

# Editorial

## Senate's referendum shows good judgment

We have nothing but praise for the Oregon Senate's unanimous decision to offer a voter referendum challenging federal attempts to select the Hanford Nuclear Reservation as the country's first national high-level waste repository.

If the bill passes the House, which is likely, the measure will go before the voters in a statewide election May 19.

The referendum is needed to help oppose the Department of Energy's questionable assessment that Hanford is a suitable nuclear waste repository. The DOE selected Hanford as one of three national nuclear dump finalists, and claims that the site is a qualified candidate to house large quantities of high-level radioactive waste. But mounting scientific evidence indicates otherwise.

Geographic surveys show the site's bedrock is fractured, and there is enough vertical and horizontal groundwater flow in the region to warrant contamination concerns. Hanford lies within seven miles of the Columbia River, and the DOE can offer no guarantees radioactive matter will not pollute this major waterway.

Nearly 20 percent of Oregon's economy depends on the Columbia, which provides commerce revenue and electricity for the state. Radioactive contamination of this river would spell economic disaster, as well as taint priceless habitats, including the Columbia Gorge.

With all this going against Hanford, the DOE's selection of the site appears puzzling. But the answer lies in unadulterated politics. The Northwest is sparsely populated relative to the rest of the nation, so the federal government saw this region as the path of least political resistance.

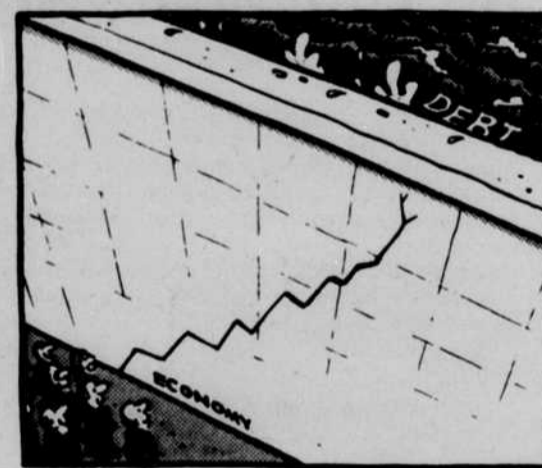
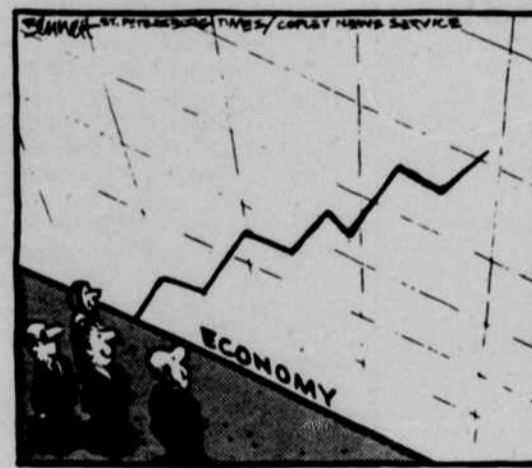
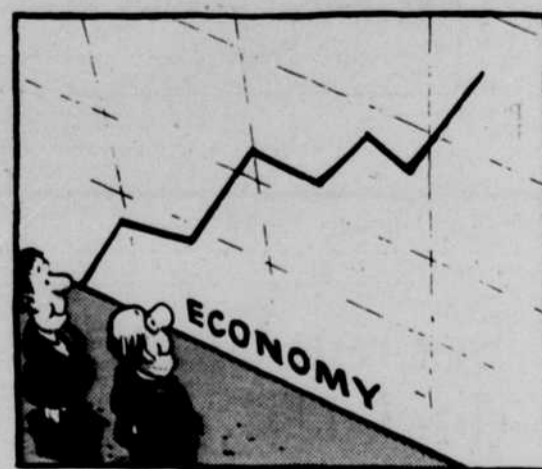
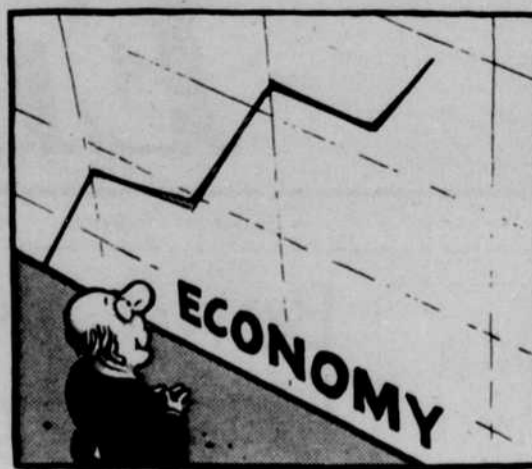
This issue raises legitimate concerns that the DOE did not research the Hanford site thoroughly enough before it made its recommendations. To this effect, the Oregon attorney general's office has filed a lawsuit against the DOE on grounds it has violated specified guidelines in choosing the site and assessing environmental impacts, as well as challenging the DOE's indefinite suspension of investigating a second site — a mandatory provision outlined in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

