

Quibble impedes ERA as deadline nears

An equal rights amendment television commercial being test-aired in Portland has drawn criticism from the Eagle Forum, a group opposed to the amendment. The Eagle Forum charges the commercial is full of inaccuracies.

The commercial is part of an 11th hour push to secure passage of the ERA before June 30. The ERA lacks three states to ensure its ratification as a constitutional amendment. June 30 is literally the *deadline* for the amendment — it has already received an extension — another is unlikely. It is unfortunate this extremely important amendment has to be mired in the petty, time-consuming squabbles of special interest groups.

The commercial, sponsored by the National Organization of Women, opens on a grave site and tombstone with narration that addresses the inequities suffered by a widow. The commercial closes with a shot of two tombstones, implying the man and woman are "equal at last."

An Eagle Forum representative says this is misleading because the ERA wouldn't increase the protection a woman — specifically a "homemaker" — presently possesses under inheritance, Social Security, equal pay and pension laws.

There's a shade of truth to Eagle Forum's claim. These adequate protections do currently exist for "homemakers." However, lighting the darker side reveals that "homemakers" cannot count on these protections to maintain the quality of life and livelihood they deserve in these years. Social Security is teetering on the brink of financial failure. Social

Security payments are at or below subsistence levels. Inheritance laws can protect the financial safety of the widow — providing there is a substantial inheritance. Equal pay and pension laws are not as "equal" as anti-ERA forces maintain. The pay ratio for women is still a deplorable 59 cents to each dollar a man earns.

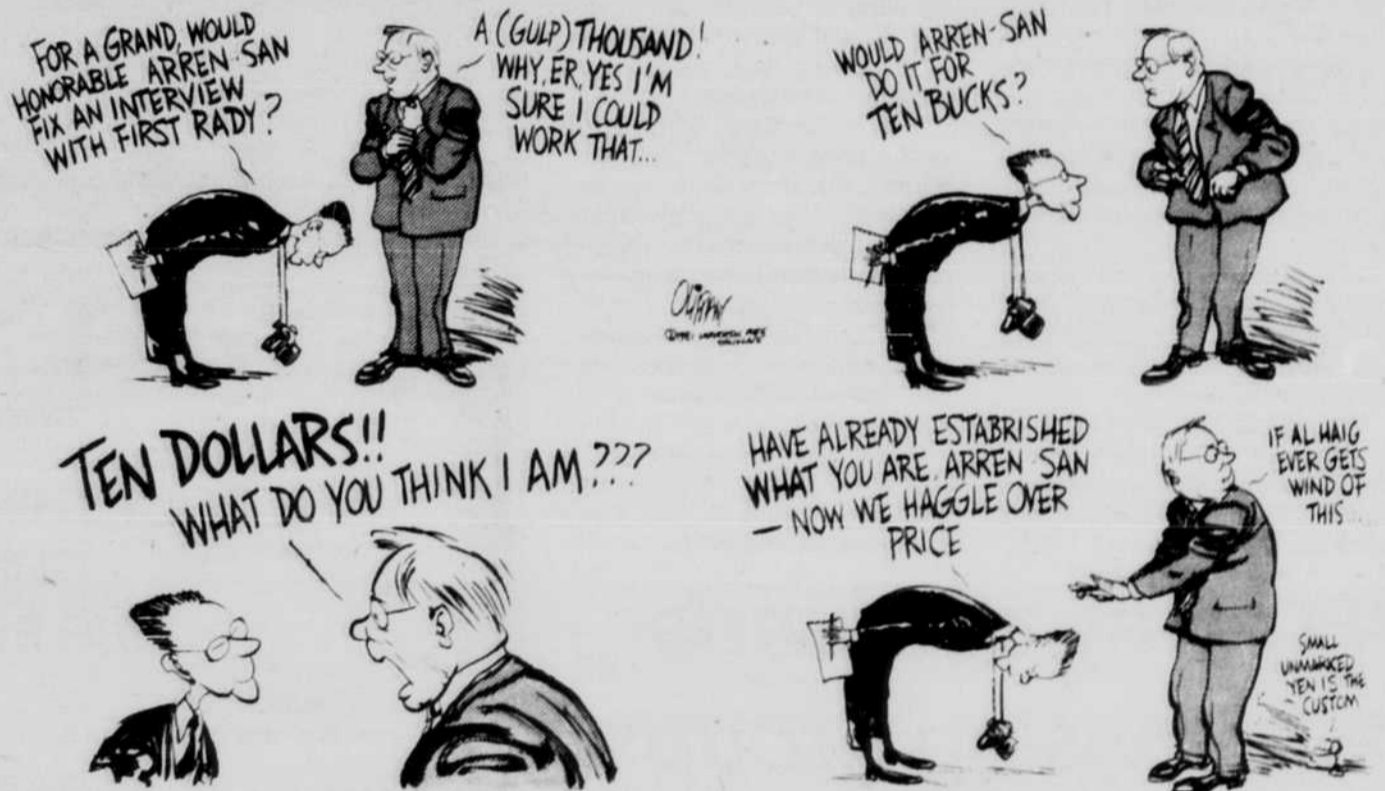
The commercial quibble over degrees of accuracy is secondary to the essentiality of securing passage of the ERA. It has been bogged down short of its goal — a constitutional amendment. That goal must be attained before the logistics of equality can be worked out.

