

# Our Political Efforts

*Like a Capon Entering a Henhouse*

A student entering a political campaign is like a capon entering a henhouse. He has no chance of being effective, and he is naive if he doesn't realize that he is lacking the crucial quality that will make him effective. Down through the annals of capon history, capons have learned to live with their deficiency. One hardly ever sees a capon strut into a henhouse these days with anything but the most Platonic ambitions.

Our student political campaigns are fast acquiring their own annals of history. In 1960 and 1962, our student leaders worked with representatives of higher education and went before the legislature to plead our case. Both times they were met with politeness and understanding, but no help. Our lobbyists stepped back, analyzed their failures, and decided they would be more effective if they could win "grass-root" support. The referendum vote taught us that even here we were doomed to failure. Yet, no one seems to realize the reason for this failure. In fact, incensed students are talking, some jokingly and some seriously, of carrying on campaigns against anti-education legislators in the next elections.

Attorney General, Robert Y. Thornton, has ruled that it is legal for students to join a group like NSA or to carry on lobby efforts so long as we do not apply political pressure to individual legislators. This is mockery at its finest. We cannot apply political pressure because we don't have any. Most of us cannot vote; and like the capon, the sooner we understand what our deficiency is, the sooner we will understand our failures.

Why don't we have the vote? Why not?—it is in this context that the issue should be raised. The burden of proof ought to be placed with those who keep the eighteen to twenty-one year old from the polls.

Voting is a right of a citizen. Being twenty-one is the only condition that must be satisfied to exercise this right. It is not based on intelligence quotients, tax contributions or who is to be influenced by electorate decisions. The age condition for voting is arbitrary—it is based on traditions followed since the middle ages, not on any scientific or philosophical reasoning.

Though twenty-one is usually accepted as the age when we are expected to assume full responsibility for our actions and show maturity in our decisions, this is not in fact how the law treats us. Long before age twenty-one, we pay taxes, are obligated to serve in the armed forces and may be punished for criminal offenses.

The argument runs—and this is without support of sociological or psychological studies—that the average high school graduate, age eighteen, is not aware of issues, he does not have the ability, developed with experience, to make objective decisions. This is a great fallacy. As a high school graduate, the eighteen-year-old has just finished a class in "American Problems" or civics. He is aware of issues, of citizen responsibility, of governmental organization.

The tragedy of the situation is that these high school graduates cannot express their interests. For those who do not go to college, there is a vacuum of responsible political activity. There are no organizations where the principles taught in high school can be exercised. These people must wait three years before they can take part in government and during that time apathy replaces awareness of problems and issues. Between high school and college, political inactivity rather than interest becomes the habit. This habit is too easily made, too easily repeated in later years. For lack of an opportunity to express it, political interest is lost.

Several states have an eighteen-year-old voting age. Our own Gov. Hatfield has supported, in years past, a lower voting age. Just recently, Ed Elders, State Representative from Eugene, praised the Young Republicans at the Western Republican Conference, saying that their activities showed that a review of the voting age is in order.

We are missing a greater opportunity if we don't capitalize on this support. Our Young Republicans and Young Democrats ought to get together and support a petition, as was done with NSA and the proposition against the House Committee on Un-American Activities, for an ASUO vote on lowering the voting age in Oregon to eighteen. Then, with the access to power that YR and YD have, and with the support of the ASUO vote, we ought to go to the people of Oregon on initiative.

Students from this campus made 20,000 visits in the Eugene-Springfield area in support of a Yes-vote on the tax referendum. On a \$15 budget and with a five-member nucleus committee, we raised over \$3,000 for the Lane County United Appeal. In a short time, we raised \$13,500 to support the tax program.

It can be done. J. Francyl Howard succeeded in getting enough petition signatures with only the support of his Albany newspaper. We have access to thousands of alumni; people come to us throughout the year for football and basketball games, for conventions and other campus and cultural entertainment. How easy it would be for Oregon students to cover cities and towns in the Willamette Valley. Going door to door on a Friday night, we could distribute pamphlets explaining the need for a reduced voting age and then return Saturday afternoon with petitions.

