

Editorial

Defending the poor essential to justice

Oregon's indigent defense program is in trouble. The program is funded and operated by the state, and the state is running out of money to pay lawyers to defend poor people.

The Legislative Emergency Board must come up with money to operate the program. Indigent defense is not one of those nice "optional" government programs that can be snipped away when times are tough.

Assuring that people charged with crimes who are too poor to afford a lawyer can receive legal help is essential to an effective judicial system. Without such a program, being charged with a crime will result in convictions of people who simply could not organize evidence and testimony in their own defense.

That is why the Oregon and United States Constitutions require that indigent defense be provided. Although judges have some discretion in determining who cannot afford a lawyer, they can't reduce the need for indigent defense enough to cover the projected deficit.

Why is the deficit occurring? No one reason is the cause. Governmental units, including the City of Eugene, are trying to catch up with court backlogs in order to provide speedier trials in the future. This creates a "surge" effect in the demand for indigent defense.

Unfortunately, the surges began during the same period of time in which the state of Oregon was taking over from the counties operation of the state court system. The management transition has been slow, and the state hasn't been able to adapt to the greater need for indigent defense while staying within its budget.

The Emergency Board cannot dodge this issue, and reliance on possible economic upturns to produce more tax revenue has been overrated so many times that it simply lacks credibility as a solution to this problem. Use of a large chunk of the state's emergency fund seems inevitable.

Supporting justice is more than a nice idea, it is a constitutional imperative and, we hope, an attitude that the Emergency Board shares.

Waste dump at Hanford a very dangerous choice

The Hanford Nuclear Reservation in eastern Washington has been named a finalist in the search for an appropriate place to dump the nation's nuclear waste. This is a very poor choice.

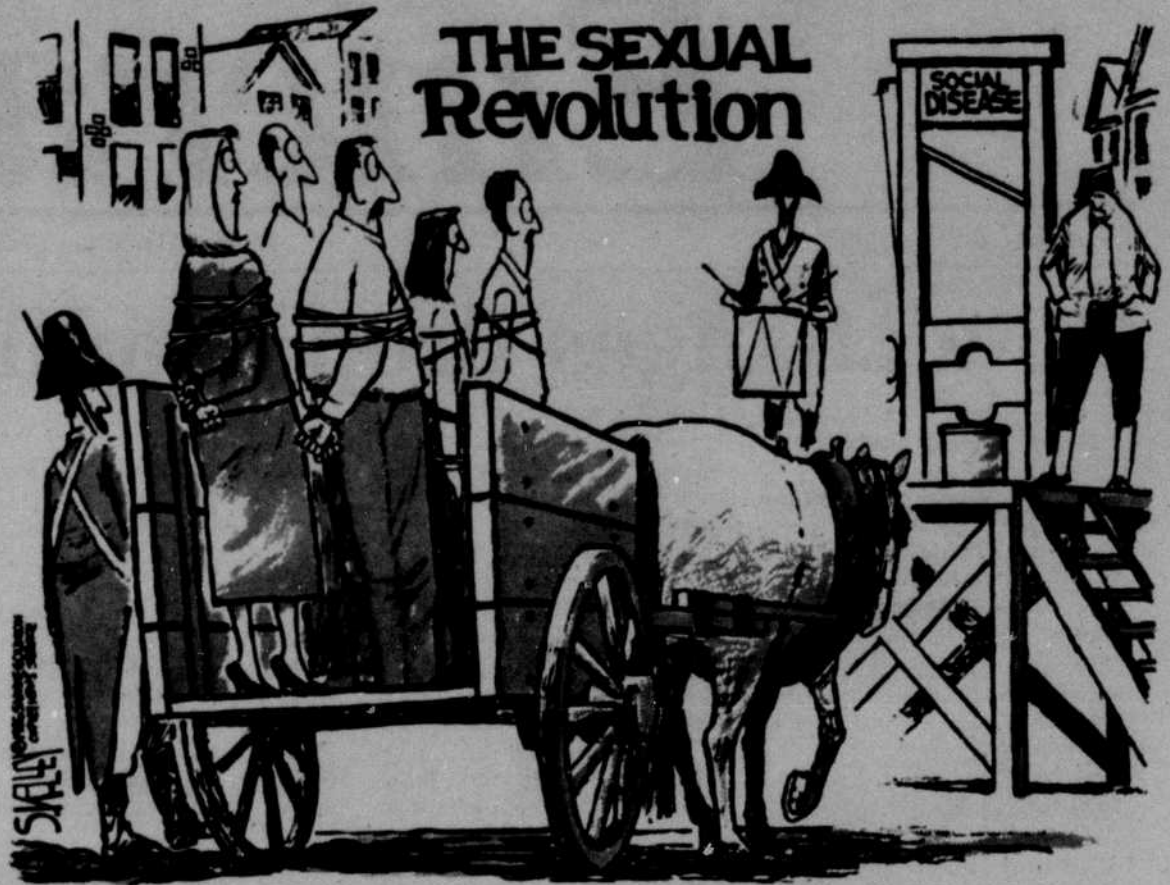
In the first place, Hanford is adjacent to the Columbia river. For that reason alone, it is an inappropriate dump site. Nuclear wastes should be stored somewhere where unexpected disasters cannot poison an entire region, or ocean.

