

Olum's handling of PNRC shows savvy

Who says politicking doesn't pay-off?

University Pres. Paul Olum, who "waffled" on the Pacific Northwest Resource Center controversy, and — to extend a metaphor — emerged from the sticky situation un battered and smelling as sweet as maple sugar.

Olum, in effect, took no initiative to make a decision regarding the PNRC on-campus. No decision was the smartest thing Olum could've done, in light of the covert political and business influences involved. That's political savvy. He shifted the final decision concerning the fate of PNRC onto the National Wildlife Federation. They, predictably, opted to consolidate the University PNRC with a regional office in Portland.

Now Olum can shrug and say to law students, "Shucks . . . they want to move off-campus . . . what can I do?"

What has Olum done? He neither backed nor attacked the PNRC situation directly. The only aspect of the PNRC issue Olum addressed was that of University programs being — ideally — "neutral."

That position has been criticized by many involved in the controversy. All that was neutral was Olum's leadership.

The motives behind Olum's indecisiveness remain unclear. Who — or what — influenced his apparent indecision?

At the outset of the PNRC debacle documents from a State Board of Higher Education hearing indicated powerful business (timber and cattle) interests were demanding the University sever all ties with PNRC's Environmental Law Clinic.

Olum replied with his vaunted "neutrality" posture.

Later, state Rep. Margie Hendrickson, D-Eugene, brought to light memos from the House ways and means committee clearly showing political pressure on Olum to remove PNRC.

Olum persevered with his neutrality maneuver, and seemed to be deliberating the PNRC question.

At this point Olum adopted the "concerned University president" attitude and met with University law students. It was a clever show — but his intentional lack of decisiveness prevailed. Olum left the actual decision to the NWF. In the meantime he dragged his feet, hemmed and hawed and stalled the media. His lack of decisiveness sent a clear message to NWF officials that the decision was theirs. Is it any surprise the NWF chose to move off a campus where its status with the administration was uncertain?

Olum has yet to act as University president

and take a firm stand regarding PNRC. The NWF decision to move PNRC to a regional office in Portland has made any stand by Olum moot.

The PNRC situation, as "handled" by Olum, makes the Emerald wonder how Olum will "handle" any similar situation in the future. This University requires vigorous leadership, not business and political wrangling. The schools and departments need leadership that will not flinch when the programs important to education — whether "neutral" or not — are attacked by outside special interests.

The expediency of the political climate, testing the winds from Salem, is no way to run a university.

Olum managed to escape the villain's guise in the PNRC controversy by indecisiveness. But he is not unscathed. All in all it was a fascinating display of milquetoast leadership slowly souring.

letters

Protest not amusing

So, Mike Cross, member of Young Americans for Freedom, found Wednesday's "Die-In" at the EMU "amusing." Well, I'm young, I'm American, and I enjoy freedom, and I find nothing amusing about a protest against a very real and serious threat to our most basic freedom: our right to live.

He must have found the Hiroshima and Nagasaki display in the EMU lobby a real knee-slapper. Most of the people I saw at the display and "Die-In" were awed and dismayed by the destructive power we, as a race, have created.

But I seriously doubt he'll be laughing if and when he, and I, and 250 million of our fellow humans are killed or grievously injured in a nuclear war. Cross would do well to remember, as would our national leaders, that war, especially nuclear war, does not respect party lines.

Thomas Birland
Sophomore, political science

Greeks aren't to blame

The yearly controversy concerning the relative merits of Greeks as opposed to non-Greeks has once again reared its ugly head on the editorial page of the Emerald. While all you seeming victims of paranoia run about like chickens with their heads cut off in your endeavor to prove one side or the other better through the power of the pen, I have decided to review the whole question from a rational, historical perspective. Let us examine the facts.

First, who was responsible for all those dirty, ugly nuclear weapons? Was it a Greek? No, it was Albert Einstein, a German! And who caused World War II? A Greek? No, another German: Hitler! And once again, who was it that started World War I? A Greek? No way, it was the Kaiser, another damned German!

Let us examine the flip side of the coin. Who have been famous figures of Greek history? Look back: we have Aristotle, Plato, and Pericles, a fine group of men if ever I saw one.

The lesson seems obvious to anyone with half a brain. It is the Germans and not the Greeks we should be worried about. So I say, why don't you people just lay off those poor Greeks, after all they've never bombed the Acropolis like the Germans did in World War II. There are probably only two or three Greeks on this whole campus and no doubt they have their own problems to worry about.



I hope that this rational historical view of the situation will lay this silly argument once and for all to rest, and that we may return to the kind of intelligent, dignified correspondence which this page deserves.

Phillip Seder
Ph.D., history, ethnic studies

Pessimistic attitude

Could Oregon grow in population yet remain a producer of agricultural goods and provide the scenic beauty we all enjoy? We could, but no-growthers claim we're overcrowded and we should stop raising families. Not only is their attitude overly pessimistic — it's downright stupid!

Oregon's population is 2.5 million and our land area consists of 96,981 square miles. Let's compare Oregon with a country nearly identical in land mass to illustrate the absurdity of the prophets of doom. West Germany has managed quite well industrially and agriculturally with a plot of land smaller than Oregon. West Germany's total area is 95,914 square miles with a population of 63 million.

Population pessimists contend much of our land isn't usable because it's barren.

But look at what the Mormons accomplished in Utah a century ago. That area was harsh desert and they made it productive. Fortunately, they had ambition — not rigid land-use laws designed to concentrate populations.

Anyway, face facts, my friends: this country's population will expand even if Americans altogether stop having children. With foreign immigration at current levels this country will be filled up with those now arriving from other countries and their posterity. Your genetic extinction won't accomplish a thing.

Ed Crockett
Abbie Lane, Eugene

The draft & the bomb

Did anyone get the chance to attend the symposium entitled "Your Rights in Regard to the Draft"? I stood alone before the locked door of Room 110 EMU at

12:30 Tuesday — no symposium; no explanation. My disappointment was brief because I was equally anxious to listen in on another symposium scheduled for the same hour elsewhere in the EMU. The topic: "After the Bomb has Dropped: Medical Effects and Civil Defense Plans." Considering it a reasonable substitute, I decided that what one of them couldn't reveal about my defenselessness against military strategists, the other was sure to illustrate. Perhaps it was of little difference that I went to the "Bomb" symposium instead of the "Draft" symposium. One of them might have told me I would wear a uniform and carry a gun within this decade. The other told me my skin will burn, my tumors will grow, and I will die just as miserably wearing a uniform or not!

Jordan Greenbaum
English

YAF inevitabilities

For those of us alive in the world today there are certain inevitabilities we can look forward to such as death and taxes. Another, which members of the campus can look forward to is at least one rambling diatribe a year from Jerry Peyton. For those who are new here Peyton is a self-righteous, self-appointed advocate for the working class who spends his spare time acting as chairman of the University chapter of Young Americans for Freedom.

In his Nov. 5 letter to the Emerald, Peyton accused me of spreading "lies and innuendoes" about YAF because I had previously published a tune taken from their songbook. Well, I wouldn't want to do anything to harm YAF as their position and philosophy is weak enough as it is. However, I'm fully prepared to document the existence of the YAF song for anyone who's interested. Furthermore, if I'm truly guilty of spreading lies about YAF then why hasn't Peyton filed a libel suit against me? The answer is that having revealed some embarrassing truth about his group for which there is no other explanation he can only respond with frantic and hateful rhetoric.

David Isenberg
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