

Balfe and Kouns waged a meaningful race

Congratulations are in order to C.J. Balfe and his successful bid for the ASUO presidency. Balfe had the endorsement of this newspaper and the interfraternity council — as well as the endorsement of a winning margin of voters. But — congratulations are also in order to Kevin Kouns and his efforts seeking ASUO presidency.

In these disoriented times for Oregon higher education, Balfe represents a smooth transition of student power from one ASUO president to his successor. There is a strength in this that will serve the students of this University. The State Board of Higher Education must become more responsive to

the student bloc. And when the student bloc is consistent in its aims and its lobbying efforts, the state board and the Legislature will be unable to ignore the students' needs for higher education.

Kouns has nothing to be ashamed of in his campaign. Kouns, and the Students for a Progressive Agenda, for the most part ran a campaign that brought to light important issues to students. They didn't shy away from the larger concerns of national and international politics. There were those, this newspaper included, that considered the arena of national and international politics to be secondary elements in the ASUO elections. But, to Kouns credit,

he stuck to his principles and continued to address the question of U.S. involvement in Central America, the draft and other issues that affect students.

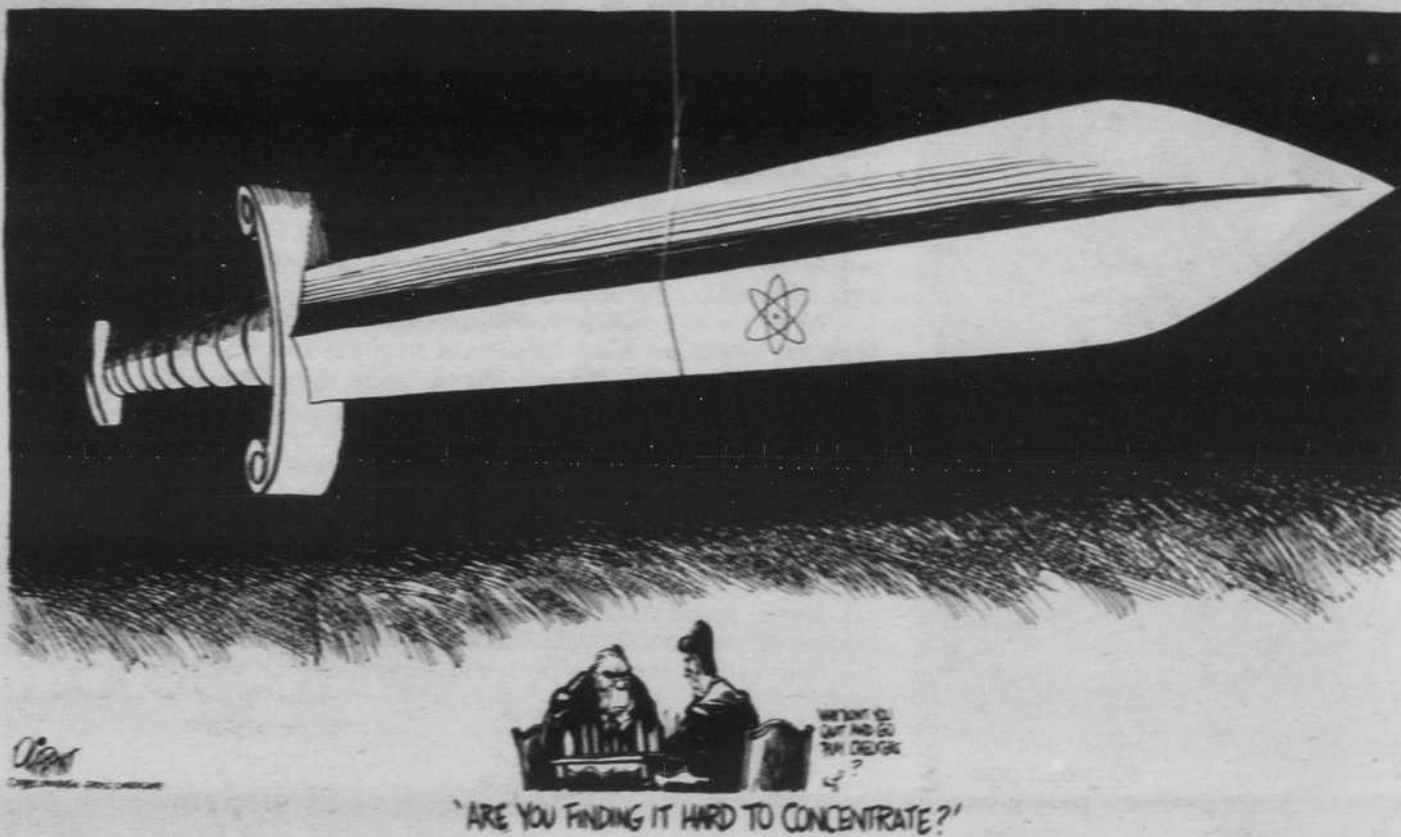
Kouns is responsible for keeping students aware of the world beyond the boundaries of this campus and the local pubs. The formation of SPA harkens back to days of student activism — activism in a political form that had more than a minor place in persuading the policies of this country's administration.

