

editorial Poll surprises

The results of a recent poll conducted by the staff of Congressman Jim Weaver are in and the findings are surprising. The poll queried 1,500 Eugene-Springfield residents on policies and goals of the federal food stamp program.

The surprise is that 76 per cent of the persons responding felt the program is worthwhile. Considering the amount of criticism the program has attracted especially during this election year, it is amazing that anyone would even admit that the program is worthwhile. Even more surprising is that 60 per cent thought poorer students should be eligible for stamps.

Comments added to the surveys indicate that voters are more upset at the abuses of the program rather than the program itself. Even though the program is accepted, the fantasized images of large-scale abuses and rip-offs persist.

Myths and stereotyped images are the hardest misconceptions to correct. They live in the past and lag behind reality sometimes by centuries. They usually expire only after they have repeatedly run head-on into the reality of the present.

The poll suggests that one of these myths may be on its way to extinction. The frontier mentality of individualistic self-reliance may not see out the 20th century. Eighty-two per cent of the respondents feel this country is rich enough to make sure everyone has enough to eat. In addition, 65 per cent believe the government should provide work for everyone if business doesn't.

While the virtues of self-reliance may be commendable, the notion that each person should be allowed to sink or swim without any help from society is disastrous in an urban-oriented technological culture. On the frontier, self-reliance meant survival. In the cities it means despair. In the Eugene-Springfield area, at least, this myth appears to be on its last leg.

Free to die

Coincidence can sometimes be a key element in creating irony. Two recent court decisions have produced just such an ironic situation. The coincidence is that both decisions were made public at almost the same time and that they both concern the issue of privacy.

The U.S. Supreme Court, by affirming a lower court decision, refuted the argument that sexual relations between consenting adults should be a private matter. The court was ruling on a Virginia law prohibiting homosexual relations. In effect, however, the ruling allows states to prohibit any type of sexual practices they deem illegal.

The second decision, by the New Jersey Supreme Court, was a victory for privacy. The court ruled that Karen Quinlan's father was free to choose whether or not to discontinue medical life-support processes that have kept his comatose daughter clinically alive for almost a year. The court based its decision in part on the principle of the individual's right to privacy.

The irony is that while the right of privacy gives one the right to die with dignity, the same right is not sufficient to guarantee one's sexual freedom.

Letters

Walking the street

I recently made an interesting discovery while reading an article about how the American Civil Liberties Union is condemning the PSU *Vanguard* for censoring its advertising. What I discovered was: Saturday Night Massacre! We all know that the paper's editors, Kathleen Hawkins and Ray Worden, were fired for being non-students. The *Emerald* has spread the word far and wide. But who ever heard of John Benneth?

Student John Benneth is the former advertising manager of the non-student dominated paper and was earlier fired by those same editors for refusing to censor the advertisers' (much less the very advertisement's) politics, an act that would have violated the stu-