With intra-college organization during the winter, we could bring an initiative vote to the public in the Oregon primaries. True, we would still be like the capon entering the henhouse. But whereas the capon can do nothing about his impotency, we would at least be approaching our deficiency at its cause.

Recently, in a highly ranked university, the 50 top freshmen were interviewed. Not one had ever had a date, none was getting any satisfaction from his relations with fellow students, and some were suicidal.

—The Washington Post

## Herblock



"And So's My Old Man!"

## Letters To the Editor

### Freedom of Speech

**Emerald Editor:**

In answer to the letter by Mr. Donald McPherson, and the letters of others, I hope that they haven't been blinded by the shining "brilliance" of their crusade to the extent that they fail to consider one other angle.

Freedom of Speech, while one of our country's great attributes, requires the same sportsmanlike and mature conduct that sports, business, and surely, politics today require. Perhaps Mr. McPherson would cheer as an opposing football player with a broken neck was carried from the field or boo and hiss . . . or hold up clever signs . . . in a public debate as the opposition spoke their piece. I doubt he would . . . but I don't know.

Yet this same good conduct and maturity ceases to exist when political leaders visit our campus.

I don't suggest that we kneel to their image or worship their words, let alone agree with all they say. They're not gods . . . nor "Messiahs." They're merely men . . . yet men who are trying to preserve our Freedom of Speech, Mr. McPherson, no matter what our views. Perhaps they deserve a little respect.

There are things . . . and political leaders . . . I don't like either. There are things I would use my Freedom of Speech to speak out against. But I'm sure that the way to win attention and sympathy to my cause is not to act like a child, but to speak, agree and oppose maturely, as befitting a college student.

I would expect the majority to agree.

**J. Craig Mathiesen  
Junior in Marketing**

### Athletic Controversy

**Emerald Editor:**

The current controversy and discussion concerning a new football stadium for the University seems to show the distorted values of this "academic community." What we should do is forget about building a new stadium, tear down Hayward Field and ask every student and alumnus to contribute five dollars to build a new and adequate library on the site.

Hayward Field would be a perfect site for such a library because it is centrally located, near all the new university dormitories and married students housing, and has adequate space for a large parking lot so that student will not get parking tickets every time they have to run up to the library to get a book out of the reserve room.

Instead of hearing tirades about the "value" of football to this University, let's hear a little bit about the value of edu-

cation and research for a university, and instead of keeping Hayward Field as a monument to superficiality let's build a new library there as a monument, a living, vibrant monument to education and knowledge.

**Bill Devall  
Graduate in Sociology**

### Student Fees

**Emerald Editor:**

The editorial of October 14, on the subject of the referral by the faculty of the problem of student fees to an ad hoc committee, requires some answer. One of the points of the editorial was that the faculty was inconsistent in assigning responsibility for student conduct to students as well as faculty while denying the same rights in the matter of student fees.

I do not think the two cases are parallel. The faculty (together with the President) is specifically given jurisdiction over matters of student conduct and discipline. The faculty is thus in a position to legislate on the matter. Our action has, so far, resulted in a code and procedures which place far greater responsibility on students than before. In my opinion, this is an inevitable and praiseworthy development.

On the other hand, the faculty has been given no jurisdiction whatsoever over the amount and distribution of student fees. This matter is in the hands of the State Board of Higher Education. The effect of any faculty resolution on this matter is merely that of advise to the President from his faculty. The object of the motion was, and continues to be, that of expressing faculty views on the subject. Student views need to be expressed, vigorously, but directly to the President and not through the intermediary of a faculty committee.

These comments notwithstanding, I should like to congratulate the Editor on the caliber of his editorials.

**Clyde P. Patton  
Acting Dean**

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## Students Developing Slave Mentality

A "slave mentality" is developing in students because too many Americans define excellence solely in terms of academic and vocational success, a Stanford University educator warns.

Prof. Nevitt Sanford, director of the Institute for the Study of Human Problems, says students are made to believe they "must get good grades in school to get into a good college where they must work hard to go on to graduate school and success in life."

This, he says, is "turning husband against

wife, wife against husband and the children against everybody."

In the best colleges the demands on students have exceeded rational bounds, Sanford said. The amount of assigned reading far exceeds what anyone could do with intelligence, he believes.

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—The Washington Post