). It is hard to say if the negotiating power of the union will increase the compensation for our faculty overall; logically speaking, I bet it would help in the long run. As *UO Matters* suggested back in January when the card check first began, "I think a union is pretty much a done deal given the disarray, incompetence, and greed we've seen from OUS and Johnson Hall over the past few years. You really think tuition money should go to help Jim Bean make his beamer payments? Lorraine Davis's family Rose Bowl trip? Perensteiner's maid?"

At the moment, the debate is getting heated. Two online petitions--one to call for a special election (effectively invalidating the union organizers' card check), and one to flat-out oppose the bargaining unit--were created in the days following the submission of the cards, and have already fallen through. (We presume a prevalence of signatures by Anonymous, Mike Hunt, and Seymour Butts probably had something to do with it.) Accusations are flying about backroom dealings by union organizers, particularly that the card check was timed to end around spring break to kneecap opposition (a claim the organizing community firmly denies). Anonymous comments on the *UOMatters* blog, meanwhile, suggest arm-twisting foul play on the part of the opposition to limit support for the union, an accusation which cannot be corroborated. The comments sections on *UOMatters*' blog posts have gotten so heated that the site administration had to post a picture of an adorably overwhelmed puppy and make a plea for civility. That's when you know things are getting serious.

The University, meanwhile, has hired themselves a couple of union-busting lawyers, one of whom hails from, "the law firm of Harrang Long Gary Rudnick P.C., with former University President Dave Frohnmayer a firm member" according to the United Academics. (After all, what's a good, burgeoning

shitstorm at the UO without a massive conflict of interest? It's like a sundae without a shit-cherry.) *UOMatters* managed, after (allegedly) nearly having to rip the invoices from the General Counsel's rigor mortis-afflicted fists, to obtain some interesting information about this hired help. *Some*, of course, is the operative word there.

"One [contract] is with Stephen Hirschfeld of the SF firm Curiale Hirschfeld Kraemer, signed Feb 1, one invoice so far for \$7,834.71. The other is with Sharon Rudnick of Harrang Long Gary and Rudnick, signed Feb 2, no billing yet. (No mention of chinese wall for Frohnmayer). These files are heavily redacted, and in white rather than black, making the extent of redactions less obvious. Tricky, and considered bad practice by those in the public records business.

By sitting on these contracts until after the 4/4 petition response deadline Geller made it impossible for faculty to consider this information when deciding how to respond to the ERB petitions. To me it doesn't really seem worth giving the union attorneys that sort of ammunition."

The administration has also provided their own Excelsior list--smart talk for "a list of people who should be allowed into the clubhouse"--to the organizing committee, expressing who they think should be part of the union. According to *UOMatters*, the results are bewildering: "Apparently the union asked the administration for a list of names that met some criteria - presumably no law, no PI's, engaged in instruction and/or research, and this is what they gave them - yoga instructors? It excludes PIs, but it includes many department heads and among others John Moseley, Jim Bean, and Scott Coltrane. WTF?" This list directly contradicts the letter sent to the ERB by the UO Office of the General Counsel, wherein it was written that "We [the University of Oregon] object to the

inclusion of supervisory employees in the proposed bargaining unit, including but not limited to...Vice Presidents [like Jim Bean and John Moseley, and] Deans [like Scott Coltrane, Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences]."

It's hard to get a grip on the full situation, though, because things are changing too quickly to even get down on paper. Toss in how much information is confidential or hasn't been released to the public and this whole mess becomes such a fast-moving, massive clusterfuck that, like a hoard of advancing zombies, it's impossible to cap one oncoming unit without getting your leg chewed off by another. It's a mess the likes of which only the UO can manage to make.

But, of course, we've forgotten to ask the pivotal question of how a union would affect the student population. The answer is: indirectly. A unionized faculty will hypothetically create better overall working conditions for teachers, and thus overall better learning conditions for students. Like I mentioned earlier, it could also prevent atrocious teachers from getting fired depending on how things shake out. To be sure, if your main concern is avoiding your third M.I.P., or painting Eugene red cuz you're a hardcore social activist, then you have already read too far. If you care about the manner in which our University functions as a whole, and the people who function within it, then you might want to get your ass involved, or at least informed. *UOMatters* seems to be the only salvation for any of us in terms of unbiased, prompt information, so haul your mouse over there for more information, you lazy bastards.



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The Folly of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action, defined, refers to “policies that take factors including race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin into consideration in order to benefit an underrepresented group, usually justified as countering the effects of a history of discrimination.” Its implementation within public universities today is limited to race, but that doesn’t discount the fact that the whole idea just oozes controversy. Accordingly, the Supreme Court this past February agreed to hear a case that challenges the practice, thrusting us all back into a rational debate over affirmative action in higher education. The new case, *Fisher v. University of Texas*, has been brought by Abigail Fisher, a white student who says the University of Texas denied her admission because of her race. Well, Fisher ain’t the first to say so. In 1978, a white student appealed his rejection from UC Davis Medical School in *Bakke v. UC Regents*, and in 2003, a white student appealed her rejection from the University of Michigan Law School in *Grutter v. Bollinger*—each on account of their race. In both cases, the Supreme Court upheld the use of affirmative action within public universities. I read through the Court’s documents and all I have to say is that shit is dense, at best. And although I will be arguing against affirmative action, I thought it would only be rational, after all the research I’ve done, to at least

present the arguments of the other side. So let us begin with my responses to three arguments in favor of affirmative action.



THE STATE MUST UPHOLD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN ORDER TO ATTAIN DIVERSE STUDENT BODIES.

I don’t know about you, but I like to imagine what policies are like in action. You see, I’ve never personally exercised affirmative action, but an admissions staff has. This is how I picture them practicing affirmative action under this specific rationale: “Hey minority applicant, you aren’t quite qualified, but we’re going to accept you because our institution finds it important to maintain a certain number of minorities within its student body, enough to call it a diverse student body at least.” This exact argument was used in the 1978 *Bakke*

v. UC Regents case. Majority Justice Powell approved universities’ use of race to further only one interest: “the attainment of a diverse student body.”

The fallacious assumption that the state has compelling interest to help public universities “attain diverse student bodies” only corners people into frivolous debate over the utility of diversity. That’s something that shouldn’t be debated, because there’s simply no question: A diverse set of students is always preferable to any kind of homogeneous set of students. But attempting to achieve the preferable, diverse campus by way of affirmative action puts a federal stamp of approval on full-blown racial discrimination—in places as important as institutions of higher education. These institutions are among of the

few places we beg to be independent of any governmental interference and limitation. And because of that, affirmative action has always been a very contentious, hypocritical exception to this plea. So contentious, it seems, that when affirmative action was upheld in 1978, the Supreme Court was splintered at 5-4. In 2003, during the almost identical *Grutter v. Bollinger*, they were splintered again, 5-4. After that decision, current Supreme Court Justice Thomas said that “Justice Powell’s opinion in *Bakke* and the Court’s decision today rest on the fundamentally flawed proposition that racial discrimination can be contextualized so that a goal, such as classroom aesthetics, can be compelling

in one context but not in another. This ‘we know it when we see it’ approach to evaluating state interests is not capable of judicial application.”

