



greg wasson

a quorum of one

Spring break wasn't a groovy time for Gov. Vic Atiyeh.

First, the House passed a tax plan that varied so much from the one Atiyeh proposed that he warned he "would seriously consider vetoing" it if the program passed the Senate without major changes.

Next, the governor's energy address to a joint session of the House and Senate was received coolly by members of both.

The tax-relief confrontation can't be explained away as a partisan one. The three bills that make up the House package passed 54-6, 58-2 and 57-3. Despite this strong show of support for the solons' tax-relief proposals, the governor called a press conference immediately after the Legislature's action and lambasted the plan.

"Those who benefit the most from this are the very citizens who are now receiving most of the benefits from the government. The hard-working, productive citizen of the state are again left out in the cold."

Atiyeh's definition of "hard-working and productive" must differ from that of House majority leader Rep. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, who called passage of the plan good news for Oregon's taxpayers.

"For the first time in the history of the state," said Kerans in floor debate, "we are saying that those at the lower end of the income scale will pay a lower percentage of their income in property taxes than those higher on the scale."

As approved, about 39 percent of the state's homeowners would pay no property taxes under the House plan and the program would pay the total property taxes of more than 90 percent of Oregon's seniors, making less than \$8,000 a year.

Like November's ballot measure 6 and an initiative drive threatened by Senate Republicans, Atiyeh's program is based on the 1.5 percent limitation on taxes. The approach yields widely varying relief levels across the state and favors the wealthy.

Rep. Wally Priestley, D-Portland, is a member of the House Revenue Committee and has looked hard at both the governor's plan and the House's. Priestley used floor debate as an opportunity to take another swipe at the governor's proposal.

"In way of supporting this, I want to kick Atiyeh's tax package one more time. It's an idea which is about dead, but it squirms every once in a while and it deserves another kick."

The reaction to the governor's energy plan split more distinctly along party lines, with many Democrats labeling it short-sighted and shallow.

"If, as Pres. Carter says," said Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, "the energy issue is the moral equivalency of war, Oregon has gone off to fight the battle with a popgun."

Kulongoski is a member of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. The head of that committee, Sen. Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene, dismissed Atiyeh's

program as "high-priced hype."

Both Fadeley and Kulongoski, as well as Rep. Nancie Fadeley, D-Eugene, the head of the House Environment and Energy Committee, accused the program of being long on studies and commissions and short on action.

"One of these days," complained Kulongoski, "we have to understand that the time for studying is passed. We have to do something."

Gay rights is no longer an issue for this session of the Legislature. By vote of 4-1 the Senate Committee on Aging and Minority Affairs killed SB 599, a bill that would have protected gays in state jobs. The bill was the least flawed of the five gay rights measures introduced. Given its overwhelming defeat, supporters have asked the head of the committee, Sen. Jan Wyers, D-Portland, not to hold further hearings or work sessions on the issue.

yours

Raps community-ed plan

I'd like to offer a few observations on the University's vaunted Community Education Program for non-matriculants. I think the concept of making university courses accessible to members of the community is an excellent one, with the potential to greatly benefit both the University and the general public. Unfortunately, the University's present program is an ill-conceived effort that falls far short of its potential.

There is no question that the University offers many courses of wide interest, but so far there has been little apparent effort to schedule such courses during the evening hours. Language classes are a case in point — despite their obvious appeal to non-matriculants, they are invariably scheduled between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., when most people are at work. Even of those courses advertised in the special Community Education Program schedule, less than half are evening classes.

Another obvious problem is the ridiculously high price of taking University courses as a nonmatriculant. To take one 2-hour undergraduate class currently costs a nonmatriculant \$47.50, nearly \$2.50 for each hour of instruction. To take one 3-hour graduate-level class costs \$124.50, or more than \$4.00 per hour. For comparison, a full-time resident student working toward a bachelor's degree pays about \$1.50 per hour, and classes offered through LCC's Adult Education Program cost about 50 cents per hour.

If the University administration is committed to promoting its Community Education Program, it certainly doesn't show. No matter how desirable a product you have to offer, you're not going to sell much if your business hours are inconvenient and your prices are too high.

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Urges nuclear-control aid

A California Federal Judge recently struck down a state statute requiring a proven system of handling highly dangerous radioactive wastes be implemented before more nuclear reactors may be sited. This is an ill wind which may blow our way.

The Federal government, since it began the headstrong rush to make our country dependent on highly questionable unproven nuclear technology, promised a "solution" to the radioactive waste problem. To date the millions of tax dollars spent on these problems have produced no advancement towards a solution. Even when a solution is found, if ever, the expense of implementing it will be staggering.

The Federal Department of Energy now wishes to deny the states any rights over the question of siting permanent nuclear waste storage facilities within the states. This would override the existing Oregon law which prohibits permanent storage of nuclear wastes in Oregon.

One can see the problems the Federal government could create for Oregonians if they pre-empt local



control. In New York the Federal government recently abandoned a nuclear waste storage facility. The New York taxpayers are now being forced to pay more than \$1 billion in decontamination costs. This cost figure is the Federal government's own estimate and the cost could be much higher.

One chance exists to preserve state control. An amendment to the Department of Energy authorization bill would give states the veto power over federal decisions in siting waste facilities. Sen. Mark Hatfield has co-sponsored this amendment and deserves our thanks.

I have introduced a resolution (HJM 4) in the Oregon legislature to support this amendment and to give Oregon, and all states, the right to veto such federal decisions.

If you agree that Oregon should be able to override such federal mandates, please write me at the State Capital in Salem. Also write your own state legislators and congressional representatives urging them to support this local control.

Rick Bauman
State Representative, Portland

'Keep your vision clear'

Sat Nam Tunkashila Wakan Tanka. May Great Spirit keep your vision clear.

Monday, March 12, your newspaper ran an article on the Rainbow Tribal Potluck in Dexter in which some clarification is needed. First, Maria Medler is not ordinarily a spokesperson for Rainbow tribal affairs since she does not consider herself Rainbow and is not affiliated with our trip in any positive way. What she may or may not say has little or no relationship to the voice of our Council.

Second, I am not a "chief." I am a medicine man. We have no chiefs. Our form of government is by Council and we are recognized that way by the United States of America. We are the only tribal nation within the boundaries of the U.S. to have recognition of our council form of government.

Thirdly, but by no means leastly, Roberto Morganti, our scheduled juggler, most certainly was there and did in fact give a fine and delicately executed performance. Had the reporter remained he would have known that Roberto juggled, and as well, that we were not all thinking of going home at sundown, for the celebration went on into the wee hours of the morning with all performers present and Peter Spring's band playing on into the night.

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