

# opinion

## Food-Op closure leaves questions

Seeing the the Food-Op close its doors is bitter medicine for a number of its patrons. The news might have been less bitter had the Food-Op directors and ASUO administrators been straight with students about the reasons for the closure.

In fact, dealing more openly and honestly with the situation might have brought about a solution to what ever ailed the Food-Op.

The tersely worded "explanation" of "ongoing financial difficulties," and an unwillingness to talk about the closure seems especially strange coming from ASUO Pres. Mary Hotchkiss.

The Hotchkiss Administration prides itself on its "reformed" style of student government. They were, at last glance, a group working to be more open to University students, in hopes of crushing student apathy. The miniscule amount of information released by Hotchkiss is not the way to end student apathy — it will likely have the opposite effect.

Another factor is Hotchkiss' involvement. The Food-Op is a private, non-profit corporation with no ASUO or IFC connection.

How did Hotchkiss become involved enough to issue the statement?

And why were Food-Op directors so inaccessible after such a drastic move? Why did Pat McGurk, the outreach director, resign?

Without legal responsibility to answer those questions, the ASUO, through its own involvement, and the Food-Op, through its own structure as a cooperative, seem to have a moral obligation lurking just around the corner.

And all the unanswered questions sound like the beginnings of a dime-store mystery novel. Or the makings of some nasty rumours.

The Food-Op and the ASUO should come clean with the answers, before the final chapter.

## Committee thwarts student fee control

Student control of their incidental fees has been thwarted at least for this year with the setting aside of House Bill 2747 by the Senate Education Committee.

The bill set aside by the committee was a revision which would have had incidental fee budgets jointly recommended by the president of a college or university and by a recognized student government. Once an agreement was attained, the budget would be submitted to the state board for approval. This version of the bill was passed by the House of Representatives. Originally, the bill would have banned outright all mandatory student fees.

Despite the fairness of the second version the committee chose to set the bill aside after Chancellor Bud Davis gave them a written promise he would work with the student government's to develop a cohesive policy on incidental fees.

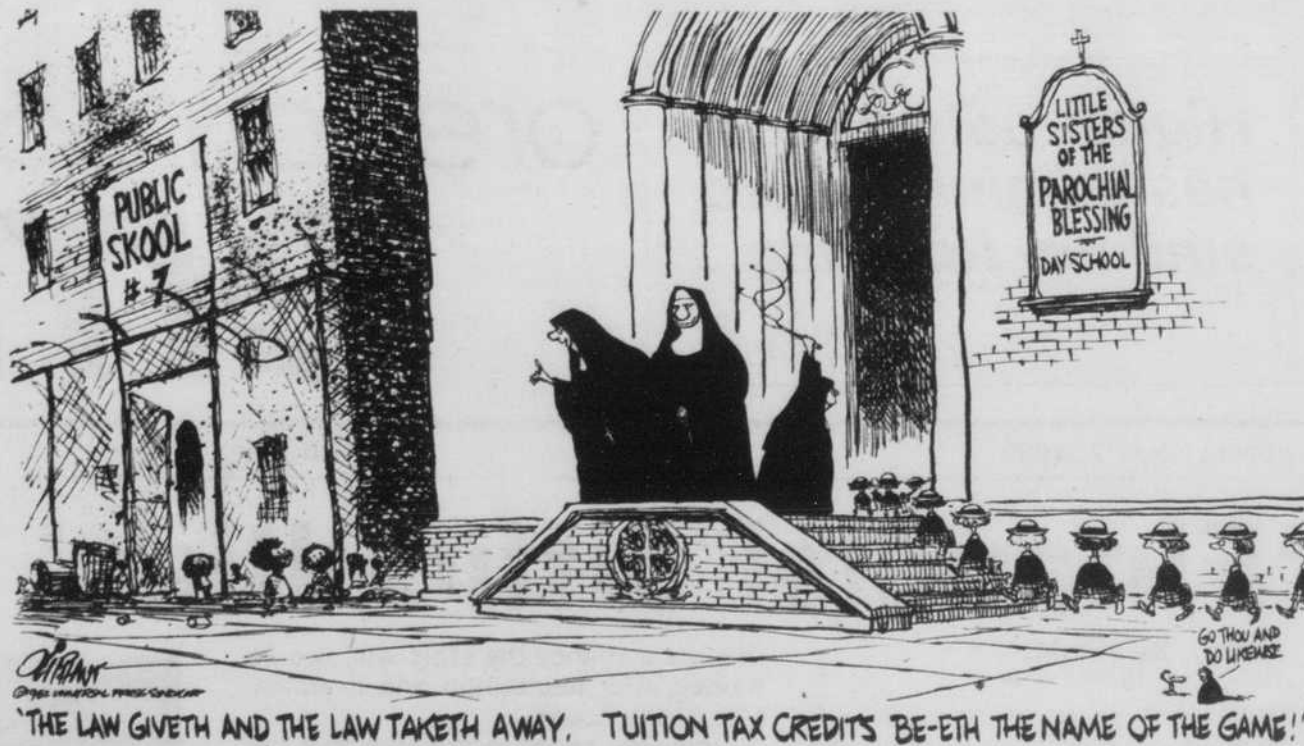
A spokesperson for the Oregon Student Lobby said Davis' promise "is no more than an attempt to deflect the interests of students another two years." In this we agree. What students seek is a more pronounced role on the decisions concerning incidental fee budgets and how the money is allocated. The bill reflected this.