It is bad enough that one of the last two U.S. reactors of the dangerous graphite type is located at Hanford. Now the Department of Energy wants to add to the danger to northwest residents by adding a waste dump.

The DOE is supposed to create at least two dump sites, but is now planning only one, contrary to a congressional mandate to in effect spread the risk.

Although the creation of a dump site would pump hundreds of millions of dollars into the eastern Washington economy, Democratic Congressman Tom Foley, who represents the area including Hanford, is strongly opposed to the plan.

The U.S. needs a place to store nuclear waste, but it doesn't have to be next to a river in the heart of one of the nation's premier wheat-growing regions.



Letters

Paper sells out

What has happened to the Oregon Commentator?

When the publication first came out, it was a strong voice for "radical" change. Yes, it was conservative.

But today, that has all changed. It still calls itself conservative, but it does not act conservative. It has become part of the "me too" generation. It, like all the other groups on campus, now asks for hand outs from the students in the form of incidental fees.

This is the same publication that once believed that incidental fees were inherently wrong and an "unfair taxation" of students. Anyway, it used to believe this, or was that just more words?

One can accept that the Commentator has had to change. But at what cost has it paid for this change?

Recently the Commentator compromised with the Incidental Fee Committee. Part of that compromise was payment of a \$30 a month stipend for the editor. But in agreeing to this compromise, the Commentator must now follow Affirmative Action policies concerning the hiring of their editor. Time and time again, the Commentator has assailed the very policy that

it must now follow.

Where is the integrity of this stand? It is sad to see that the Commentator has sold out its views for a mere \$30 a month.

As a long-time friend of the Commentator, I thought it stood for more than that, but I guess I was wrong.

Ron E. Munion
Political Science

Use library

Christine Potts: SORRY! The U of O and all those who attended the Folk Festival would like to extend a big apology for trying to bring a little culture to you. Wouldn't it have been much better to have a parents' weekend and nothing to share with them? Maybe I could have brought my mom and dad to your dorm to watch you nap on Saturday afternoon? I don't think one weekend out of the term is too much to ask, do you? Well, if you do, then can I ask you one more question. Why didn't you go to OSU, where there are no cultural distractions, plenty of lazy Saturday afternoons and quiet Sunday evenings?

P.S. If you head west on the little footpaths past Gerlinger Annex you will find a large, brick structure. It's very quiet, has no folk music and it provides an atmosphere conducive to studying...it's called the Library.

Shana Campbell
Student

Pro-capitalism

I am a 44-year-old "capitalist" grandmother and the grand-daughter of immigrants who fled Finland in the early 1970s to escape the Communist threat. (They wanted my strong, young grandfathers for their army.) I am attending college now as a direct result of the abundance and blessing of living in a free society.

My dedicated parents brought me up to place God, family, country, responsibility, etc. in proper priority. In honoring my parents, I am a testimony of their wisdom. I have been wonderfully blessed to create a home and raise four beautiful babies the past 26 years — one son a Phi Beta Kappa GTF in computer science here.

My husband, as head of our home, has been blessed to support us and earns \$50,000 yearly. We are able to bless our church with 10 percent of our gross income or tithe. ("Give and it shall be given unto you...")

In protest to some of my sociology classes, I stopped by Joe Romania's last week and bought a new, luxury model Chevy van. I thought of my grandparents as I drove home in it (stereo blasting, air conditioning on high).

In say "Up With Capitalism, Freedom, America! Down with Socialism, Oppression, the great lie!"

Carolyn Mannila/Harper
Sophomore, Leisure Studies
Therapeutic Recreation



Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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Display Advertising and Business 686-3712
Classified Advertising 686-4343
Production 686-4381
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