THE STATE MUST UPHOLD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS THAT COME FROM A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY.

In her formal majority decision in 2003, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor used this exact reasoning when she declared that the Court had legalized “the narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body.” This is tricky I know, but the first argument I cited, and this second one, are not the same. Unlike the first, this argument is suggesting that minority applicants are the means rather than the ends; the educational benefits that come from diversity, not diversity itself, are the explicit interests of the state. Like I had done with the first argument, here is how I think affirmative action is applied with this second rationale: “Hey minority applicant, you aren’t quite qualified, but we’re going to accept you, because we find that your presence benefits our institution. Back in 1978, we wanted you at our institution as a result of our pursuit of diversity itself. You know, in the way that because you are diverse, if admitted, you can make us diverse. And back then we wanted diversity. Well we’ve changed our mind, and now we want you because the presence of minority students actually provides tangible, educational benefits—for other students at our institution, and for our institution itself.” Maybe I’m misrepresenting the logic. But for me, this argument seems even worse than the first. Immanuel Kant anyone? “Always recognize that human individuals are ends, and do not use them as means to your end.” It’s immoral. It’s just fundamentally immoral! Alright look, if you’re not convinced by my reference to Kantian ethics, then let me quote Justice Thomas’ 2003 disapproval

of the University of Michigan Law School’s use of race on these grounds: “...marginal improvements in legal education do not qualify as a compelling state interest...even if the Law School’s racial tinkering produces tangible educational benefits, a marginal improvement in legal education cannot justify racial discrimination where the Law School has no compelling interest in either its existence or in its current educational and admissions policies.”

THE STATE MUST UPHOLD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN ORDER TO HELP IMPLEMENT A SELF-SUSTAINING “CRITICAL MASS” OF MINORITY STUDENTS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXPANSION AND GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY IT REPRESENTS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

This argument sounds pretty good doesn’t it? It doesn’t use an applicant’s race as an ends or a means, like the two listed before had done. This argument

“Hey minority applicant, you aren’t quite qualified, but we’re going to accept you because the federal government thinks that it will aid the development of your race.” God do I feel incredibly racist just saying that.

supports affirmative action for the sake of the minority himself, or herself. It’s quite benevolent, and it strictly pertains to the advancement of certain racial communities. Hmm, “pertains to the advancement of certain racial communities.” Sorry, but with that being said, I think this is the most racist—implicitly racist, of course—argument yet. Applied by an admissions staff, I find it equivalent to: “Hey minority applicant, you aren’t quite qualified, but we’re going to accept you because the federal government thinks that it

will aid the development of your race.” God do I feel incredibly racist just saying that. And Wait. Wait a second. Isn’t racial favoritism at the federal level kind of unconstitutional anyway? Why, yes. Yes it is. And the Supreme Court doesn’t deny that. In the Court’s 2003 decision to uphold affirmative action, it actually explicitly cites that the ruling will last just 25 years. In explanation of this decision, Former Justice Sandra Day O’Connor stated, “We are mindful, however, that a core purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment was to do away with all governmentally imposed discrimination based on race. Accordingly, race-conscious admissions policies must be limited in time. This requirement reflects that racial classifications, however compelling their goals, are potentially so dangerous that they may be employed no more broadly than the interest demands. Enshrining a permanent justification for racial preferences would offend this fundamental equal protection principle.” If I may, Justice O’Connor, in other words you’re saying that affirmative action contradicts the core purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment. And due to its illegitimacy, you’re going to legalize the use of it for only 25 years, because—let me be clear—any permanent justification for affirmative action would be unconstitutional. Well shit! That’s all I needed to hear. But if that isn’t good enough for you, along with its utter lack of legality, the affirmative action in place today is loaded with some serious implications. Forgive me, I beg you, but it seems to me that Justice O’Connor is implying that after giving the people of minority races easier entrance into college for 25 years, that’s when they will be equal with the rest of the nonminority nation. So along with making me super uncomfortable, this argument shows us that affirmative action is not just blatantly unconstitutional, but it’s incredibly demeaning as well. Does anyone recall how many years it took for this planet to even recognize that superiority and inferiority does not arise from race?

Does anyone remember the Holocaust? God this is frustrating. Justice Clarence Thomas—the African American Justice Clarence Thomas—vocally dissented from the Court’s judgment, stating: “I believe blacks can achieve in every avenue of American life without the meddling of university administrators.” And as for the 25 year ruling, he stated “I believe that the current use of race violates the Equal Protection Clause and that the Constitution means the same thing today as it will in 300 months.”

Well unlike Justice Thomas, I’m not black. But for the record, I’m only half white. Like Justice Thomas, I oppose affirmative action. This doesn’t mean I oppose diversity; I think diversity is a wonderful thing. But we don’t mandate federal policies by measure of the wonderfulness that they may yield. Yes, without context or implications, affirmative action is extremely appealing. But that’s just it—the debate over affirmative action MUST be considered in its proper context, and amongst all of its subsequent implications; it makes all the difference. With these things in mind, I am able to realize the concerns of the practice. Firstly, affirmative action amplifies the role and the reach of the federal government in every American institution of higher education. Secondly, affirmative action endows college admissions staffs with an ability to admit and reject students extremely arbitrarily. I’m simply not comfortable with either, and I don’t think anybody should be. During the Grutter v. Bollinger Case, Justice Thomas declared that “No one would argue that a university could set up a lower general admission standard and then impose heightened requirements only on black applicants. Similarly, a university may not maintain a high admission standard and grant exemptions to favored races.” I agree with this statement. Affirmative action poisons the admissions process. When you factor in “race” as a legitimate attribute, a legitimate highlight to someone’s application, you’re putting a gold star next to somebody’s innate

characteristic. It sounds crass and I’m sorry, but nobody earned their ethnic origins. And I think I speak for most college students—most prospective college students rather—when I say please, if I’m going to get turned down by a school, let it be on account of merit, on account of a shitty essay, on account of a shitty SAT score, on account of insufficient extracurricular activities. Let it be all or any of those reasons; I shall endure, I shall do better. But please, do not deny my admission because of my plain and pasty nonminority nationality—for I cannot change that.