An often repeated argument against the bill was that students were not competent enough to responsibly devise an incidental fee budget and allocate the money.

At the University, where the budgeting and allocation of incidental fees is a finely-honed bureaucratic process, the argument is not altogether true. At other colleges and universities in the state system the argument may be true. But competency can be achieved through autonomy.

Another argument was that student control of incidental fees would cripple athletic departments. This seems to be the old saw — "gown versus gridiron" — that has raged for *ad infinitum*. Actually, athletic departments would be subject to the same criteria as other incidental fee supported programs. They would be responsible to wisely use the student dollars at their disposal. If the programs were successful the money would be there. If the programs were a failure the money would not. (Success or failure in athletics are relative terms and not solely indicative of winning seasons.)

The setting aside of House Bill 2747 means that students will continue to be required to blindly put their money into the hands of other people and only hear of how it is being spent. We sincerely hope Davis keeps his promise to the education committee and does develop a cohesive policy for incidental fees. We can't speculate on the likelihood of Davis' promise being kept. And we wonder the likelihood of him giving students more opportunity to manage their incidental fees.



michele matassa

## reporter's notebook

Don't get me wrong, I understand the plight of the taxpayer. I understand that if the taxpayer never says "no" the government might run wild in raising revenue.

But I'm afraid that the taxpayers have gone to the polls — if they've gone to the polls — a little too intent on showing the government who's boss. And by getting carried away with an anti-government binge, taxpayer's often fail to look at the bargain they may be getting.

Some of those "worst fears" were realized in the county law enforcement levy June 28.

We, the county's voters, turned down a \$2.9 million tax levy that would have afforded us the "pleasures" of sheriff patrols, criminal investigations and adequate public service staffs at the district attorney's office and the juvenile department.

Pardon the cliche, but the

taxpayers cut off their nose to spite their face.

Those services would have cost \$26.40 in property taxes for a \$60,000 house, something most property owners know. But the average taxpayer may not know the services refused weren't luxury items, they were basics. Those dollars were only to maintain what was already there.

Lane County voters blew it.

An average month's phone bill runs more than \$26 for most of us. Cable Television service is about half of that \$26. At \$4.25 a shot, a person could see "Return of the Jedi" six times. And for a family of four, with popcorn and soda, \$26 is one trip to theater.

Think of what could have been, at \$26 a year. It's the same as what you won't be getting now.

You won't be getting the protection of 25 sheriff's

patrol officers who were laid off Friday. You won't be getting the help provided by seven other sheriff's deputies, two sergeant's, two communication-records specialists, 12 communications-records officers, one store clerk, one program analyst and three secretaries.

You won't be able to call the sheriff's office to report a crime or accident — well, you can call but they can't respond.

You won't even get help from the district attorney's office in prosecuting drunk drivers.

You may wish the sheriff's patrol had been out in force, if you, or some one you know is victimized.

You may wish the levy election was tomorrow.

Michele Matassa is the Emerald's associate editor for the community.

## letters

### Unisex insurance

United States Sen. Bob Packwood and his "feminist" cohorts are really pushing their luck this time by fighting to pass a "unisex" insurance bill. Packwood is supposedly a strong supporter of women's interests, but this type of "unisex" insurance would drive up women's rates to the same level as men's.

You may think it would be fair to have equal rates, but when you look at the facts, I think you'll reconsider. For every age group, men have been shown as more reckless, with more drunken driving, and more severe accidents than women in these same age groups. What's fair about raising women's rates to equal men's when generally women tend to be safer drivers, with more fender benders than

the major accidents of their male counterparts?

Several years ago Michigan adopted a similar rate system and women's insurance rates soared as much as 195 percent above what they were previously paying for same age groups, such as young women.

This would be an extreme burden for lower-income women, single working mothers and two-car, two-driver families as well.

You may gripe about the high cost of insurance now, but just think how you'd be affected by such legislation. This is one Republican precinct person who'll be working against both this bill and Packwood — when he runs for office again.

Lori Parkman  
Springfield

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