

# Deadline, rulings put ERA on the ropes

How swiftly the hour draws nigh — and the spectre of defeat looms large before the backers of the Equal Rights Amendment. The deadline for ratification remains June 30 of this year and three states needed for the 38 states required are no where nearer to ratification than before.

ERA has suffered many setbacks in the last two months. One court decision has nearly destroyed all possibility of ratification.

An alternative to a constitutional amendment exists which ERA backers need to examine. The Civil Rights Act of 1965 is presently in the Congress for reenactment. The possible inclusion of a statement banning discrimination also based on sex is an avenue to eliminate sex bias. Granted, ERA backers will see this as a weak recourse to a Constitutional amendment; though, with the amendment's stalled progress, it may be the only means to ensure sexual equality.

A U.S. District Judge in Idaho only last month tossed a spanner in the works by ruling Congress lacked authority to extend the ratification deadline and that five states acted within their right when they rescinded approval. The states seeking to reverse their position on ERA are Idaho, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Dakota and Nebraska. An appeal is in process, but if Judge Marion Callister's decision stands, ratification may be quite impossible. If these states are allowed to rescind ratification a trend may develop among other states that previously ratified the amendment.

Callister's ruling is being appealed to the Supreme Court by the National Organization for Women. NOW argues that Callister, formerly a high-ranking official in the Mormon Church, had a decided conflict of interest in the case. The Mormon Church is staunchly against ERA.

The most recent setback to ERA was delivered by the legislatures of Georgia, Oklahoma and Illinois.

In the Georgia House, despite the influential presence and support of Presidents Carter and Ford, their wives, and entertainer Alan Alda, the measure was defeated by a 2-1 margin. The Oklahoma Senate

rejected the measure by a 27-21 vote. And Illinois has put off dealing with the ERA until March, even closer to the June deadline. The Governors of Oklahoma and Illinois are ERA supporters, yet even they can't move the amendment through their state Houses.

The deadline is five months off, but due to the recent actions of these states many are calling the ERA cause lost.

Oregon has remained steadfast in its ratification of the ERA. But feminists in Oregon must cease sitting smug in satisfaction over Oregon's progressive legislation. The struggle for ratification of this important

amendment will come to naught without those needed states.

Letters to persuade the legislative bodies of those unenlightened states need to be written. Groups and organizations must go on record supporting ERA and condemning states that do not.

The ERA is down and facing a short count — but it is not out. Short of a constitutional amendment there is the Civil Rights Act of 1965 which is amenable to a sentence outlawing discrimination based on sex. Regardless of whether the ERA is ratified, the fight for sexual equality will continue.



## letters

### Ignorance

There is a new old mean spirit which has taken wing once more across this land. In its centuries-old unreconstructed ignorance, it is mocking our nobler aspirations and finer sentiments. And it is today teaching us its pusillanimous and bitter lesson: do not make Ozymandian promises to your children.

Upon the archway facing the foyer in the EMU is painted this now-darkening assurance: "The University of Oregon Established by an enlightened state for service and inspiration..."

David T. Mason  
Graduate, political science

### Unethical

I read with some surprise and perhaps twisted amusement the letters of Jan. 20 concerning the University athletic department. I tend to forget the naive outlook of some under-informed students (and the public at large) who have been led to believe that such things as fair

play and sportsmanship exist in 'big-time' college athletics. Both Paul Blikstad and Robert Sheahon question the ethics ("manners," "integrity") witnessed recently in connection with one of the major, or "revenue-producing," programs — in this case, men's basketball.

Instances of deviant, immoral, and unethical acts have surrounded the athletic department's revenue-producing programs for at least the last few years. The University is not unique in such acts of questionable integrity. In fact, some leading sport sociologists (Frey, 1978; Santomier, 1980) argue convincingly that such deviance has become organizationally accepted, even encouraged, by those in the university athletics establishment, in order to "remain competitive." They postulate that deviant actions are not limited to a few individuals who happen to get caught, but that there is more of an "All the President's Men" phenomena in operation.

For those interested in reading more about institutionalized deviancy in big-time university athletics, see "White Sock

Crime: Organizational Deviance in Intercollegiate Athletics" in the Fall, 1980 issue of Sport and Social Issues.

Bill Howard  
Graduate, P.E.

### Ma Bell

The Saturday morning newspaper this last weekend held some pretty unsettling images. As a student of the social sciences the daily paper often presents me with dilemmas which indicate the nature of the times, and the direction in which further developments are taking us.

One such dilemma is the development of severely increasing financial burdens on the consumer. In the background are steadily rising unemployment and inflation rates. In the foreground are announcements of actions that will be taken by Pacific Northwest Bell as a result of a federal anti-trust suit and subsequent reorganization of AT&T. AT&T will divest its assets from certain areas of regional and local operations, but will remain "competitive" with Bell in long

distance services. The resulting decline in profits from long distance revenues and removed subsidies will be offset by Bell by raising the cost of basic phone service by 300 percent. This is estimated to exclude approximately 7 percent of those who currently use the phone system from that opportunity.

The consumer collectively loses, and the low income consumer picks up the tab. The access to a basic service is thus narrowed, becoming a service which is increasingly a privilege of the more wealthy.

The frustration of the recent cost hike for payphone use from 10 to 25 cents is compounded for me by this new development, and by economic developments of this nature. Consumers — especially low income — are backed into a corner. People end up paying out the nose to regional monarch Bell telephone anyway, and now for actions which restrict the concentration of power and wealth of international giant AT&T.

Curtailing access to basic services in a society which has the means to distribute those services presents some inter-

esting questions. The gains made at the expense of those who can least afford to loose are difficult to reconcile. For those hit most severely, recourse is limited and choice is restricted. And Democracy...? The direction of these and like decisions indicate regrettably the direction of certain priorities, and prerogatives.

Cheryl Wold  
Senior, history

### letters policy

The Emerald will accept and attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on issues, ideas and topics of interest to the University community.

The letters **must** be limited to 250 words, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to The Emerald offices, EMU 300.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content. Publication is dependent upon space available.

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