Affirmative action’s motivations? Incredibly benevolent. Affirmative action’s justifications? Incredibly demeaning; the implications that come with easier college admission degrade the minority races themselves. And if you were wondering, discrimination, defined, is “the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit.” And with that, you can call it affirmative action, you can call it a commitment to diversity, you can call it fried chicken—nothing changes the fact that affirmative action is plain old racial discrimination. To think that this nation justifies the same exact practice that it so fervently abhors on a fundamental level is bewildering. This country has struggled with its conception of equality since its birth, and American history is already tainted by its habitual inability to practice the “equality” that it was claimed to be founded on. Well it’s

been a long time coming, and we aren’t anywhere near perfect, but we must acknowledge that we’ve come a long way. And now, in the year two thousand and twelve, the thought of undermining or unraveling any of the progress made towards this elusive ideal is no less than nauseating. No less than nauseating to me at least. The purpose of American government is to protect and pursue this admittedly

In other words you’re saying that affirmative action contradicts the core purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment. And due to its illegitimacy, you’re going to legalize the use of it for only 25 years, because—let me be clear—any permanent justification for affirmative action would be unconstitutional.

convoluted notion of equality—not to give consolation, reparation, remedy—for past societal injustices. And as for the right of access to higher education, The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 declares, in Article 13, “higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means.” The key phrases here are “equally accessible to all” and “appropriate means.” Affirmative action is neither of those.



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Opposing Gays is Super Gay

Every few years some group begs all us normal people for “equal rights.” This year it’s the gays. Homos everywhere have been asking for the right to get married. Now, because my mother chained me to a water heater for the first eighteen years of my life, forcing me to subsist on a diet of rat feces and roof crumbs, I am very sheltered. I had no idea what “gay” was before this article, so I decided I needed to interview two people who did. The pro gay supporter was found doing charity at a local hospital, while the gay rights opponent was found at his family reunion, trying to pick up chicks. After interviewing the two, this is what I found.

PRO GAY

The pros of gay marriage are relatively bountiful. There is literally no group that could throw more kick ass weddings than gay people. Should we give gay people equal rights, novelty rubber fist sales would sky rocket from all the bachelor parties, thus pumping money into our economy. Lesbians getting the right to marry would create the scenario of the very first cut off sleeve flannel wedding dress, and who doesn’t want to see that? Separation of church and state is a real thing, and marriage has been around longer than the bible. If gay marriage becomes legal everywhere, the chances of Neil Patrick Harris and Ian Mckellen (fucking Gandalf and Magneto) having a super baby increases. That baby would literally cum gold. They could have a show called “How I Met Your Father” based on the whole thing. And I guess gay people are people too and should be given equal rights.

OPPOSE GAY

Being gay is weird! If we start allowing gay marriage, they’ll probably force me to have a gay marriage! Married lesbians are less likely to have three ways! We just gave colored folks rights, isn’t that enough?! Gay people get AIDS more, and we all know that people that are married are more likely to sleep around and spread AIDS! Which means I’ll probably get AIDS, because I was planning on fucking a bunch of married homos! The Bible says gay marriage is a no-no, fuck separation of church and state! God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve! God would never make gay people. If I’m not allowed to marry my cousin, why should two dudes be allowed to marry?!

FINAL VERDICT

Gay people should be allowed to marry. I base my verdict mostly off of the fact that Clint Eastwood is cool with it. The church should be supporting gay marriage, since it will finally give the Pope the ability to marry his eight-year-old freckled-face fuck buddy when he is of proper age. A poet once said that the only people worried about gay marriage are the people that are worried that cocks are delicious. I think there’s a lot of truth to that.



Brandt Hamilton is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and thinks bacon can ruin a breakfast. What a freak!

VAGINA WARS

HOW REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE GETTING THE SHAFT

The debate for public health care just keeps getting hotter as liberals reach deeper and deeper to pull those pesky conservatives out



of women's vaginas. Unfortunately, GOPers are firmly wedged between Lady Liberty's legs for the time being as Congress gets ready to spew its pathetic, attention-seeking, middle-child worthy reasons to withhold contraceptives in insurance coverage. Recently, Big Balls Barack successfully passed a measure that mandates that employers provide birth control options as part of their insurance coverage for employees. However, conservatives quickly caused a ruckus over whether religious institutions would also have to abide by the birth control mandate, citing some made-up Bible verses to sound "informed." As it stands now, religious institutions such as churches are exempt from providing contraceptives to their employees, while other employers, even if they have some religious affiliation (such as colleges and hospitals), are required to provide some birth control services starting in August. As if it wasn't bad enough that a panel of crusty old men is setting

rules and boundaries for the genitals of over half the population, now we have people crying that getting free rubbers and otherwise preventing pregnancy is a filthy sin. You'd think that a debate focusing on the regulation of vaginas would warrant a strong nucleus of vagina-owners to speak on the matter. Nope. Catholics don't think so. The front-runners for the GOP presidential candidate sure as hell don't think so. And congressional Republicans? They just want the flaming bags of dog poop to stop. At this pivotal time when women need to raise their voices the most, Capitol Hill is disappointingly lady-free. Luckily, female journalists, activists, and politicians have been more vocal about their support for women's health care rights lately--ever since the media, including pundits like Jon Stewart, ripped the ladies of America a new asshole for letting five old men, who have only ever admired vaginas from afar, tell them what's what in the... underpants.

Unfortunately, and paradoxically, the push against the inclusion of contraceptives in healthcare plans is symptomatic of the serious woman-hating on Capitol Hill. There has been a slew of anti-abortion measures cropping up around the states since Republicans took control of the House of Representatives early last year. 2011 was especially severe for cooters: in the first six months, there were over 80 laws proposed to limit women's access to safe abortions. The laws used direct and indirect means to achieve their slimy goal, including: decreased funding to family planning services;

mandatory "reflection periods" which sometimes require that women visit a therapist whose goal is to try to talk them into keeping their bastard child before pursuing an abortion; bans on late term procedures (which are rare, anyway, and are almost always performed because the health of the mother is at risk); and the slimiest of all, the transvaginal ultrasound. Even the word is intrusive. Apparently, seeing that blurry, grainy, black and white picture of some moving bubbles is meant to turn your Rosemary's Baby into your Knocked Up by slapping some good ol' fashioned Bible Belt morals and guilt on your indiscretions. You can't even opt for a transabdominal ultrasound, because that wouldn't be nearly as demeaning and fucked up. Don't want the ultrasound? Tough shit if you live in Virginia or Florida. The rest of you can sit tight for now, but don't get too comfortable because several other states are greasing up those specula and are headed for your vag. Don't they know that encouraging contraceptive coverage would actually REDUCE abortion rates? (And--hopefully--keep people like our faithful congressional servants from reproducing?)

