

Editorial

New public service: the politics of cash

The political transition period from Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon was once described as a change from the "New Dealers" to the "car dealers." Today someone considering a career in public service is bombarded daily by news of corruption, special favors, backstabbing and incompetence.

Where is the ethic that once brought people into government for their country's benefit? Today's public service appears to be a way station on the road to personal profit, a chance to grab a piece of the action.

Public office is a public trust. Former Oregon governor Tom McCall, a Republican, spoke of this trust, quoting Democrat John F. Kennedy to the effect that public officials should be "uncompromised by private obligation or aim."

Between now and November, Oregon voters have the opportunity to carefully choose officials who will consider public interests instead of personal promotion. On campus, ASUO administrations have been notable for their devotion to ideals and lack of major scandals.

Ambition has an essential place in politics. That ambition should be for the best possible service to the people. Only such service leaves a lasting legacy worthy of the name.

Albert Einstein refused an offer to become the first president of Israel because, in his words, "I have no head for human problems." Many politicians share this trait, to the detriment of the people they supposedly serve.

We want to see more public officials remember the words of John Winthrop upon founding the Massachusetts Bay colony. Winthrop said that the colony would be as a city upon a hill, with the eyes of all peoples upon it.

What do the eyes of all peoples see in the U.S. government today? By international standards, the foibles of the U.S. government may be small potatoes. So what?

The United States has the potential to be a shining example of popular government. Instead it gives us the latest generation of car dealers, Deaver's Dollar Days and Bob Packwood's cash-drenched re-election campaign.

The U.S. must do more than oppose regimes such as those in South Africa and, until recently, the Philippines. The U.S. should try to become the city upon a hill to which any people may look for an example.

This cannot be done by trading government on the block to the highest bidder. It cannot be done by permitting corrupt people to remain in office unchallenged. It cannot be done by electing professional politicians who are playing the game for the game's sake.

Government is not a game. Government, in this country at least, is people. No more, no less. There are some limitations on what people may do, but if enough people determine that a policy should change, or that a person should be elected, they can reach that goal.

Walter Mondale's concession speech on election night 1980 spoke of the American people quietly exercising their enormous power to peacefully transfer authority.

The American people, at every level of government from the ASUO to the Oregon legislature to the United States Senate, should express their displeasure at every aspect of government that does not meet the high standards they are entitled to expect.

Officials are there to serve people, not to pad their own bank accounts or serve as henchpeople for a few interests. Don't let them forget.

DAN SHEPHERD
ASTORIA AMERICAN STATESMAN
COPY NEWS SERVICE



Letters

Homophobia

"Gay Pride Week." Once again the U. of O. homosexuals have paraded their proud proclamations. In an EMU display case was a photo collection of a dozen misfits and mental malforms, including James Dean, Truman Capote and unrecognizable others with a sign rhetorically asking, "Where would we be without these gay contributions?"

Where would we be indeed? For one, we would not be facing a multi-billion dollar loss (paid by raising "straight's" health insurance rates) and multi-thousand life loss due to a perversion-induced AIDS epidemic.

Webster's "Discrimination": "To use good judgment" and "To distinguish by exposing differences." Discrimination exists, and hopefully, it will exist against the chosen lifestyles of sexual perversion.

The day when society no longer discriminates against those flaunting their sexual aberrations will be the day when society fails to acknowledge even a minimal concept of morality and decency. Hopefully, that day will never come.

Long live "homophobia"; may it flourish.

Jon Wollander
Eugene

Angel or devil?

In response to Mike Springer who tried to answer Brandon Shepard's letter about the persecution of Christians: Mike, as a freshman, you logically overlooked one aspect of Shepard's letter that sort of disqualifies his whole question. That is his reference to "Brother Jed" as a "Christian" being persecuted.

Jed is not a Christian but a wolf in sheep's clothing. When we persecute him, we are merely exposing him for what he really is. Let me quote him, "if Jesus were alive today, He would be for nuclear weapons..." Also, "you men should beat these women back into their place..." Now a quote from his wife, "if my child becomes a homosexual, I will want him/her to be put to death..." and "you students are all queers, and shameless hussies..."

Perhaps Shepard will write next about how we are persecuting Nazi war criminals and South Africa's president.

Christians do get persecuted, Mike, when they protest war, etc. People like Martin Luther King, who had a dream, like Jesus. Many Christians don't claim to be ones. Many devils say they are Christians.

I respect you, Mike, for defending others, but I advise you to learn more about who you're defending before you do so. Otherwise you could wind up unwittingly defending the devil.

Still, ignorance is no excuse.

Lisa A. Wilson
Health Education

Apology due

I would like to know which brainstormer came up with the brilliant idea of locating a weekend-long music festival where the highest possible concentration of students are living. Am I the only student who needs to study on a Sunday evening or take a nap Saturday afternoon? Closing the windows (on the hottest weekend yet) couldn't shut out the noise. If I were to have a party

anywhere near as disruptive as the noise was that weekend I would have been excited and with good cause.

I believe a special apology is due to those students in Morton-McClure. Next time please put more consideration into where you locate a music festival.

Christine Potts
Young Hall

Christian hate

This letter is in reply to Brandon Shepard, who asked why there is such ill will and hostility directed toward so called "born-again Christians."

Mr. Shepard, you ask why a "message of love" receives such a negative reaction. You ask also why people dislike Jerry Falwell and harass "Brother Jed." I hope I can help you understand these reactions a little better.

When I listened to Brother Jed, I did not hear any message of love. I heard a message of intolerance, fear, hate and doom. In his narrow, rigid view of human existence, he believes he has found all the answers. But let's skip the question of vanity. Unfortunately, he thinks his interpretation of spiritual truth applies not only to him, but to everyone else as well.

There are many religious people, Christian and non-Christian, who make the world a better place by quietly struggling to make themselves better people. These sincere individuals feel no need to spew forth fear and doom, or try to coerce others into absorbing their beliefs.

It is the Jeds and Falwells who evoke this hostile backlash, Mr. Shepard. As long as this particular brand of Christianity exists, so will the strong anti-Christian sentiment. The so-called "born-again Christians" would do well to remove the planks from their own eyes before attempting to remove the specks from the eyes of their neighbors.

Ken Loders
English

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