

Robert W. Straub

Rogue trail defaced by improvements

I have just returned from a back-pack hike down the Rogue River Trail with my wife and I don't like what I saw!

This is the only river basin in Oregon primitive enough to be included in the original Federal Wild Rivers Act.

The Rogue River Trail was made 200 years ago by the Indians. It has been used over these many years by miners and mules packing supplies into the mines. It is a beautiful, primitive, unique kind of hiking trail—approximately 43 miles long—ideal for a two-or-three-day back pack.

The BLM has the responsibility over the upper portion of this trail. I am appalled at what I see the BLM doing to fulfill their notion of preserving a wilderness area.

Leave them alone for five more years and they will ruin it and waste a lot of taxpayers' money in the process.

Here are three things that are happening under BLM management:

First, they have installed outrageous, blue and white plastic, chemically sanitized, perfumed toilets along the

trail—located in the most conspicuous spots along the river. Anyone on the river or the trail can see these phony, Hollywood substitutes for an honest, self-respecting outhouse a quarter of a mile away. If a hiker can't see them, he can smell the ersatz perfume way down the trail. I think these toilets are made in Southern California—probably in Hollywood. At least they use the same cheap, movie-house perfume.

Second, BLM, which is supposed to preserve the natural qualities of the wilderness trail, has set fire to some of the wonderful old miners' cabins tucked into the trees and blending so well with the natural environment. BLM's judgment appears to be that old-time, historic, miners' cabins are incompatible with the wilderness law.

Yet BLM apparently sees nothing wrong with posting bright blue, sentry-type outhouses at strategic spots all up and down the river, at what cost I hate to think. Some of the people along the river told me the toilets were flown in by helicopter.

Since some are located below the winter flood level, they presumably will have to be helicoptered out in the late fall, and then brought back again in the spring the same way.

Next is the building of footbridges of BLM to cross the little creeks that flow into the Rogue. This is a real beaut! You ought to see the just-completed footbridge built across Kelsay Creek. It is a monstrous, concrete-based, steel-reinforced structure which I swear would carry the load of a log truck. It must be the most over-designed structure in the state of Oregon. For fifty years, three logs have spanned that creek and served the mules, miners and hikers with no problem. To replace with a similar structure would cost not to exceed \$500. You would have to see to believe what BLM has built across Kelsay Creek as a substitute for those three simple logs. I estimated the cost at about \$10,000, but a resident living down river said he was told it cost \$27,000. Whether it actually cost \$10,000 or \$27,000, it was too much money, and this kind of elaborate, overdone

structure doesn't belong on an old mining trail.

I see that the BLM is also surveying the trail. This probably means they are going to be "upgrading" the trail to meet their standards. This means straightening out the curves and the contours of the original trail—which gives the Rogue River hike such beauty and character.

In another five years, if BLM keeps going, I predict they will spend a million dollars "improving" the Rogue River Trail. Leave it the way it is—the way it's been for 200 years. Spend your money instead on timber management and planting young Douglas fir trees in brushed-over land. I believe if you would put up a sign at each end of the trail and simply say: "This is your trail—take care of it," and then stay completely out, it would remain an authentic wilderness area, be more enjoyable to those of us who love to hike it, and the public would be spared a vast and totally unnecessary expenditure.

Gary Cole

Who will protect us from OSPIRG?

The University of Oregon's version of Nader's raiders; OSPIRG, which claims to be a consumer protection agency, among other things, has released a report on the sale of records in the Eugene area. By its printing we make several assumptions. One, that it is valid. Two, that it covers the ground indicated. And, three, we can use this survey when we as consumers march out to the battlefield of business to wage our wit against their policies. I'm sorry to report that by digging into the survey I found the assumptions to be fallacious on the grounds that it is inadequate and incomplete.

A consumer protection report, by definition, is designed to give the consumer adequate information to arm himself against unscrupulous business practices and enough facts to make an intelligent choice. Yet, by all indications these very elements have been left out of this survey. If we are to clarify the report, let us ask several pertinent questions:

1. Is the survey broad enough in examining only fifteen albums?
2. What is meant by "highly sought" albums? Sought by whom?
3. What is meant by median price?

Making a survey of record dealers it becomes apparent that no attempt was

made to distinguish the type of records included in this survey. The different stores listed appeal to different types of customers they are trying to attract to their establishments. Let us clarify now the difference of special price and sale price. Some of the stores listed, those in the generalized term of head shops, list their prices lower on the albums that will draw the people into their stores. Whereas, a store like Bon Marche makes no effort to list records any lower to draw customers. So, some of these stores have prices which are specialized to the different types of albums and these are not to be confused with a sale price, which is a lowering of an already determined price. This in itself causes the term "median" to lose the closely knit definition of being the "average" price paid per record.

In using the term "median" it might have been better to cover the entire spectrum of records listed in Billboard's top one hundred albums as well as those carried in the individual stores. Suppose the survey had taken three from the top ten, three from the next ten, and so on, and had averaged the prices? Wouldn't we come closer to the term "median?" When OSPIRG mentions "highly sought" do they refer to teeny-boppers, hard rock, or

country? As I have shown the spectrum of music is quite varied and leaves a lot to interpretation.

Last, but not least, "merchant policies" are variable according to situation, not determinate on either yes or no answers. Had OSPIRG asked the people who make the policy, rather than some poor schmuck who happened to be working at the time the questions were asked, they might have found this to be the case.