It seems so logical. If people have better insurance coverage with easier access to preventative healthcare (i.e., contraceptives), the birth rate would decrease, relieving some of the tension on our environment and our economy, and would help women's health overall. Congressional leaders oppose the coverage because of morals and religious freedom, when at its core it is a healthcare issue. Opposition says the government does not need to extend its reach any further, but I would rather let the government regulate my insurance company than my vagina.



Farrah Thunderbolt is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and was once mistaken for Little Richard.

AMERICA: PLUTOCRACY MEETS THEOCRACY

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND

STATE is a phrase that has been used throughout America's history, and as of late, more often by Democrats than Republicans. Both parties consist of a largely Christian foundation; however, the dependence of the GOP on the Religious Right has become especially

obvious as the primaries push forward. It seems as though certain Christians believe they are under attack; this is apparent through the campaign of Rick Santorum, who was, until recently, neck and neck with Mitt Romney for the Republican presidential bid. Whether Santorum's stances are based on genuine moral beliefs, or political motivations, they are frequently hateful and almost always ignorant.

I believe the most obvious example of Santorum's hateful rhetoric is his openly disdainful stance on homosexuality. On February 3rd, in response to the question, "Why don't homosexuals deserve equal rights when it comes to gay marriage?" Santorum replied, "[Marriage] is an intrinsic good ... we extend certain privileges to people who do that because we want to encourage that behavior."

The patriarchal tone that Santorum takes here is a common tool of his. To a Christian audience Santorum's vague declaration of what is "good" behavior must feel comfort-

ing, like a preacher who shouts to the pews, "all those who doubt the word of God will feel his wrath!" (I didn't bother finding an applicable quote from the Bible because I felt making one up would be just as credible.) Basically, what Santorum is saying is that straight couples are bettering society, and therefore deserve the right of marriage. He is condemning homosexual couples as unfit members of society. It is impossible to fathom that anyone who condemns gay marriage does so without the belief that homosexuality is intrinsically wrong; a sin, as some Christians would say.

Santorum's website shows just how willing he is to rely on hot button issues, combining them into one right wing façade. In an article entitled, "We Hold These Truths" Santorum writes, "Millions of Americans, including myself, know what we think about human life and marriage.

We know not only what we think but why we believe what we believe. We know that some truths are bigger than the next election and should not shift with political consultants' advice. And among those great, enduring, and foundational truths, I believe, are life and marriage."

In what I consider one of the most convoluted essays I

have ever read, Santorum proclaims the supremacy of hetero-marriage, and the preservation of unborn babies as 'foundational truths.' Let us take a brief second to review some of the 'foundational truths' that have since been recognized as America's historical low points: white supremacy, female inferiority, slavery, Jim Crow, Separate but Equal, child labor, etc... What I find so disturbing about Santorum's campaign is that it was entirely built on the notion of an infallible and uncompromising God (and not so much on the real issues). Furthermore, his roping together of the two subjects is appalling. How do gay rights and abortion have anything to do with each other, besides their consistent coupling in debates?

Santorum is a master of manipulation, and his preferred trick is the creation of the Other. Santorum knows that if he can convince religious voters that he is on God's side, then they will believe what he says to be right, no

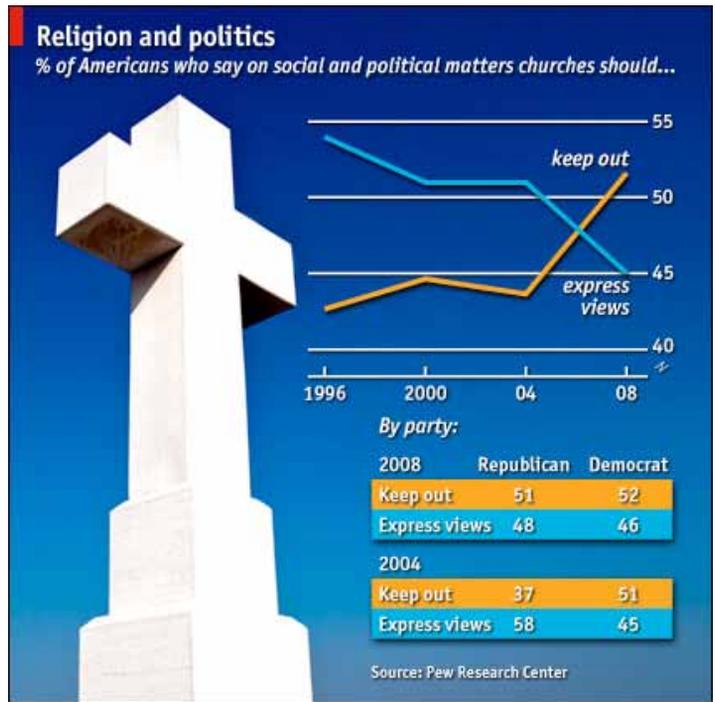


matter how illogical it may be. And by misrepresenting certain groups of people (homosexuals as unfit members of society, women as promiscuous and heartless), he is attempting to win the election through scapegoating.

For argument's sake, let's say that there is a God, and that he is everything that the Christians say about him. Are the religious institutions of the world not perfect examples of why we shouldn't allow corruptible, imperfect men and women to take such powerful positions without some sort of regulation or accountability? Sure, Christianity is responsible for a lot of charitable works, but what of the scandals that so frequently come to the public's attention involving pastors, preachers and priests? Santorum may be out of the picture in terms of the coming election, but the fact that his injection of religious dogma into matters of the state was not only tolerated, but celebrated speaks to a problem within the system itself.

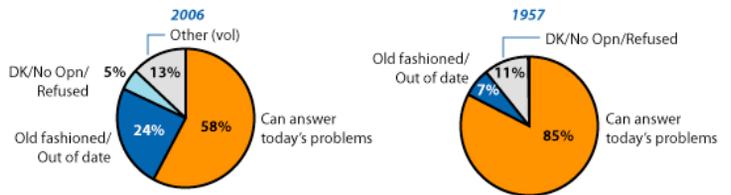
Before I became an atheist, I was raised in the Mormon church, and before I decided to think for myself I asked my Sunday school teacher a simple question. It had come to my attention, through a PBS documentary entitled, "The Mormons," that, until September 30, 1978, people of black African descent (regardless of actual skin color) could not participate in the Mormons' 'sacred' rituals. I asked my teacher why. When confronted with the question, he strategically danced around it until he ended his response with a shit eating grin, and the ignorant statement, "but can't you imagine how happy they were when they could?"

I do not believe that I have the right to tell people what to believe in. However, right-wing Christians are providing a source of political power that is neither based on logic nor empathy, but on faith. Any politician can use this tremendous power in any way they want, even if it's contradictory to their alleged morals. Radical Christians have polarized the GOP and, when it comes down to it, have stopped the US from progressing both socially, and politically.



