

opinion

Impetus provided

It's so simple, it might insult the intelligence of the average college student.

You walk up to the table. You fill out the form. There are some tough questions, like: Name? Address? Political party affiliation? — things like that. Then you stick a stamp on it and drop it in the mailbox. Ta da! You're a registered voter.

All this week our pals in student government will be working hard to get students to complete the above. And folks, they're not doing it for their health.

In the past, student turnout at the polls has been atrocious. Even during important elections such as the one coming up Nov. 2, the percentage of student voters could be counted comfortably on one hand.

Student volunteers will be pleading with passersby to stop at tables in the EMU, outside the University Bookstore and in the dorms. They know that the decisions made during the coming elections will have a crucial impact on higher education. They want to make damn sure that students have a say in those decisions.

Take a minute to register. Within two weeks, Lane County will mail you a little green card that tells you where to vote. Then comes the important part.

Students have a vested interest in voting, believe it or not. Issues such as the nuclear arms freeze, the property tax limitation and the election of our next governor could easily be decided by as few as 10,000 votes or less. There are approximately 50,000 students in Oregon's state system of higher education. Less than 5,000 usually vote.

Funny things happen when a large number of students make it to the polls. Politicians start spending a little more time on campus finding out what students are thinking, and where they want the state's money spent. Student lobbyists find themselves with something they've always wanted — influence. Legislators begin to legislate with student interests — and votes — in mind. Suddenly, we exist.

This week, the ASUO will provide the pens, the forms and the impetus. In November, why don't we provide the votes?

cort fernald sidelong glances

There is no progression without contraries.

William Blake

I have long held the particular notion that contradictions make a person infinitely more interesting rather than wishy-washy. Contradictions magnify the complexities of a person's character. Without the disparate, conflicting — and yes, even hypocritical faces of a person's character the robotic mentality — singlemindedness — dominates.

I have cultivated my own varied and sordid contradictions and now find much comfort and amusement when people give that distinctly American "Huh?" when I contradict myself.

Contradiction can be viewed as growth instead of confusion — at least I like to think so. It should come as no conundrum that the world is not black and white. Often the distinctions are foggy and we grope blindly

through the gray. What your fingers contact in the obscure light should be grasped and held — and discarded when something else is revealed.

Strange as it may be, my life has become cluttered with "things." At times I have been plagued always by a virgule. It's an inexorable pattern to my existence. I have never been one "thing" so much as one "things" simultaneously.

I have been a writer/journalist, a lover/friend, a man/boy, and so on. A virgule is a piece of punctuation — another of those odd inky marks in the English language that confounds readers and writers alike. A virgule separates alternatives, such as and/or. It separates successive divisions as well.

It seems so much better to couch my contradictions with a punctuation mark. I am honest to a fault, yet guilty of the insidious practice of pretense on-



letters

Obsequy

The taxpayers of Eugene had their faces rubbed in dirt twice in one week. First, in a surprise move, the City Council, in perhaps the swiftest action in its history, changed the name of the Eugene Performing Arts Center. Then the Eugene-Register Guard, a newspaper that calls itself "a citizen of the community," betrayed that community by defending the Council's action. (Editorial, Sept. 29).

In an editorial of Oct. 1, the Guard as much as admitted that the Council's methods were less than honorable. Its editorial of Sept. 29 mistakenly asserted that the meeting at which the Council had put a price tag on naming the Center had been well publicized. It had not. Without the inconvenient presence of opponents, the Council was able to offer the Center's name to the highest bidder. The Council had acted dishonorably; yet, the Guard upheld the Council's action. Whence the rewards of obsequy?

When the voters of Eugene were asked to commit 18.5 million tax dollars to the Center, nothing was said about naming it for a major benefactor. Indeed, most of those who voted for the Center must have been confident that it would receive a name much like the one first given it. It was after the citizens of Eugene had signed over their money for years into the future, that the council elected by those citizens decided "it would be proper" to name the Center for a major donor. (Guard, Sept. 29).

Bringing up the naming of Autzen Stadium (Guard, Sept. 27), is an irrelevant rationalization. That "facility" was not paid for with tax monies; nor was it voted on by Eugene taxpayers. The Guard, in its editorial of Sept. 29, tells of facilities in Toronto and Baltimore "named for people who have big bucks." Are there not similar centers named for the cities in which they are located? Is the Guard guilty of selective researching?

And what if the day comes when the City, supported by the Guard, has to go back to the people for additional funding for the Center? What then?

While the citizens of Eugene are grateful to those who gave sums large enough to be classed as major donors, the giving by these benefactors does not hurt them as much as property taxes hurt the "minor" donors. Those with the "big bucks" should heed the precept of Jesus: "When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you." (Matt. 6:2).

Give the name of the center back to those who contracted the biggest commitment: the citizens of Eugene.

Guido Palandri
Library

Controversy

I am tired of dull letters to the editor, so I am throwing down a challenge to everyone out there who feels the same way. I hope someone will start some raging controversies, so the letters to the editor are interesting to read. Let's make them all one paragraph, so we can read more of them. Here are a few possibilities: all Christians are nitwits, bring back Al Haig, let's censor the Emerald, owning a car is immoral, and marriage is for the birds. Surely someone can do better than this.

Mary Flinders

Half a salute

The student editor of the University newspaper wrote an article condemning the appearance of the city of Springfield.

It was a "ripping" article, said the president of the Chamber of Commerce.

The mayor is now apprehensive as to "what the University is all about." Weyerhaeuser may cut off their generous grants.

No one said he was wrong, just that he shouldn't offend certain people. The editor, Harry Esteve is entitled to half of a salute.

The other half is due him in three years when he publishes in the real world an article that makes the mayor, the Chamber of Commerce or some big corporation mad.

When he is successful in doing that while working for a media that cannot offend those advertisers who wish to continue ripping off the public or those public relations persons or those slick city fathers — all at a time that he is restricted to the traditional targets — politicians and movie stars — and still makes those big shot snobs mad, then he will know, as I have known for many years, "What the University is truly all about." It is all about free speech without fear.

The University is where I learned to be obnoxious, many years ago. A half of a salute to you, Harry, I'll look for your name in three years if I'm still around, but please don't talk that way about Klamath Falls — we've got class.

Sam McKeen
Klamath Falls

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