

Public shouldn't pay for social exclusivity

Neither the ASUO nor the state of Oregon should be in the business of protecting and promoting organizations that foster purely social exclusivity. Last week, however, the University's Incidental Fee Committee and a state legislative body committed themselves to those ends.

The IFC reversed an earlier decision to deny use of student-fee funds for a Pan-hellenic program of high school visitation. And members of the House of Representatives in Salem nearly trampled themselves in rushing to exempt sororities and fraternities from property taxes.

The Emerald, which has its own contingent of Greeks and former Greeks, doesn't intend to argue the issue of the rather frivolous rivalries engendered by social clubs. Cultural anthropologists, novelists and sociologists have, no doubt, convincing explanations for the apparently innate (and inane) rise of human groups that manufacture and maintain irrelevant distinctions, that include and exclude persons for often superficial reasons.

The differences thus fostered probably remain no more harmful than those arising between religious denominations. (The latent message of such aggregations, however, subtly supports divisions rather than unity among people.)

But the apparent innocuousness of these superficialities doesn't mean these institutions should be maintained at public expense.

The House action represented a response to a tax court decision in

ours

recent years that reversed the property tax exemption of fraternal organizations owned by private parties, often alumni associations.

To justify support for a privileged legal status for sororities and fraternities, therefore, Rep. Mary Burrows, R-Eugene, and other supporters of the bill argued that Greek houses have become so financially pressed that, if taxed, many would fold. With Eugene's chronic housing shortage,

Burrows said, Greek halls serve a general, public need.

In so arguing, the Republican legislator begs the question of favoritism toward certain social groups. If Eugene has a housing problem — and it does — that would be better and more directly addressed by such measures as rent control, subsidies or construction funding for low-cost rental units.

Greek houses, even in the unlikely event they went belly up from property taxes, would hardly stand vacant. In the last recourse, the University or private co-operatives might well take them over and operate them as residence halls of a non-exclusive kind, as was done with Parr Tower and the Campbell Club.

The "poor boy" routine has been used in the past at the University to retain fall-term rush — to keep the rooms full and the houses solvent — rather than a spring recruitment, which would probably serve first-term students better.

In turn, that fall rush provided the basis for the Pan-Hellenic proposal

of high school visitations and subsequent request for IFC funding. (Since students new to the University during fall term don't have much chance to find out about the Greek houses before rush, the argument goes, the high-school visitations are needed to inform and promote interest in fraternities and sororities.)

When the IFC initially turned down the request for Greek visitation funds, the Emerald applauded the committee's distinction between aiding recruitment for ethnic and cultural programs — which add diversity to the University otherwise not forthcoming — and not aiding recruitment for social organizations — which merely channel the predominately WASPish students already headed to college. The IFC's collective change of heart marks a step backward.

If sororities and fraternities want to continue pursuing their often pretentious, occasionally sincere, but inevitably exclusive ways, our society can certainly endure them. But the public shouldn't have to foot the bill.

A gut reaction to pizza politics

We view with mixed feelings the novel attempt to increase voter turnout for ASUO elections by offering discount coupons to an Italian restaurant.

A significantly higher percentage of students went to the polls in Wednesday's primary than have in the recent past, a development that might well be ascribed to the coupon campaign. (One wonders what the response would have been if hot pizza had been served up with the ballots.)

While we like to see voters get something tangible for their efforts, we can't help but wonder if a mercenary electorate is worse than a smaller but more substantively motivated one.

Beyond that, the coupon issue itself may inject an unpredictable element into student politics. Candidates may start running on platforms to change the type of restaurant for which the ballot-box coupons are offered. Local merchants may begin competing for the privilege of subsidizing ASUO elections.

In the end, campus politics could end up leaving an even worse taste in students' mouths than it already does.

yours

Not all the same

We are responding to a front-page headline of your Wednesday, April 11 issue that reads: "Eugene clergy criticize city's support of gay bills." This headline could suggest to the reader at first glance that "the Eugene clergy" are somehow a bloc which possesses consensus on the issue of gay civil rights, specifically in opposition to such rights. A similar headline appeared in the local *Eugene Register-Guard*, likewise suggesting clergy unanimity in Eugene in opposition to gay civil rights.

We simply wish to register a strong disclaimer to such a possible conclusion. Many clergy in Eugene favor civil rights for gays in Eugene and in our state and nation, and therefore support present efforts for a statewide law specifically banning discrimina-

tion against gays in employment and housing. There may be differing views on the religious/ethical rightness or wrongness of homosexual behavior, but this can and should be seen separately from the basic protection of civil rights for all citizens in our society, including specifically those of an alternate sexual orientation.

We hope it can be made clear to the readership of your newspaper and to the public at large that many clergy in Eugene disagree with those who have spoken out against support for such legislation.

**Norman Metzler
and 10 other staff members
of Campus Christian Ministry**

Supports Tobias

As a student concerned with the politics of representing student interest in a large

university such as ours, and with some knowledge of the structure and workings of the ASUO, I would encourage all students to take the time to inform themselves about the candidates running for ASUO President, and to vote in the elections.

Furthermore, I would encourage any student interested in more responsive leadership to take a close look at Amy Tobias. Amy's clear, logical, quick reasoning abilities, along with her seemingly endless supply of energy and enthusiasm make her a clearly superior candidate.

Her experience, at the base levels in the University community (involvement in dorm governance, standing University committees such as Academic Requirements and Orientation, and her direc-

torship of the Information and Grievance Center), has allowed her the chance to talk and work with students on an intimate, personal basis.

For these reasons and the fact that she does "GIVE A DAMN", I wholeheartedly support Amy Tobias for ASUO President.

**Gary McMahon
Sophomore, Architecture**

'Open your minds'

After waiting for some type of word on the George Thorogood concert last Tuesday, I've come to the conclusion that "responsible, objective journalism" is totally fucked.

I can't believe that you would devote almost a whole page article to some cheap hack hustler named Josh, while completely ignoring the honest, straight-forward sermon

delivered at the EMU Ballroom by George on Tuesday night. No article, no photo, not even an honorable mention.

How can you consider some geek dropout from the leisure-suit crowd worth greater coverage than a pure rock and roll revivalist? Aren't George's revelations just as valid as Josh's? Can't a "sermon" of rock and roll take place on the "alter" of the state? Isn't Chuck Berry just as worthy of our reverence as Jesus Christ? After all, both were men who brought "good news" and a "new way" to modern man. Doesn't George have as great a mandate to preach the Gospel of Rock and Roll as Josh does to preach the Gospel of the New Testament? Open your minds, people, and hear the word of the magic that can set you free.

**Paul Civello
Sophomore, English
Monday, April 23, 1979**