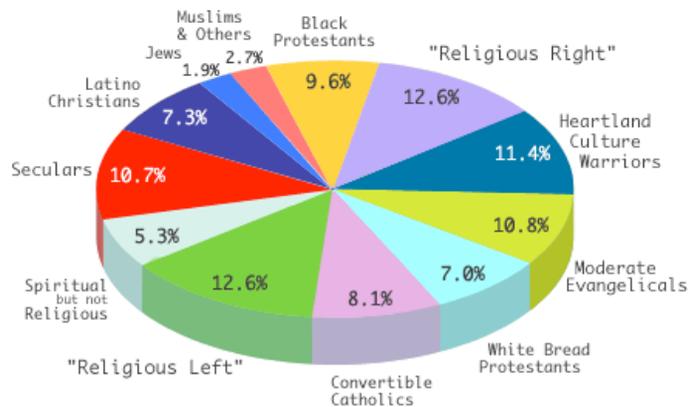
Public Opinion on Religion

Question: Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?



Source: Gallup/USA Today Poll (September, 2006); Gallup (March, 1957)
Data provided by the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF AMERICAN POLITICS



Adam Chimeo is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and knows all about the magic underwear.

Bankruptcy and Student Debt



Why student loans must be made dis- chargeable again

Off in a small corner of the internet, on a college-finance website called finaid.org, a clock is slowly ticking. Right beneath the quaint, diploma-shaped exclamation point in the organization's logo, the numbers on the black and white digital clock change every second, moving along ceaselessly, as clocks tend to do. But this clock isn't ticking forward, to a future full of Mandarin and jet packs; it's ticking up. As I sit here with my chocolate and spiked tea, the clock reads a little over 986 billion and, with each tick, goes up by a few thousand. It climbs and climbs, adding an additional 900,000, ticking away one-million, the number rising like the ocean amongst a thousand melting icebergs. But what, you ask, is this clock counting? The answer may (read: will) horrify you: this clock is tracking America's total student loan debt. And people wonder why we drink.

For those of you who are going to school on mommy and daddy's dime and who didn't weep like an actor in a Spanish soap-opera when you heard this news, cumulative student loan debt in the United States passed credit card debt back in 2010. As tuition costs skyrocket and the job market continues to flounder, the student loan default rate is rearing its ugly head: the percentage of loans in default rose from 7% in 2008 to 8.8% in 2009 according to the Department of Education. Bloomberg News creates an even starker picture: in the third

quarter of 2011, 10% of student loan debt (or \$85 billion) was delinquent, 14% of borrowers had at least one past-due account, with 47% in deferral or forbearance. If that doesn't make you want to reach for the Jaegar, I'm not sure what will. (Grizzly bears on jet skis?) Attempting to stifle what appears to be an upcoming loan-pocalypse, there has been much talk about student loan forgiveness, a controversial topic that has been met with much teeth-gnashing resistance. Also, as much as I would personally love to have all my loans forgiven today (and can I get a martini with that?), I can see how such a tactic could cause its own set of problems in the financial market. That all in mind, it seems like the road to a solution is going to be difficult—if not impossible—to tread.

But there is one small solution to consider. Something that wouldn't change the face of the issue by itself, but might help alleviate what is, for some current and former students, the crushing burden of student loan debt: make student loans dischargeable through bankruptcy.

It's not catchy and doesn't have a patriotic-sounding title, but hear me out. In 1976, the United States bankruptcy code (which had previously marked all student loan debt as dischargeable) was altered so that federal student loans could not be discharged in the first five years of repayment. Similar restrictions were placed on private student loans in 1984. In 2005, the Bankruptcy Abuse

Prevention and Consumer Protection Act was passed, prohibiting any student loan from being discharged through bankruptcy. This act has led to the current state of the student loan market, where many borrowers are dealing with impossible-to-escape financial burdens and lenders are legally allowed to all but take their payment in flesh. Not only has this set-up been bad for students, but for the economy as a whole, because people in debt don't spend money (or nearly as much as they would) to revitalize the market. Further, as defaults on federally-backed loans continue to rise, the student loan debt scene is starting to look worryingly similar to the housing market before the bubble burst. The National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys (NACBA) noted in a February report that "as with the mortgage foreclosure crisis, the staggering amounts owed on student loans...will have repercussions for the broader economy. Just as the housing bubble created a mortgage debt 'overhang' that absorbs the income of consumers...that sustains a growing economy, so too are student loans beginning to have the same effect..." Even FICO is starting to get concerned, with chief analyst Dr. Andrew Jennings saying, "Evidence is mounting that student loans could be the next trouble spot for lenders."

Seeing it all unfold is like watching a gluttoned, drunken football fan swaying toward the stadium rail: you know he's going over, and right now, you don't

see anybody around to catch him.

Allowing student loans to be dischargeable through bankruptcy (ASLDB?) would ease the pressure valve on the industry, allowing the most destitute of borrowers a chance to get out from under their burden. Several bills have been put forward in the last few years with that goal in mind, such as the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act and the Fairness for Struggling Students Act, both of which are still in committee. Though the terms of each bill are different in how strictly they approach the subject (from allowing any amount to be discharged at any time, to allowing it after a certain amount of years or under certain circumstances), they all aim to ease that debt burden for borrowers and, hopefully, save the economy and financial market from an oncoming deluge of educational defaults. Further, it could potentially make lenders a little more cautious about handing out sums of money they don't think will be paid back. While perhaps not great for potential borrowers, such discretion might help slow the unyielding ascent of the country's cumulative student debt.

While some argue that student loans don't have the same security as a home or auto loan, where what the loan was used to buy can be repossessed, such a stance is pointedly obtuse. If the yardstick for what can and can't be discharged is tangibility, why is credit card debt admissible? Is the bank going to repossess long-digested groceries? What happens if the borrower sold that car? What if the house isn't worth what the borrower took out to pay for it? The product of those loans may be of no more tangible value than a diploma, so the fact that they are admissible while student loans are not is, at best, shortsighted and moronic.

(And, honestly, who would you rather let out of debt: the kid who graduated with a 3.8 GPA and is struggling to survive on Starbucks coupons, or the guy with a big-screen in his garage?)

Similarly, those who claim that bankruptcy is just a way to avoid responsibility, and every student will turn around and file once they've got their diploma in hand, aren't the sort of people who are particularly familiar with bankruptcy. Pro-tip: it's not easy for anyone. The procedure is long, arduous, and frighteningly legal; everything of value you have is surrendered; and your credit dies a slow, painful death from which it will take years of hard work to recover. It's not a pretty sight, and only the most financially desperate would voluntarily put themselves in line for such virulent financial hell. Which is, you know, precisely the point.

