

opinion

OSPIRG constitution case regrettable

The case against the Oregon Student Public Interest Group to be heard by the ASUO Constitutional Court is regrettable on a number of points.

The first regrettable point is that the student lodging the case, Richard Burr, is adhering to the strict letter of the law without adequately understanding that laws exist also in spirit. The second is that Burr, by his own political posture, is infecting an inherently beneficial organization with a pestilence of his own.

The basis for Burr's case is the incidental fee funding OSPIRG receives. University students voted during last spring's election to fund the group \$1 per student, per term, for two years. This is a change from an annual vote for continued OSPIRG funding.

Burr is taking the case to the constitutional court as an individual. He is not affiliated with the national College Republicans, nor with its chapter at the University. Yet, Burr's tactics are right on-line with the conservative PIRG-busters in that national group. Burr's strategy so far seems to be to break OSPIRG by having the constitutional court declare it a "political" organization and therefore making it unconstitutional for them to receive incidental fees.

According to Project Inform, a national conservative group out to bust PIRGs, a campus anti-PIRG group or individual "can pre-empt the whole problem by re-structuring the student fee process. Some schools have passed resolutions outlawing any student fee money going to any 'special interest' group." This sounds suspiciously similar to Burr's case.

We wonder why PIRGs are the target? PIRGs are intended to survey public opinion and aid voters and concerned citizens with information to make an intelligent choice. PIRGs canvas for issues of public concern. Oregon's "Lemon Law", protecting new car buyers, was the result of OSPIRG lobbying efforts in the Legislature. The ends don't justify the means, but within the context of the PIRGs the ends are, for the most part, to the greater good of the whole.

OSPIRG is the tip of the iceberg. The case also calls for a review of the Survival Center and Students for a Nuclear Free Future. The impact of Burr's case, if successful, would send shockwaves through student groups on this campus and perhaps the other campuses in the state system.

Why shockwaves? Student groups, like the Black Students Union, Jewish Students Union and Moslem Students Union, receiving incidental fee funds, would be scrutinized for any political inclination. These groups could not stand without a shadow of doubt in the glaring whiteness of Burr's criteria.

Burr has a point, however slim. Student groups receiving incidental fees should not be avowed to any political stance. Although, Burr's rationale that political is "taking stance on public issues" is an amusing generalization. Every public issue, invariably, has a political side. It's naive to think that public issues can be evaluated in a pristine non-political light.

Tsk tsk, sounds kind of familiar

We are looking forward to the bi-weekly publication put out by the ASUO, but we doubt it will be the fun-loving, tongue-in-cheek "yellow" publication we once knew as "Not the Emerald." The ASUO is trying to give our disreputable past publication a new set of clothes and a whole new respectability.

Mary Hope, ASUO publication coordinator, really hits the nail on the head as far as this newspaper goes. According to Hope "As a daily newspaper (so true), the Emerald can only cover everyday stuff (too true, we bring you the 'everyday stuff' everyday)." The ASUO publication will give more long-range coverage and provide more "concept" reporting concerning its programs.

We are very interested in reading "concept reporting" — perhaps what it is will then become more clear.

Best of luck to the ASUO's bi-weekly publication, even though the name sounds a little too familiar.



letters

Crime free

On behalf of the students who hold office hours at Taylor's, I would like to inform you that the University was declared an official "Crime Free Zone" in a Taylor-wide election last night. The measure was approved by 100 percent of the inebriated patrons.

The measure prohibits the "planning, attempting, or the execution of any form of criminal activity" on campus. Any other research involving the criminal element is also prohibited.

We request that the University campus be officially and permanently removed from the criminal target list and the University security force be abolished, as we pose no threat to other peoples and do not feel secure or protected by their weapons.

We denounce the use of and threatened use of weapons as a defense.

We believe that this declaration and our request to be removed from the target list of criminals will contribute to individual and campus life and security.

If other taverns, universities and cities will make such a declaration, I believe that not only will crime be eliminated but thousands of dollars can be saved with the abolishment of law enforcement agencies.

We trust that you criminals will give this your immediate attention as this is a matter of local and national importance.

William Wright
business, management

English?

In regards to "Student challenges OSPIRG's funding," on the Emerald's front page Sept. 28, I would like to ask who taught English to Frank Shaw, Emerald news editor, Brooks Dareff, night editor and the copy-editors. The plural words, "complaints" and

"Republicans" do not require apostrophes. Periods should be placed inside quotation marks, not outside them. No journalism professor, and especially no practicing editor, would accept the opinionated 44-word lead that was printed.

By the way, Richard Burr's complaints are like those in other states, not "indicative" of them.

Dane Claussen
senior, journalism

Solomon

I feel compelled to point out some factual errors in your editorial concerning the Solomon Amendment. The Amendment requires that any person who wishes to receive financial aid of any sort certify that they have complied with the regulations of the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA) or that they are exempt from its provisions for one of a number of reasons. This, in essence, requires a person to certify, under penalty of law, that they are not guilty of the crime of non-registration and to provide information that will allow that certification to be checked against Selective Service records. Any person who refuses to so certify is to be punished, without any recourse.

In addition to the violations of Constitutional right that occur as a result of the requirements discussed above, the entire financial burden of enforcement is placed upon the already strained University budget. The Financial Aid office sent out over 6000 letters, had an additional table at the registration, and suffered an increased and unnecessary burden of paperwork as a direct result of this Amendment and its regulations.

On balance, the Solomon Amendment has caused mass violation of well established legal rights, unnecessary financial burdens on colleges and universities, and personal dislocations for many people.

William Kittredge
director, OSA

Overplayed

Judging from the Sept. 28 article on the OSPIRG case, I have been linked — not too well — with a subversive organization. The article harps constantly on possible links but never proves them. The questions were fair but overplayed.

One would think, because of the article, that the case matches Rich Burr, with the enormous monetary resources of the College Republican National Committee,

against the small, helpless OSPIRG, which is just trying to make a living on the public payroll. In fact, I have prepared the case alone with scant help, while OSPIRG can fall back on its resources of tens of thousand of dollars and numerous staff people and helpers.

College Republicans at this University, to my knowledge, have never been unlawful or malicious. Reporter Jim Moore fails to explain the "less-than-ethical" tactics used in the 1972 presidential campaign by national College Republicans and their relevance to this case, although the point was thrown in the lead sentence.

I'm glad that guilt-by-less-than-substantial-association journalism does not exist on campus.

Why was not the case brought up before? Because I was an associate editor of student government for the Emerald at the time and still was bound by the bonds of objectivity.

On another note, ASUO Pres. Mary Hotchkiss is sadly mistaken if she thinks students approved a nuclear-free-zone measure last year. Former Pres. C.J. Balfe announced that it was just a poll question to gather student response, just as questions on the quarter and semester systems were intended to gather student input.

Now, this does not mean that students should go running for the bomb shelters, even though Yuri Andropov, who apparently is bound by University measures, still is free to bomb the University, despite Hotchkiss' attempt to calm the masses. Why bomb a university with an expensive warhead when the Soviet army can round up all the passive resisters on the streets and throw them in jail? Not that such a nuclear-free-zone measure would have much weight in a country that shoots down unarmed civilian airliners.

Richard Burr
senior, political science
journalism

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Correction

A name was inadvertently left off the letter entitled "Dear, Yuri" published in the Emerald Sept. 28. Barbara McCarthy, of Students for a Nuclear Free Future, also authored the letter to Pres. Ronald Reagan and Soviet Pres. Yuri Andropov. We regret the omission.

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