



greg wasson

a quorum of one

Like a temperamental movie star, the Oregon House stopped action for the first week of the 60th Legislature, in order to deal with an internal problem. The 34 Democrats couldn't elect a leader.

Four rural renegades, led by Rep. Jeff Gilmour, D-Jefferson, refused to support the majority's choice, Rep. Hardy Myers, D-Portland, unless given important positions in the House structure.

Finally, a deal was struck. Myers was elected speaker and Gilmour named head of the seven House members placed on the Joint Ways and Means Committee, the committee that controls the state's pocket-book. The four had seemingly frustrated and manipulated the majority.

But changes simultaneously approved in the House rules will reduce the impact of that manipulation. House Majority leader Gratten Kerans, D-Eugene, says it best:

"The House has been democratized to a greater extent than in the 120-year history of this body. The powers of Chairers to act in disregard of a majority of its committees and the power of the speaker to simply bury legislation have been nullified."

A look at four main changes supports Kerans' contention.

- The chairer no longer has absolute say over the scheduling of work sessions and hearings. Now, any two committee members can force action.
- Committee assignment of any bill, historically the province of the speaker, can now be diverted to the floor for approval of the full House.
- Pocket vetoes have been outlawed which means the chairer of a committee can no longer let a bill languish in legislative limbo, approved by the committee but not passed on to the full body.
- Thirty-one of the 60 members can now pull a bill out of a committee if that committee refuses to act. It used to take the vote of 40 to do that.

The changes are positive ones and strike at the "good old boy" network which has permeated the Legislature at times. The new rules make it much harder for a small group of people in key positions to throttle legislation they disagree with.

Not that throttling has been common but it usually occurs, in the words of one House member, "during the most intensely fought political battles we fight." Conflicts occur during all legislative sessions and the 60th session will be no exception.

The rural conservatives were well-publicized for their victories in the Democratic caucus but they form only one of the House's many communities. Coastal legislators also bind together occasionally as do the urban representatives and the House's 14 women legislators. Opening the process as much as possible keeps these different communities in check, makes it easier to correct mistakes and prevents oppression of a small group by a larger one.

Granted, new rules have to be adopted at the start of each session and advances could conceivably be undermined. However, regression is unlikely.

The House is a highly volatile body and the changes allow for even more extreme political gyrations. Members will likely enjoy their additional freedom and resist attempts to restrict it.

Besides, the rapid rate at which the lower body changes (17 members didn't return this session) makes it extremely difficult to build the support necessary to take control and restrict those who disagree.

Legislative issues are becoming increasingly complex, decisions increasingly important. Fairness in those decisions can best be insured by rules, like the ones adopted this year, which allow many inputs.

Committee assignments for the "Big Six" (those who represent a majority of students) are: House-Kerans: agriculture and natural resources, transportation, rules; Nancie Fadeley, D: chairer, environment and energy, intergovernmental affairs, legislative oversight; Dave Frohnmayer, R: vice chairer, judiciary, education, rules; Mary Burrows, R: vice chairer, housing and urban affairs, revenue.

Senate-Ed Fadeley, D: chairer, environment and energy, ways and means, judiciary; George Wingard, R: vice chairer, housing and urban affairs, revenue, labor, consumer and business affairs.

yours

'Attack where attacks due'

Your editorial Friday on Atiyeh's budget cuts, while commendable in many respects, was entirely unfair in its attitudes towards state employees, among whom are included graduate teaching fellows.

First, you imply that state employees are lazy and unproductive. In fact, "productivity" is usually a code word for squeezing more work out of conscientious workers. Further, until the contract, GTFs could work virtually unlimited hours for their meager salary.

Next, you go on to suggest that state employees, "protected by a powerful union," are receiving "as a matter of course, merit pay increases originally designed for uncommon effort."

In fact, the GTFF just spent a year and a half fighting for a pay increase that was only slightly more than what other state employees, with their "powerful union", received. Our increase did not even cover inflation. I hardly think other employees are buying castles.

Your pandering to knee-jerk anti-public employee sentiment does a disservice to the many hard-working employees in the state. Your time would be better spent investigating management salaries in the state bureaucracy.

Indeed, there are at least 25 top management people in the State System of Higher Education alone making over \$40,000. Please make attacks where attacks are due.

Jeff Edmundson, vice president
Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation

'Revolution, not reform'

It has been more than a year and a half that the flames of the mass struggle in Iran have spread throughout the country. The vast majority of the people are actively fighting the fascist Shah and his U.S. masters. Iranian students in the U.S. have never stopped this fight, same as our people back home.

The Shah's mother and sister have taken part in murdering thousands of people, and bringing empty hands and hungry stomachs to the people so they themselves can live in luxury. They fled Iran to escape the peoples' anger.

Should they be allowed to come here and live in peace? The Beverly Hills demonstration was necessary for the Iranian students to give the Shah's relatives a taste of the justice they deserve.

In this context, Reza (quoted in ODE Jan. 8) should be ashamed of himself for his negative comments about the demonstration. Now that it's "easier" to open one's mouth against the Shah, those who have been left behind by the heroic struggle of the Iranian people finally decide to become a loudspeaker for some sectarian groups.

All those who condemn the Beverly Hills actions as unnecessary do so because they are weak; they are unable to take up the real struggle against this regime which itself has caused so much bloodshed.

Reza says, "We have no need to act hostile . . . After all, this is the United States — not Iran." This is saying that one only has to fight the enemy sometimes, depending on where one is.

Others mentioned in the article said that they will continue to march until the situation in Iran improves. Iranian people want more than "improvements" — they are fighting for the complete overthrow of the Shah's regime and his U.S. masters.

Revolution, not compromise or reforms, is the only way to achieve an independent and democratic Iran.

Ghassem Enya
senior, architecture

IFC wants accountability

In response to Thursday's ODE article "Student board sets committee to review members' 'conduct'" Gary McMahon is in grave error. This letter is to correct his mis-information.

The Incidental Fee Committee does not want and cannot have (viz the ASUO Constitution) "control" over any ASUO program or any other branch of the ASUO government structure. What we do seek is known as accountability and effectiveness. These are radically different from control and that difference is crucial to understand as we move into the budgeting process this week.

The Incidental Fee Committee does not determine what happens within a program or pass judgment on any of the activities. Rather the Incidental Fee Committee determines which of the programs' activities are eligible for incidental fee funding and whether that activity is affordable within the framework of the Incidental Fee budget.

Some people will challenge this immediately saying that funding automatically leads to control, but they will conveniently ignore the idea that the IFC and incidental fees are not the sole source of available funding.

Currently, there are many programs which raise funds from other sources including Club Sports, the Drug Information Center, OSPIRG, the Oregon Student Lobby, the Crisis Center, the Craft Center and Panhellenic.

In reality, the IFC encourages and admires programs who have sought funding from other sources. If funding be control: PLEASE, give us less control!

The crux of the matter is this: To say that merit pay should be instituted in the Student University Affairs Board because the IFC wants more control over the program is false. If anything, as students, the IFC members laud merit pay as an effective tool in holding student leaders accountable to their constituency.

On reflection, it is an age-old truism that the cad is the first to defend his honor, the liar, his veracity and the ineffective, their merit. I strongly urge SUAB as well as each ASUO governing body to reconsider merit pay as an idea whose time has come.

Janet Eggleston, Chairer
Incidental Fee Committee

letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters and opinion columns containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Letters and opinions will be run on a first-come, first-served basis. Both letters and opinion columns must be typewritten, using 65 character margins, and should be triple-spaced.

theirs