It must be said that this solution isn't one that will please everyone; in fact, it's probably going to piss off both sides to make such concessions. I will somewhat agree with their as-of-yet unexpressed rage—in terms of fixing the problems with the student loan industry, making student loans dischargeable is pretty weak-sauce. However, one must note that making this change isn't supposed to fix the system in its own right. Rather, it should function as a first step, giving the most desperate among us—and, effectively, our potential future selves—an out in the absolute worst of circumstances. At the risk of sounding patriotic, our forefathers eliminated the use of the debtor's prison, so how can we as a country allow people to live in one made of bank bills and collection notices? Further, while it may only seem to benefit those so deep in debt they're willing to file, the fact that the option is open is a huge step

forward for everyone. After all, the future is uncertain. Just because you'd really rather not have to ever use the defibrillator at the gym, don't you feel a little bit better about the feeble old man trying to bench press twice his weight, knowing it's there?

Allowing student loans to be discharged through bankruptcy—or, perhaps, the Our Forefathers Would've Wanted It Act of 2012 (ha, I thought of one!)—will stick a metaphorical finger in a leaking dam. For those living at the foot of that dam, anything's a plus. Perhaps the situation will become a little less dire, and what is literally an impossible position to escape for some will start to look a lot more hopeful. It's going to take a lot of work, a lot of gnashing teeth, and a lot of patriotically-named bills to fix the problem of student loan debt in the United States. But maybe, by making student loan debts dischargeable, we can make that clock hit daylight savings time, and jump back a couple million.



Ashley Reed is the managing editor of the OREGON COMMENTATOR and thinks there should be trampolines under those rails.

KEEP POT ILLEGAL

All the good points you and your stoner friends didn't think about.

In the 1920s, outright prohibitions of our beloved cannabis began to plague the great United States. With the implementation of the Uniform State Narcotic Drug Act in 1934, every state was restricting and regulating the drug in some form or another. That received little attention until 1970 when the Controlled Substance Act defined cannabis as having high potential for abuse, no medical use, and deemed it not safe to use under medical supervision. Skip forward to 1998, when Oregon became the first state to decriminalize it, making the devil's lettuce as serious as a traffic violation. Today, it is Oregon's (and the nation's) largest cash crop. There are 57,386 patients currently registered under the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP), 24,000 more than April of 2010. This business is burgeoning and it is young, sexy and barely legal.

We as Oregonians need to keep this in mind. With 29,504 caregivers, Oregon has a lot to offer the weed industry. However, it is still young and

the kinks are still being worked out (in Oregon and other states as well). If we wanted to, we could flip our middle finger to Congress, straight legalize this shit and make bank. But are we ready for it? The DEA will be ready. Still persistent in its assertion that it lacks medical value, the DEA has been increasing eradication of the plant over the last ten years. To the DEA, Proposition 215 in California is seen as a way for the common citizen to "medicalize" their recreational use. Before some of the most recent raids (and, perhaps, still to this day) dispensaries outnumber Starbucks in Denver, while outnumbering both Starbucks and McDonald's in the city of Los Angeles.

Slowly but surely, we have approached a crossroads, or a shit-fan--whatever you want to call it--and it's going to be interesting. Fourteen states approve marijuana for medical use and more are about to follow. The Oregon Cannabis Tax Act and Initiative Petition 24 (look them up) are both on track to appear on the November

ballot. What I propose is that we lay low and let some other states make messes working out the legal kinks. In the meantime, it would be in our best interest as a state to make modest changes to our program (if any). If a proposition to legalize pot for adult recreational use is ultimately successful, the DEA will start sticking their noses deeper into people's business, busting shit up and destroying plants.

Yes, in case you didn't know, Oregonian stoners have it made... for now. The current limits are pretty generous. As stated in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act Handbook,

[An OMMA protected] garden may contain eighteen seedlings or starts which are less than twelve inches in both height and diameter, and which do not have flowers. It may contain six plants, which are twelve inches or larger in either height or diameter or have flowers. The patient, caregiver, or person responsible for the garden may collectively possess or transport up to twenty-four ounces

of medical marijuana, however the medicine may be cultivated only at the registered grow site.

A patient can have six mature plants and carry twenty-four ounces (a pound and a half!) of smokeable pot! That's a whole lot of medicine. I couldn't smoke that much in a year. Probably.

After all, everybody and their mother is an OMMP card holder. It's not difficult. Severe pain (loosely interpreted) qualifies any adult for a consultation. What's more, although we do not enjoy the privilege of having a dispensary on every corner like California, we do have it set up pretty sweetly for any knowledgeable grower to start up a small, private business and help their community while earning a few bucks--or getting high for free. What's more, all of the pro-

Technically, an OMMP cardholder cannot "sell" or "buy" marijuana. As stated in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act Handbook,

A patient or the patient's designated primary caregiver of the cardholder may reimburse the person responsible for a marijuana grow site for the costs of supplies and utilities associated with the production of marijuana for the patient. No other costs associated with the production of marijuana for the patient, including the cost of labor, may be reimbursed.

An OMMP cardholdering "trader" of medical marijuana cannot ask for any-

thing more than reimbursement of costs of supplies and utilities associated with the production. That is fair and clear. A cardholder running a "dispensary", "club" or "collective"--whatever you like to call it--needs to keep extensive records to ensure they're clean in the eyes of the law. The exact cost of a bag of buds is calculated by the cost of everything, excluding labor.

Now for the loophole--well, it's not really a loophole, but then again it is. You see, growing and preparing cannabis takes a whole lot of work. It is indeed an art, or even a



craft, but far from a consistent science. In addition to the constant tender love and care required to raise a quality crop, you need garden hoses, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, tall fencing, a power drill, screws, secu-

rety cameras, motion detectors, multiple sets of scissors, zip ties, fertilizer, pesticides--the list goes on. All of this and more constitutes production cost.



rety cameras, motion detectors, multiple sets of scissors, zip ties, fertilizer, pesticides--the list goes on. All of this and more constitutes production cost.

Consider you already have some or most of these things (perhaps your daddy owns some farmland or something). Maybe you were already growing and have just made yourself legal. All of this capital is added up to assess the price of medicinal marijuana. Want to know what the price comes to? It's below street price. You can buy an eighth of quality pot from a dispensary for as little as \$25. That's not bad at all, considering that the grower can "legally" exaggerate the production cost.