This is not to sanction any inaccuracies by either

pro- or anti-ERA factions. Misrepresentations tend to spread confusion across either camp. One has only to recall the unisex bathroom debacle to understand confusion is detrimental to both opponents and proponents.

The commercial is not completely inaccurate in its depressing portrayal of a "homemaker" left with small resources. A recent news story estimated the worth in wages for a "homemaker" at better than \$400 a month. That's a conservative estimate for the services of a cook, maid, mate and babysitter.

NOW's depiction of a destitute widow is a tame reminder of the meanness of a woman's future without equal rights as a constitutional guarantee.



letters

Editorial refuted

This is in response to your editorial of Nov. 17 accusing Pres. Paul Olum of deliberate indecision about the location of the Pacific Northwest Resource Center. You charge Olum's delay was actually an attempt to avoid the necessity of assuming responsibility for a decision. The facts are as follows:

1. After meeting separately with the faculty of the School of Law and appearing in a public session attended by both faculty and students, Olum reported that he would honor a request for a delay in the announcement of his decision. The request came from the Dean of the School of Law, some law faculty and a number of law students. Emerald reporters were at this meeting, and it is impossible for me to believe that they failed to understand Olum's plain talk.

2. Dean Bell specifically requested the delay in order to permit the School of Law and the National Wildlife Federation time to explore a range of possible arrangements. Olum's delay was based on his concern and respect for Dean Bell and the faculty and students involved.

3. All of the above was described by Olum on a number of occasions. The most recent of these was at the President's press conference on Nov. 5. Again, Emerald reporters were present, and again the language used was plain and explicit.

Given the above, the distortions appearing in your Nov. 17 editorial are impossible to understand. The Emerald has the right, indeed the responsibility, to criticize the administration. In turn, the University community has the right to expect honest reporting and comment. In this instance, the Emerald has engaged in such a gross distortion that I must seriously question your commitment to ethical responsibility. You have done all of the parties involved most serious disservice.

Richard J. Hill
Provost

Free association

The usual mild hissing and squawking about the Greek system has begun again, with both sides overdoing the outrage, as is customary. The Greek system is like any other system, and it does not turn angels to cretins, or vice-versa. Although certain houses may do a better job than others of helping teenagers to maturity, what goes in is, for the most part, what comes out. I have worked with a number of Greeks, and have found some very pleasantly competent, and some quite foul and the great majority somewhere in between. Is that ratio so different from the rest of the student body? Of course not.

