

The drinking age should be 18

The House votes today on the age of majority bill. The bill grants 18-year-olds all legal adult rights — except the right to drink. According to this bill the drinking age in Oregon would be 19.

Yesterday the House rejected a motion to substitute an 18-year-old drinking age for 19.

The rejection is disappointing. The Emerald strongly supports lowering the age of majority — including the drinking age — to 18. The Senate should recognize the inconsistency of having two different ages and amend the bill to grant 18-year-olds full adult rights.

Lowering the voting age to 18 was the first step towards recognizing the role of 18-year-olds as citizens. Recent polls show that most legislators and citizens recognize the inconsistency of having one age of voting and another for legal rights. Arbitrarily singling out the drinking age and making it 19 does not rectify this situation.

Opponents of the 18-year-old drinking age argue that traffic accidents will substantially increase when 18-year-olds can legally drink and that high school students will more easily obtain alcohol.

What they are unwilling to admit is that these students are already drinking. Any high school student who wants to drink will testify that he or she has no problem getting booze right now. They are simply encouraged to sneak around outside of the law, and a pattern of disregard for the law is fostered. The existence of a drinking law which is difficult to enforce and is blatantly disregarded undermines respect for the entire justice system.

More than 20 states now have an 18-year-old drinking age. Studies of these states show that 18-year-olds are often more moderate drinkers than older persons.

Some opponents are reluctant to see the Oregon drinking age lower than

Washington's 19 because they fear hordes of young people will cross the border, drink and drive home. If this logic prevailed the drinking age would still be 21 everywhere.

The age of majority bill recognizes 18-year-olds as legal adults. To deny them one privilege of legal adulthood — drinking — is arbitrarily discriminating. The constitutionality of such a law is questionable.

None of the arguments against lowering the drinking age make valid points against lowering the age of majority to 18. None of them show 19 to be a better age for drinking than 18. The Emerald hopes that the weakness of these arguments will be recognized by the legislature. If a partial law is approved, 18-year-olds should legally challenge it.

Eighteen-year-olds must have full adult rights — including the right to drink.

Letters

From Rep. Dellenback

I have noted with a good deal of interest the continuing dialogue in your newspaper concerning the youth differential as it applies to minimum wage legislation now before Congress. It began with the well-written article by Valerie McIntyre.

The central issue in considering the question of the youth differential is that high school and college age people in our nation face a persistent unemployment problem. In 1971, for example, the unemployment rate for 16 to 19-year-old youths who wanted jobs was four times that for persons aged 25 and over. Studies which indicate that youth unemployment does rise with increases in the minimum wage are, in my opinion, quite persuasive.

I feel we must consider, on the one hand, the fairness of ensuring those youths who work the same minimum wage paid to adults doing similar work. On the other hand is the potential of creating more jobs, a good many of which I believe would not exist if there were no youth differential.

Although there are, as Ms. McIntyre points out, sound arguments against a youth differential, I feel the pros outweigh the cons. At this time I am leaning in favor of supporting efforts to establish a youth differential tied to increases in the minimum wage.

I also want to emphasize one important aspect of the youth differential as most recently proposed that is often overlooked. Although the youth differential would allow employers to hire young people at rates somewhat below the established minimum wage, the employer would only be able to maintain that rate for six months. After that, full minimum wage would have to be paid.

The House of Representatives is just about ready to take up the minimum wage bill on the Floor. On May 15, the bill (H.R. 7935) was ordered reported by the House Education and Labor Committee, on which I serve, and is currently scheduled to be filed on Tuesday, May 29. As reported by the Committee, the youth differential is not included in the bill; however, I anticipate the issue will be raised during Floor debate in the form of a proposed amendment to add such a differential.

Since students clearly have a large stake in this legislation, I encourage those with strong views about the issue to put their thoughts in writing and send them directly to me.

Sincerely,
Congressman John Dellenback
1214 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dirt-bike riders!

Friday's Emerald featured an article which made some inaccurate statements about S.B. 100, the land-use planning bill. Comments by two University motorbike users were made to the effect that passage of this bill would outlaw off-road motorbike use in Oregon. To my knowledge, the land-use planning bill contains no reference to banning off-road vehicle use. The bike riders may have been referring to H.B. 2282, which does concern off-road vehicle users. This bill would allow such use only on areas specifically designated by government agencies following public hearings. As such, it would set up reasonable restrictions similar to game hunting areas or closed fishing waters. The bill would not eliminate off-road use; it would only make such use subject to restrictions. This would be inimical only to motorized recreationists who feel that the public's land is theirs to use as they choose. The land belongs to no one to abuse, and no user group should be granted unlimited access to the public's land.

Fred H. Swanson
Senior, psychology

Compared to what?