Let us keep in mind, though, that most of the cardholders willing to go through all of the start-up costs, paperwork and background checks associated with running a dispensary are not drug pushers looking for an easy buck. I am good friends with the owners of a medical marijuana "exchange center" that will remain unnamed. These elderly people, originally hay farmers, got into the game wanting nothing more than to grow enough medi-

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

cine for them and their card-holding friends. It became evident that growing and selling on the black market was both undesirable and dangerous. What's more, community members without cards were uneducated and sometimes wary about anything to do with medical marijuana. The exchange center was opened up to make safe, tested cannabis, cannabis products and non-partisan information available to the community. In fact, the first section of the establishment is open to the gen-



eral public and is dedicated solely to other natural alternatives to pharmaceutical drugs unrelated to cannabis. Let's consider the possibility of regulation of the medical marijuana industry on a national scale. Better yet, let's consider the far out impossibility of national legalization of recreational use. Were this to happen, what can we expect? We can surely expect



taxes. We can surely expect industrialization and commodification. And, worst of all, we can surely expect regulation--“when”, “where” and “how much” will become subject to the

stubborn and distant judgement of the U.S. government. Do we really want the FDA and who-knows-which-other agencies involved with our herbs? As of now, it's mine, yours and your aunt Fannie's weed. If we jump the gun on this legalization business, who knows what kinds of restrictions or deviations will arise from the rubble of this war? These potential factors have been described as business-killing nightmares by the well-established growers, large and small, of the Emerald Triangle. What worries them is that corporate-grown weed will saturate the market, driving down prices and making things very difficult for the “green” economy of Northern California. While it is argued that this mass-cultivated marijuana will not be comparable to the sticky icky of the Triangle, other implications of possible legalization remain. Let's keep Oregon's patients, stoners and their rights safe--Keep pot illegal!

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Nicholas Ekblad is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and is the second smartest stoner we know.



The word privatization, particularly in the context of higher education, is a dirty word with lots of negative connotations. Approaching the concept from as fair a position as possible, one will still likely be able to see the reasons for that.

When I was a freshman, the University of Oregon was ranked 79th in a list of the top colleges in the nation. Since then, its ranking has slid to 100th. Meanwhile, the University has expanded its athletic facilities, increased tuition, increased the number of administrators, decreased the amount of teaching-oriented staff, and partly closed the gates of the school to Oregon residents while encouraging Californians to attend, all for the sake of maximizing profits.

There is evidence that the University is slowly being “privatized,” and by privatization I mean that the university is being run like a business rather than a school. This isn’t entirely a bad thing, but there will be lasting consequences if students and faculty are not given a chance to help shape the school’s future. There was a lot of controversy surrounding Richard Lariviere and his ideas. When he was

hired, the board clearly stated that an ideal school President would do new things and expand the school in new ways. However, Richard Lariviere’s plan to make the University of Oregon less tied down by the state legislature ultimately bit him in the ass.

In 1990, 25% of the University of Oregon’s funding originated from the state. Today that number is around 7%. We get most of our money through private donations, and we get significantly more money compared to other Oregon schools. In this sense, yes, we should be run differently than other schools. However, the purpose of a state-run institution is to provide a quality yet affordable education while ensuring that people have the opportunity to learn for learning’s sake, not because it is profitable for the university. As time goes on, we can expect that the University will become more research oriented and will begin cutting programs that have less student enrollment because it will save more money.

I have overheard professors talking about Oregon State University and how occasionally agricultural businesses have dictated what cer-

tain professors teach. This is the beginning of the death of higher education, and it won’t be long before private donors have an unfair influence over how the school is run.

However, what bothers me the most about the privatization of public universities is the stealthy removal of the tuition cap. As of now the University of Oregon is only allowed to raise tuition by 9% every year. Under Richard Lariviere’s plan the tuition cap would have been removed, leaving tuition increases to the discretion of the educational institution.

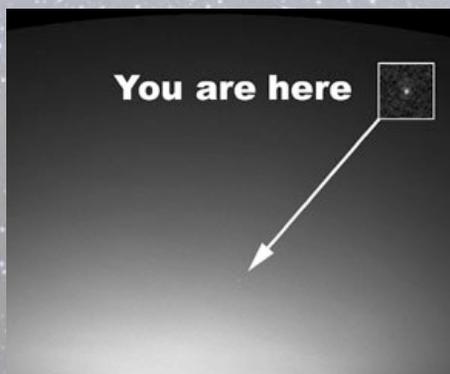
The University will need to implement some creativity in its procurement of future funding. As of now, donors can pick and choose what their money is spent on. Popular departments usually enjoy the fattest donations. Moreover, Oregon needs to construct a long-term plan to keep funds high and tuition low. Otherwise, the funding problems afflicting Californian universities will fully manifest themselves over here.



Joe Rouse is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and calls for the deprivatization of genitals everywhere.

You Are Nothing

So you think you're pretty special huh? Sitting there, reading this magazine. You're in the early years of your life, which means you're meeting people, working, studying to become a whatever. You may be concerned about your future but don't worry, because it won't matter. I mean, NOTHING you do will really matter in the big picture. In the wise words of Matt Foley, "I'm here to tell you that you're probably gonna find out, as you go out there, that you're not gonna amount to JACK SQUAT!" Allow me to explain myself; I'll start at the beginning.



Poppin' Off

I used to think that the Big Bang theory started because scientists simply couldn't think of another way to kick things off. Like a bunch of them were sitting around one day and one scientist, who had coincidentally seen *Transformers* the night before, said, "I think the universe started with a giant explosion," and all the other scientists were like, "Sure, why not."

But actual scientists noticed that as time goes on, galaxies are moving farther away from each other, meaning the universe is expanding. If the universe is spreading out that means it had to start at one point. That point would have been infinitely small, and due to the amount of energy crammed in there, infinitely hot like basement frat parties. Why this point expanded in a violent eruption is unknown; a bigger mystery is why that pile of crap "Big Bang Theory" is so popular.

Scientists estimate that the Big Bang happened about 13.7 billion years ago. 13.7 billion years ago! Think about how long ago that was. DO IT. All the matter and energy that exploded from that immeasurably small point is the same matter and energy that exists today. It's just been converted into bajillions of different physical forms. Everything you've ever known was at one point packed densely next to everything you will never know.

The Earth is about 4.5 billion years old. Again, a number that is hard to fully appreciate. But if the universe is 13.7 billion years old, and the Earth has been around for 4.5 billion years, that means that the Earth has only existed for one third of the universe's existence. But the matter that created the Earth and everything on it has been around since the start, it just took roughly 9.2 billion years to take the form of our planet.

Going the Distance

Everyone knows that other planets and stars are far away, but just how ridiculously far away they are is mind-blowing. The speed of light is 670,616,629 mph. The fastest jets in the world can't go more than several thousand mph. But even going at that ludicrous speed, it takes light 8 minutes to get from the Sun to the Earth.

Everything outside our solar system is so distant that scientists measure in light years. The closest star to Earth besides the Sun is Proxima Centauri, which is 4.3 light years away. Meaning that even if you were going at the speed of light, which is something humans will probably never be able to do, it would take more than four years to get there. And that's the closest star. Our galaxy is over 100,000 light years wide and contains roughly 300 billion stars. It's hard to fully grasp the immensity of our galaxy. It's really big.