Some detractors of the Greek system simply don't like the implied "elitism" that surrounds any private organization. Value judgments are easy to come by at a university, though, and those who believe that Greek member's

personal attitudes toward such rights of privacy would change if they simply stopped being Greeks are likely mistaken. After all, Greek houses do not snatch students off the street and compel them to participate in activities. Students join Greek houses on purpose, and wouldn't stay in unless they liked what they were doing. The right of free association, I believe the U.S. Constitution calls it.

If we disallow private Greek activities on the grounds that they foster elitism, why shouldn't we discourage co-op houses because they tend to promote egalitarianism? A nice, juicy personal value judgment is all that is involved in most such arguments, and the "Greek Question" is no exception. Mandating lifestyles by government edict is an ill-advised policy, no matter who it is directed at.

Alan Contreras
Senior, political science

Keep Study Abroad

I see that Pres. Paul Olum is planning to drop the Study Abroad program in order to cut costs. That's too bad.

I spent one year with the Oregon Study Abroad program at the Universitaet Stuttgart in Germany, and stayed for another year of independent study at the Universitaet Tuebingen. I consider my time there very well spent. In contrast to many other programs, which are little more than self-contained and isolated camps for American college students, the University's program threw its students in with the German students in most respects: same classes, same housing, same food and so forth. It was a thoroughgoing exposure to German life.

Such a program helps provide a better understanding of the rest of the world, which the U.S. desperately needs. Its diplomats can't speak the languages of the countries to which they are posted, and must have to rely on the gossip of the native clerical help to find out what's going on. American businessmen are abysmally ignorant of even the most rudimentary aspects of the countries in which they're attempting to bring off business deals. The present political leadership hasn't the slightest inkling of the differing viewpoints in other countries — a case in point is Reagan's unilateral decision to deploy the neutron bomb, which shocked Europeans and prompted Germany's *Der Spiegel* (24 Aug 81) to worry about "the laboriously maintained solidarity of NATO."

(And in this vein, there is much caviling at "congressional junkets" abroad as a waste of taxpayers' money. But if those people who are shaping our foreign policy remain ignorant of the world outside our borders, what kind of foreign policy could we have but misguided?)

The University apparently can't find funds for this program, yet it continues to use its financial resources for activities which are essentially frivolities, like football. What

effort is made to find a benefactor who might put up the money to keep the Study Abroad program alive and provide us with a better chance for international understanding? Is there such a benefactor? It seems we value athletics over understanding, sweat over study. So it will be appropriate, when nuclear annihilation comes, for us to be watching the Ducks get annihilated at Autzen Stadium.

Robert Ackerman

Reduction harmful

Americans have been barraged with gloom and doom propaganda from population reduction advocates. Rarely is the public exposed to opposing ideas since the liberal establishment types in the media and in education generally endorse measures to persuade Americans not to raise children.

Actually, many respected scientists and scholars contend that current population reduction trends are, in reality, harmful for America. After extensive research, Jullian Simon (Professor of Economics, University of Illinois) feels our economy will stagnate unless current birth trends are replaced with a rise in the number of children being born.

Herman Kahn, director of the Hudson Institute, a think tank based in New York, discounts the dismal forecasts of population pessimists. At an international conference held in Bonn, West Germany, he predicted by the year 2175 Earth will easily support 10 billion people. He is confident we have enough resources to insure a prosperous future for centuries to come. He has stated, "I defy you to name one product of which we are now running out for which there is no substitute." (*Parade*, Sept. 13, 1981). Many predict with our present technology, Earth could easily feed from 35-50 billion people, and this doesn't include aqua farming or even any massive programs to reclaim our great deserts. (*Population, Resources, and the Future: Non-Malthusian Perspectives*, by Bahr, Chadwick, & Thomas).

I feel population reduction advocates should devote their energies towards building a better future rather than trying to lay guilt trips on Americans who love kids and desire to raise more than one or two children.

Lori Parkman
26th Street

Greek praise

In response to Mr. Seder's erudite epistle in praise of Greeks: no one has ever warned me to beware of Germans bearing gifts.

Jim Marshall
Friday, November 20, 1981