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Birds got the blues



But area trail sings song of hope for declining bluebird population

Along the edges of a field, a solitary bluebird sat on a telephone wire.

Al Prigge pulled the car over to the side of the road and sat still a moment. All week long he had prepared himself for bad news. Last weekend he had gone out along this bluebird trail and found nests abandoned in the recent cold, rainy weather. Today promised to be no better since it had been cold and wet again.

Story and photo
By NICK GALLO
Of the Emerald

But this nesting box, which is one of 230 that Prigge and other members of the Eugene Natural History Society have placed in the outlying Eugene area was special. Here a pair of bluebirds had withstood the onslaughts of more aggressive tree swallows and had begun nesting. Here, the bluebirds were making it, but today only one sat on the wire.

If Prigge, who is 54 with touches of silver in his gray hair, doesn't see bluebirds flying about a nesting box as he approaches a site, he gets worried. Like the time last year when similar harsh weather knocked out a good many birds. Or like the time he reached into a box that had been shot up by vandals and found a bird shot through the breast.

In 1974 Prigge and several others in the area organized a trail to provide nesting sites for the western bluebird. Since that species prefers open but not densely wooded country away from urbanization, the trail runs alongside rural roads in Lane County.

The reason for the trail is that the bluebird is in trouble. In the mid-19th century when European immigrants came to America they

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Referendum

Students blast white minority rule; demand divestment in two-day vote

By HEATHER McCLENAGHAN
Of the Emerald

University students voted overwhelmingly against apartheid and white minority rule in southern Africa in Monday and Tuesday's special ASUO referendum.

Some 1,160 voters marked ballots in the two days of polling. The first ballot measure, which sought to prohibit recruiters from corporations with investments in South Africa, Rhodesia or Southwest Africa to use University facilities, passed 903 to 257.

The second measure, calling on the State Board of Higher Education and the University's Development Fund to divest themselves of all stock and other holdings in corporations with investments in southern Africa, passed 980 to 180.

ASUO election officials termed the referendum's turnout "excellent." Earlier this month 1,748 students cast votes in the ASUO presidential runoff election.

The referendum grew out of several months of work by Southern Africa Support Committee members to confront the University administration and student body with what they see as University complicity in apartheid.

The State Board of Higher Education and the Development Fund own millions of dollars in corporate stock in 27 companies doing business — either

directly or through subsidiaries — in the racist countries of southern Africa. Recruiters from Weyerhaeuser, Standard Oil and IBM have been confronted or driven off campus by student demonstrators in recent months.

The referendum came in response to State System Chancellor Roy Lieuallen's charge that the demonstrators' demands do not reflect the views of the student body.

Southern Africa Support Committee member Bruce Bowers called the referendum's outcome "a significant development in student activism."

"The turnout was at least as good as the ASUO presidential election's, given the fact that we only had two polling places. The vote is definitely as valid a representative sampling of the student body as the ASUO election ever has been.

"Now the Administration will have to examine the Development Fund, State System investments and recruiting policy. It's time for Pres. Boyd to make a statement — if he opposes what the measure said, he should say it," Bowers said.

The support committee's next step will be to encourage other student bodies around the state to hold similar elections to insure the University vote is not seen as an isolated expression of opposition to apartheid.

Bowers said political figures in the state may be approached, including State Treasurer Clay Myers.

Evaluations

Legislation stalls as committee looks at value, validity of proposed release

By MARY BETH BOWEN
Of the Emerald

SALEM — The student faculty evaluations bill escaped near death in committee Tuesday, when one of the committee members, Sen. Keith Burbidge, D-Salem, said he would support sending the bill to the Senate, even though he may vote against it there.

Burbidge's stand tied the committee 3 to 3 on the measure. But whether House Bill 2702 gets out of committee appears to hinge on the vote of Sen. Tony Meeker, R-Amity, who was absent from Tuesday's work session.

Committee chairer Sen. Cliff Trow, D-Corvallis, agreed to committee member Sen. Frank Roberts', D-Portland, request to postpone a vote on the bill until the full committee is present, probably within the next week.

HB 2702, which would require state system schools to release student evaluations of faculty members to students, drew praise and criticism from committee members. Trow, an Oregon State University history professor, said the evaluations are not an accurate measure of good teaching.

"Student evaluations give you an idea of what the average student thinks about the teacher," said

Trow, "but they don't get at the essence of teaching, which is the transfer of knowledge. Students want things laid out systematically and the things they want often restrict good teaching."

Trow added he thought the evaluations would "adversely affect good education" and that there are no present laws that prevent students from conducting evaluations on their own.

Kirby Garrett, coordinator for the Oregon Student Lobby, claimed that whenever students have attempted to conduct independent evaluations, a law suit or a threatened law suit by a faculty member has shut the operation down. Garrett added that under HB 2702, representatives of the faculty, administration and students would all have input in the selecting of evaluation questions, something faculty members would be left out of if students conducted the evaluations on their own.

Roberts, a Portland State University speech professor, said he supported the bill because it provides accountability in education.

But Sen. Fred Heard, D-Klamath Falls, a professor at the Oregon Institute of Technology, said he believes in providing students with "scientific objective information," but that the information provided by student evaluations is "subjective opinion."

today

Weatherization

Weatherization for energy conservation is enjoying a popularity surge nowadays, with a whole slew of legislative bills to re-enforce it. Oregon homes historically have been poor in weatherization. See Page 12 for the story.

Track meet

The University men's track team will gear up for its trip to Champaign, Ill., Thursday in an NCAA prep meet. The Duck team flourished this season with a Pac-8 finish of fourth. Steve Geiger has the story on Page 15.

Phoenix

The Phoenix newspaper has slowly become a fading dream for Eugene senior citizens. Once a popular alternative to the seniors, the Phoenix now faces deep financial troubles. Becky Young details the problems on Page 17.