Life

Elements like carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and iron were created over millions and billions of years by the ridiculously hot temperatures in stars. Scientists believe these are some of the key elements necessary for life. At some point in time, a star exploded, sending these important elements through space, the atmosphere and eventually to Earth. So essentially we're made up of star rubble.

There wasn't life on Earth for about the first 800 million years of its existence. Then there were little cells and stuff, but it wasn't until 600 million years ago that the first animals started fuckin' shit up.



Amature artist's rendering

Every single period of time I've mentioned so far (except for the distance in light years to Proxima Centauri) is much, much longer than ALL OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. The universe was well over 13 billion years old before humans even came on the scene. We've been around for roughly 200,000 years, depending on what you define as human. These numbers make Madonna look like an infant.

Time After Time

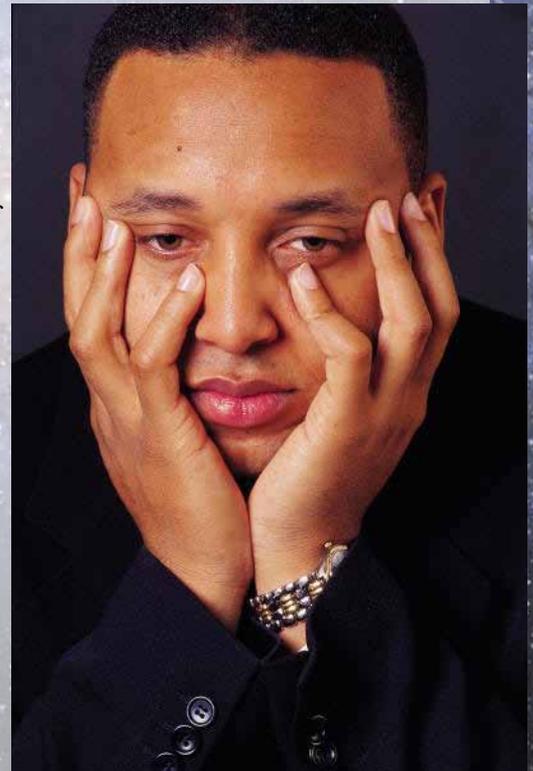
To try to put all of these figures into perspective, imagine a clock face. If Earth's existence is put into one hour, all of human existence would happen in a fraction of the last second. If the universe's existence was put into one hour, all of human existence, everything we've ever known, would fall into a fraction of the last second so small it couldn't be seen by the naked eye. But what kind of freak would put clothes on their eye?

200,000 years ago humans were building the foundations for society. Billions and billions of people are born, do what they do, and die in between then and now. You will never meet a large majority of the people who have inhabited Earth. In fact, the number of people you do meet in relation to the total human population over time is comparable to the ridiculously small fraction of a second that represented human existence on the clock. In fact it's way smaller.

And Then There's You...

You have been given a slice of about 80 years, or significantly less if you go to DoughCo as much as I do, to inhabit the Earth and be a conscious being in the universe. All the matter that you are has always been here, since that first explosion, and always will be there until the end, assuming there is one (I hope it happens with another explosion).

You are a tiny spec on a tiny dot. From the universe's point of view all of your problems or accomplishments start and finish in an impossibly small fraction of time. The universe is bigger and older and more mysterious than anyone could fathom, so it's safe to assume it doesn't give a fuck about what we busy ourselves with. If the universe ran a grand fuck-giveaway everyone would leave disappointed and fuckless.



Disappointed and fuckless, just like the end of a Saturday night.



Ben Schorr is a contributor to the OREGON COMMENTATOR and can be hired out for motivational talks and pep rallies.

SPEW...

ON DEPTH

“I have been running on a serious issue of social and environmental justice; it is clear to me that these values are best upheld by the Katie and Alex political ticket.”

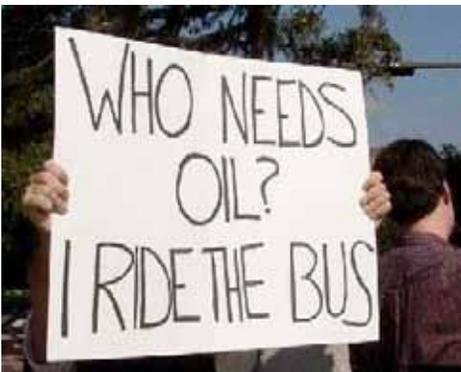
Cimmeron Gillespie, in a letter to the ODE, endorsing something that is only promising on the surface, like Communism. (ODE, April 4 2012)

“We made it a standard to run a clean campaign and I am extremely disappointed that this isolated incident has occurred where two individuals exercised extremely poor judgment...The individuals responsible for this have been removed from the campaign.”

Shamed Vice-President Katie Taylor (“A Political Hack?” ODE, April 9), making it clear that Charles Denson is going to be sleeping on the couch for the foreseeable future.



ON PERSPECTIVE



“I never thought that I would have the opportunity to rally with people in my own country in the same inspirational ways as those in Egypt, Libya and countless other countries fighting for their civil rights.”

Anna Bird in an article in The Siren (Winter 2012), not realizing how ridiculously lame Occupy looks in comparison to the protest examples she gives. Also forgetting that Occupy was primarily about Wall Street corruption, not civil rights.

ON NECESSITY

“Realizing that we were born into a world which limits our expression of our soul and will, we must break the existing structures which inhibit us before we can continue with our lives. For a reformer, real living is put on hold in a hope for a better tomorrow, thus creating the mood that we suffer from time to time: one of melancholy, despair, hopelessness, etc.

It’s all too common, and very unnecessary.”

Dominick Damo, in an article for the Student Insurgent, accidentally describing the actions and opinions of his entire magazine with the last sentence.



ON DEATHOR ON TAKING THINGS OUT OF CONTEXT

“When asked to write a list of things that should, well, die, you’re inevitably sucked into this self-analytical quagmire, confronting your judgments and sublimated disdain.”

Troy Brynelson, expounding on “Things That Should Die,” the title and subject of his words in the Oregon Voice (April 2012). Speak for yourself, Troy.



“But is it fair that dead members’ [Facebook] profiles are still online, possibly without their consent? Would they have wanted their pages to stay up after dying? People can write whatever they want or post embarrassing photos over which the deceased have no say.”

Josh Larsen, in “Posting Your Respects,” Oregon Voice (April 2012). Who the fuck cares? They’re dead.

“The only body left for me...

***Is the University of Oregon
student body.”***



VOTE BEN SCHORR FOR ASUO PRESIDENT

- Whatever you heard, if it was bad, it is not true.
- Running on an “Expect to be Disappointed” platform
- He’s not Katie Taylor