



greg wasson

# tabled indefinitely

Saturday's editorial page in Eugene's other daily illustrates a problem endemic to journalists, especially those who write opinion pieces: there's a tendency to use syntax words two or three levels above the language of speech. Consider the editorial on world population.

".....there is a strong correlation," the piece says, "between reductions of income distribution inequalities and declines in birth rates."

What?

That sentence seems to say that as the gap between rich and poor closes, people have less kids. But why say it in such a convoluted way? There's little to gain by using words that cloud one's message and the above message is clouded to the point the relationship between bucks and babies is almost lost.

Rather than decipher the writer's weighty verbiage, most readers dismiss the article and move on. With the reader gone, little communication can take place; so, why the urge for unnecessarily formal language?

First, there's a feeling of permanence—that the written word can be analyzed and dissected and is somehow more important than verbal discussion. This forces most writers to assume a methodical, systematic persona. Presenting the image of a professional observer or commentator is important to journalists and some feel 10-penny words help do that.

The journalist is also charged with using words correctly and concisely and a varied vocabulary makes that

easier. But big words shouldn't be used when they make the idea difficult to understand or just to show off the fact the writer's been to college.

A third factor has to be considered when talking about the editorial page. Most editors are elitist and write to a small group they consider opinion setters. Of course these people have the training and sophistication needed to be comfortable with stilted words like "therefrom" and phrases like "fertility control programs."

The Editorials aren't widely read, but maybe that's because the subjects and style are aimed at a select group. Those outside this group have little motivation to read the edit page 'cause most opinion writers never consider them.

## yours

### 'Don't obfuscate'

William Kogut's interview with the University's Black faculty (11-14-78) was somewhat misleading in both tone and content. That there are differences of opinion among members of the Black community comes as news only to those who feel that Blacks, because they are similar in skin color, must all hold similar beliefs and philosophies.

Awareness that quotes taken out of context can be misleading prompts me to ask 1. Were these professors interviewed as a panel or as individuals? and 2. If they were not interviewed as a group, were they given the text of each other's interviews to read or were they simply quoted to each other (out of context) and then asked to respond?

I would like to suggest that some of their differences of opinion are perhaps more semantic than philosophical (or more in the mind of the reporter than in reality). For example: Coleman's statement that Black students frequently seek the guidance of Black professors is not incompatible with Carter's observation that many of those students only want to talk about other professors. (The article did not specify whether the students were complaining or seeking advice.)

Eight years of teaching experience leads me to conclude that whether students' concerns are academic or personal and

whether or not the teacher shares these concerns, when students (Black or white) come to talk to a teacher they are, in fact, seeking counseling, albeit informally.

Newspaper articles should strive to inform — not to obfuscate or mislead.

Ali Butler  
graduate, English

### Save on Schools

I have taken the position that the budget for the state system of higher education has already suffered retrenchment and should not be a candidate for cuts to achieve a state expenditure limitation goal.

During the 1977 legislative session, the subcommittee of the Ways and Means group, which I chaired, increased the higher education operating budget above that recommended by the Governor to the legislature in January of 1977.

The increase which I helped obtain was about one-seventh higher than the Governor's recommendation, in terms of the state General Fund dollars contributed toward the public higher education system. (I was not a member of the subcommittee which dealt with funds for state employee salary increases or with O.P.E.)

Approximately \$1 million of the increase went directly to the University to offset the effect of its

enrollment decline. About \$2 million more went to hold down tuition systemwide.

Contrary to the implication of a story in the Nov. 10 Emerald, I do not favor closing the OCE campus but do favor a plan being formulated by the state board of education which will:

1. Eliminate duplication involved in maintaining teacher training programs in six separate public institutions in the state, and
2. Provide other uses of facilities *not now* in use at OCE, perhaps saving money for capital improvement needs currently being experienced by the juvenile training schools (McLaren and Hillcrest).

If money can be saved in these ways, it should be. And that should benefit both students and faculty systemwide. Hanging onto the status quo probably will have the opposite results.

Edward Fadeley  
State Senator

### Need N-controls

An important proposal designed to regulate and restrict the transportation of radioactive wastes through Lane County is now being considered by our County Commissioners, Wood Rust and Weinstein. Under the proposed ordinance, radioactive wastes could be shipped through our county by rail or truck only for reasons of national security or emergency.

Shippers would have to post a

bond with the County which would cover the costs of cleanup, decontamination and medical needs in the event of a spill. Radioactive materials used for medicine or research would be exempt from this ordinance.

Similar measures have already been approved in a number of towns and cities throughout the country where citizens have realized the potential for disaster created by shipping spent radioactive fuels by road or rail near populated areas.

The possibility of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington becoming the site for permanent waste storage in the United States poses a grave threat to the well-being of the people and land along the main transportation routes leading to Hanford. If Hanford is chosen as the storage site, we can expect hundreds of loads of radioactive waste to pass close by Eugene on their way from the Southwest to Hanford via I-5 and the Southern Pacific railways.

If just one of these casks were to break open and spill, the loss of even 1 percent of its contents into the environment would result in thousands of deaths and a greatly increased cancer rate for people in the area (from a report issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 1977).

The safety record of the nuclear industry in shipping these deadly wastes is far from perfect. In the past 25 years some 300 shipments have met with accidents,

and 30 percent of those cases, nuclear waste was released into the environment.

We are alarmed at the possibility of large quantities of radioactive wastes being transported through Lane County. We urge everyone to write or call their County Commissioners expressing their support for this ordinance as soon as possible.

Send letters to the Public Service Building, 125 E. 8th, Eugene, Oregon 97401 or call the commissioners at 687-4301. They will be voting on the issue Wednesday, Nov. 29.

Ann Coleman  
Joan Gordon  
Sheila McCormick  
Liz Milne  
Gwen Jaspers  
990 E. 23rd

### Persian dominos?

I am not, at present, an enrolled student at the University of Oregon, but I do, however, take a strong interest in the University activities and the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, as a student influenced publication well above average.

I do have some reservations in regards to your indicated support of the Iranian student organization which, according to knowledgeable persons is communist supported.

The 'down with the Shah and up with the young Iranian communist' is reminiscent of the *Daily Cal* when I was a student at Berkeley during the 1930's. We were very strong on "hurray for Germany and down with the British Imperialists."

Of course we knew then that Germany only wanted back what was rightfully hers. We touted the German American Bund and many similar organizations. I went so far as to become a member. The *Daily Cal* supported us with all its journalistic power. With what repercussions?

It is quite possible that if the Shah is overthrown and a regime hostile to America comes to power, a major source of our oil supply will be cut off.

I wonder how University of Oregon students feel about \$5 a gallon of gasoline.

Also if the Shah is overthrown, what about the rest of the Arab states and the domino theory? All wars are started and fought for economics. I know, I was dragged off to one.

O'Brian Mulry  
87915 Central Rd.

## theirs