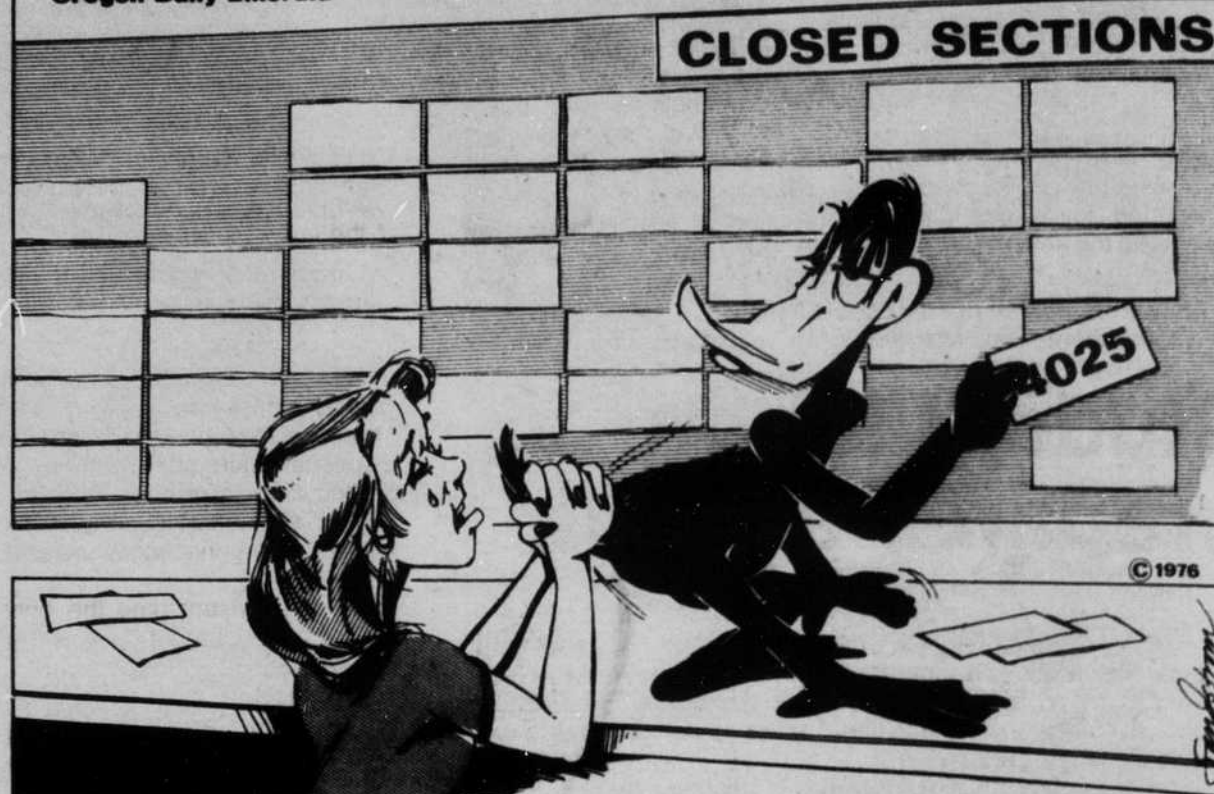
dent government's written guidelines and his own principles. I call it a Saturday Night Massacre.

John Benneth lost his job and probably won't get it back soon, since Attorney General Lee Johnson can't muster the energy to rule on the controversy until May. Until then, John Benneth will walk the streets; cold, alone, hungry.

But I won't stand for it. If John Benneth isn't back on the job in ten days, I promise I will write a series of muckraking articles that will reveal how the non-student dominated *Vanguard* sunk \$11,000 in debt in two terms and still manages to turn down advertising. Ask the ASUO! Scandal will flow like water, and muck as a mighty stream.

Mike Sylwester
Russian, grad.

Duck Soup
Oregon Daily Emerald



No! Please ... my life depends on it!

opinion

Revolution continues to ring

A lot of people, inspired by the magical numeral "76," have begun to look back on the past 200 years of this country thoughtfully in an effort to grasp an idea of what should be done in order to secure a decent place to live for all generations.

The watchword of most thought is "change." Virtually no one is happy with the current state of affairs except the moneyed elite and, strangely, the candidates who are happy with anywhere from first to last in the primaries. No one yet has faced the issues.

Since 1941, and probably much earlier, the country has been in a war economy. In 1976, a year when the United States for once is not involved (at least overtly) in foreign wars, the military budget is the largest ever. The reason: It's good business. Making tanks, missiles and bombs not only for our national "defense" but to peddle to other nations has kept that elite rich and is making them richer.

The scary part of the arms race is that we have to rely on the same government which makes the profit from arms manufacture to tell us what the Russians are up to. Recently, the Pentagon has adopted a policy of "first strike" and a similar policy which would make it possible to trade cities in a limited nuclear war.

Nations like Vietnam, which admired the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution for the grand ideals they espoused, have watched as the same country which produced them oppres-

ses its own population from Japanese to women while carrying war and death to the Third World in the name of freedom.

Further paradoxes have assailed the American psyche. We voted for peace and got war and near-dictatorship. We honor the Bicentennial with red, white and blue objects made in Japan and watch the CIA drag the same colors through the gutters of foreign countries.

But the Declaration and the Constitution remain. Even if they are burned and a massive media campaign launched to make America forget, those two parchments containing the rights of all humans to a decent life will endure in much the same way books endure in "Fahrenheit 451"—in the hearts and minds of the people.

The revolution that occurred in 1776 surely rang round the world. It still rings across this country daily in an ongoing revolution of thought from the right of women and minorities to an equal share to the growing number of people who question war as the only way to a healthy economy.

Change is occurring and will continue to occur as long as the people can shake off their passivity and apathy to realize their power in numbers to bring it about.

Steve Dodge
pre-journ. soph.



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