Conclusion: when making a survey; that is, a generalized survey, make sure your facts are broad enough to carry your conclusion. It stands that OSPIRG in their

desire to help the community has misled us, through ignorance rather than intention, to take at face value the assumptions and conclusions drawn from their efforts to inform us of the very thing they tried to do. If this type of naivete is continued we may come to the point of asking whether it was worth the time and effort. If those who try to lead us out of the darkness are also blind, where do we end but stumbling after them. Worst of all, if OSPIRG is to protect us from the fallacies of everyday living, who is to protect us from OSPIRG?

Gary L. Cole
Jr., Philosophy

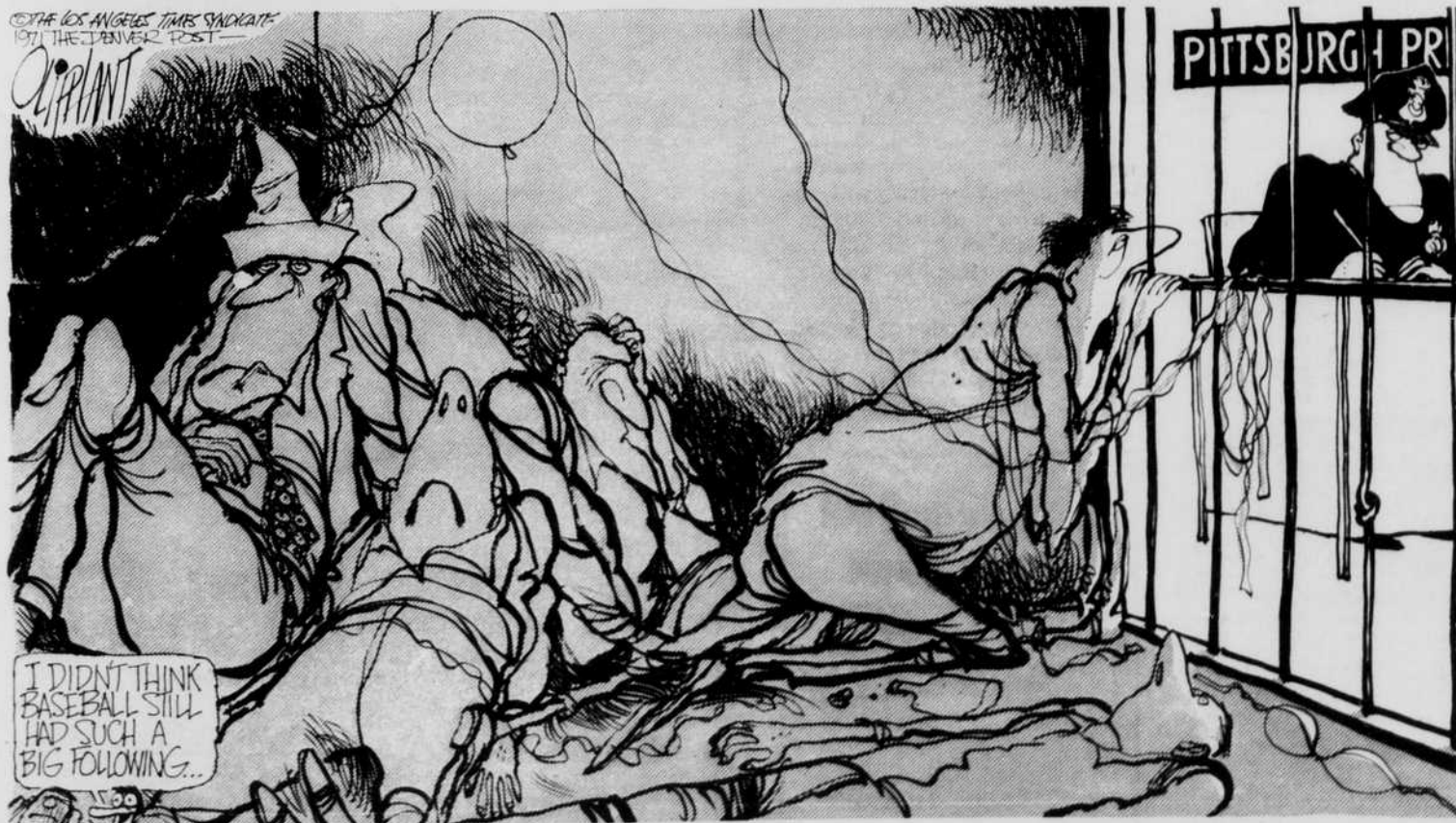
Letters

At a recent ASUO senate meeting a notice of motion was presented calling for a re-apportionment of the senate by sex.

While on the surface this bill may seem unnecessary because a person's sex can't bar their nomination to the ASUO senate. It does however raise some interesting questions concerning female participation in politics. Why are there only three women presently serving on the ASUO senate? Notably one of them is the President of the senate. Why do so few

women offer their names for nomination to the student senate? As a former senator and candidate for election this fall with S.A.F.E. I would like to urge any interested women to run with the S.A.F.E. party this fall. Our party founded last year is dedicated to a re-organization of the senate through qualified candidates, so as to improve the senate as an effective organization for student response. Through a cooperation of the sexes I hope we can achieve that goal.

John Koford
Sr. Philosophy



"Officer, tell me very quietly . . . who won the pennant?"