Letters to editors don't come easy for me; either the matter is not useful enough to share concern about, or else it is so useful that to show-and-tell becomes a kind of confession in the marketplace. But the reporting of Professor Hyman's approach to Truth makes it seem so primitive and naive that I can't help stating my present position on the matter.

He confuses two separate pairs of terms, "knowledge" versus "faith," on the one hand, and on the other, "psychological truth" versus some other kind. Any term I choose for that other kind begs many questions, like: what kind isn't "psychological truth?" "Objective" truth? Come on now — get off it. "Measurable" or "quantifiable" or "experimentally verifiable" or "public" truth? Roberta Flack would say quietly, "compared to What?" and would not stay for an answer.

Faith is a body of belief, the relative usefulness of which is verified by exploring the consequences of holding it, while building knowledge out of information, wisdom out of knowledge, and mutually confirming dialogue with other beings out of wisdom. My position as to the nature of wisdom is manifest in this sequence.

The psychological truth of Tarot, astrology, post-Freudian dream interpretation, graphology, spiritism, and

other rampant energies, is evident in their striking influence on attitudes, as shown by behaviors among those people who listen carefully to what they say. My aim here is not to evaluate the potential usefulness of exchanges that go on between those who counsel and those who are counselled; it is merely to state publicly that I believe Professor Hyman's position, as reported, builds on the heresy of defining something by its potential abuse; People WILL find faith, even when information has become deified in schools; people WILL find priests and mentors, even when dialogue and community are notably absent in schools, churches and temples. The flaws in their findings can only be learned experientially; it would help to have professors rise above their own fearful provincialism when they preach about "academic objectivity" — whatever the hell THAT is. May he be protected from the numinous!

Robert M. Trotter, Ph.D.
Administrator, Wanderer, Musician
Edge Junkie

Farcical masochism

In a recent letter to the Emerald, Jim O'Rourke cited my previous letter and lamented that "Sigma Nu fraternity is being criticized for their efforts to raise funds for BRING." Aside from the faulty grammar, this isn't quite correct. I wasn't criticizing the fraternity's attempt to raise funds, I merely questioned the way they went about it.

If, as O'Rourke claims, the funds were donated by "those who, while sympathetic, were previously unaware of the need," how does sitting on a roof contribute to greater public awareness of the need to recycle reusable materials? As for the function of "channeling funds" contributed by those who were aware of the need, but "did not know how they could help," couldn't this have been done much more simply and effectively by an advertisement soliciting donations?

I suggest that any funds raised by the fraternity were not donated for any of these reasons, but rather they were donated by sympathetic people who were concerned that all the colds acquired by wet Sigma Nus would not have been caught in vain.

Yet the fraternity's intentions are commendable (though their methods are childish) and I can understand some of the self-righteous indignation expressed by O'Rourke, who ended his letter with the query, "What are you doing to help?"

I'm forced to admit that I haven't done anything to help BRING. I am, however, very much concerned with, and am trying to gain support for, a cause that has until recently been almost totally ignored by the

general public. We have been unaware for far too long that there exist among us various groups of people who seem to lack the mental facilities required even for their survival and well-being. I refer to those who, for example, do not even know enough to come in out of the rain.

Another symptom is the group's collective reversion back to childhood fantasies, which, when taken to an extreme, can result in such peculiar behavior as their playing on a teeter-totter throughout the night. In this and other letters I have tried to call attention to this problem, and I now submit that the state should provide psychiatric help for these groups.

In relation to the Sigma Nus' attempts to help BRING, I find myself agreeing with them. There is a problem. I simply feel that farcical masochism is not the answer.

John Mighell
Political Science

Funds, not bias

As graduate students in history, we feel that the Emerald's recent interview with mediaeval historian Barbara Westman does not accurately describe the problems faced by the historian, male or female, currently seeking employment, or fairly represent the history department's position.

Westman claims discrimination within the profession in general and the department in particular. Yet her presence directly reflects the department's continuing efforts to implement a program of Affirmative Action. The contraction of available funds, not bias, dictates Westman's appointment for one year only. No one would "dismiss" mediaeval history, but the realities of budgetary limitations and student interest and enrollment force the department to set priorities accordingly.

Westman's difficulties in finding a permanent position are not unique. Jobs for historians are currently so scarce that entering graduate students in history will be told not to expect employment once the Ph.D. is obtained. Likely Westman's specialty in mediaeval history and her narrow field of geographic consideration have limited her opportunities more than sexual discrimination at a time when Affirmative Action programs suggest the reverse may be true.

Gayle Bandow
Timothy L. Wehrkamp
N.P. Sil
Gaylord B.L. Regan
Conrad L. Ober
Thomas M. Steele
Karen Gernant
Margot Beutler
Robert Wagers
Thomas McRoberts