This election is said to have been "dirtier" than last year. Some 23 election violations have been lodged with the Elections Court. That's 19 more than last year. This aspect of the election is nothing for Balfe nor Kouns to be proud of. In fact, accusations of violations (notably a letter in the Emerald condemning SPA) may indeed have adversely influenced the outcome of the election.

The Elections Court will hear the litany of violations Wednesday and make rulings. The court has the power to impose fines — the average being a \$50 penalty payment. In an extreme case, they could invalidate the entire election.

Some of the alleged violations amount to overzealousness on the part of SPA supporters, or just a misunderstanding of how (and where) they could campaign. The seriousness of these violations is questionable. Some responsibility in these alleged violations must rest with the Elections Board. They apparently didn't do that good of a job overseeing the whole election.

Balfe will provide strong and single-minded leadership for this University. But, Balfe must not ignore the fact that his margin of victory was roughly 4 percent over Kouns who ran on a platform that wasn't simply University student educational considerations. That says students are concerned with the quality of higher education and the world they inherit upon graduation. Balfe should bear this in mind throughout his tenure as ASUO president.



sally hodgkinson editor's note

They've dubbed it "WPPSSgate," and the people of Springfield are mad as hornets about increases in their electrical bills due to cost overruns from two defunct nuclear plants in Washington.

"Hey Mr. Big Man! When you gonna listen to us little folks down here?" Glenn Sofge's defiance rang throughout the meeting room in the Willamalane Senior Citizens Center, startling most of the 100 people attending the hearing on the ratepayer's burden for the WPPSS projects.

"What is he, crazy? Who is he?" asked an old man sitting on the edge of his front-row seat. His eyes bulged, magnified by thick glasses. "What is he doing?" he asked someone next to him.

The surprise was not at

the fighting words of Sofge, but at the volume. "Sit down and speak into the microphone," someone advised him. "Don't need no microphone," Sofge answered, "anyone can hear what I got to say. Listen Mr. Big Man in your ivory tower — it's going to fall!"

Sofge then sat and quieted down, having gotten the attention of all in the room. "We know we've been tricked, lied to and cheated."

As Sofge talked on, the old man relaxed. Then he chuckled. "Well, he sure is mad, isn't he?"

Yep. Sofge — a Springfield ratepayer who looks like Cheswick in the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* — sure is mad. He's mad about his electric bill, he's mad at the Springfield Utility Board for signing the WPPSS contract,

and he's mad at WPPSS and BPA officials who refused to show for the hearing.

And he has lots of company. The red-white-and-blue citizens of Springfield, many who shook their head and sighed over the anti-establishment protests of the 1960s, are now marching. In February, 400 irate ratepayers rallied to protest WPPSS, some of them burning electrical bills.

They've become suspicious of public officials and those in the power industry. When it was mentioned in the hearing that John Lobdell, Oregon's public utility commissioner, was invited to testify, the old man snorted. "He won't come. He's a coward. They're all cowards, you know."

"No sane person would

sign a contract that had no lid on what they'd be paying and no guarantee of services," said Pay Raymond, leader of Springfield Fair Share, a ratepayers group. "Something is going on, and we need to get to the bottom of it."

The hearing audience, mostly older ratepayers clothed in work clothes and polyester, cheered those who lashed at WPPSS, BPA and SUB officials. When SUB General Manager Steve Loveland testified, they were polite, although a few guffaws and hisses were heard.

"We are ratepayers," someone testified. "We have rights in the state of Oregon. We don't owe them a dime. We don't own them a cotton-picking thing."

An Albany ratepayer, who

traveled to the hearing to offer moral support, urged the Springfieldites to keep pushing. "We need to stick together like a couple of clams."

The old man read a letter to the committee that he had just received from U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield. It was vague, "I am concerned about your concern" type of letter, but the old man read it as if it was the Declaration of Independence. As he shuffled back to his seat, his friends and neighbors clapped. He turned to the small crowd and waved.

In Springfield, the little guys — ratepayers — are banding together to fight the big guys — the power industry. Hey, Mr. Big Man, don't underestimate the anger of these Springfield taxpayers.

staff

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