The Oregon referendum mirrors a proposal Washington voters passed overwhelmingly last fall. Washington voters passed their referendum by nearly an 80 percent margin. Oregon's referendum is expected to pass with similar success.

The referendum would place the state on "affected status," meaning Oregon would qualify for federal funds if Hanford were to become the nation's nuclear waste repository, but more importantly, would give the state power to veto the federal government's site decision.

If the referendum passes, Oregon voters would be sending a strong message to decision makers in Washington, D.C.. The measure would show consolidated opposition to the selection of Hanford as a nuclear waste repository.

Moreover, it would demonstrate solidarity with our neighboring state of Washington, essentially offering a regional voice of resistance. The Northwest has little to gain and much to lose if Hanford is selected as a national nuclear waste dump. The collective resolve Oregon's referendum would offer is imperative if the federal government and the DOE are to be denied a nuclear dump in Northwest soil.



## Letters

### Undermined

I have seen numerous articles on the foolishness of religion by Professor Rousseve. I wonder, however, why it is so important for him to undermine people's faith in religion. After this much effort, one would not be surprised to hear one of his counseling colleagues ask him, "When did you start having this hang-up about religion?"

My religion makes people happier and makes them feel better about themselves. It helps me care more for people. I feel there is a great purpose to life because I believe that there is more to existence than this mortal portion. Why is it so important for him to persuade people that they simply cease to exist after they die, or that their existence is simply an accident?

Rousseve should be aware that he cannot prove God does not exist, or that religion is false using the scientific method, or prove for that matter that the scientific process is any better than any other process. Nor is simply dismissing religion as

obviously foolish, irrational and unscientific a valid argument against it. Much of science is based on accepted postulates that cannot be proven, as is religion.

Millions of people have used a very rational method to find out if a certain religion is true. They tested it — they read, studied, pondered, prayed about it, and tried to live their religion. They found out, as I have, that there is a God, and a religion that increases the joy of living.

Nelson Farrier  
Education

bring a far more balanced perspective, which provides a more comprehensive experience. The class is diverse, allowing students to view their alcohol-server profession in a broad sense and contribute to the more responsible dispensing and consumption of alcohol. It is for this reason that a simple examination alone is not enough, but offered through this course.

John E. del Nero  
Lane Community College  
Instructor

### Bartending

As the teacher for the Alcohol Servers course at Lane Community College, I would like to clarify our position regarding the examination fee. In your editorial (ODE, Feb. 5), you stated that the "exam fee for the mandatory course is too high, ranging from \$25 to \$45." LCC charges a course registration fee of \$20. In addition, there is an \$8.50 charge for the actual examination. This examination fee is the OLCC charge for the exam and its grading. The total for the entire class is \$28.50.

The final portion of your editorial suggested that individuals could simply read the booklet and take the exam without spending time in the classroom. I believe the course is far more encompassing than the information included in the booklet. OLCC requires not only the examination, classroom instruction and a thorough examination of the curriculum, but role playing to emphasize the intervention techniques explored in the class. The written examination is a quantitative means of evaluation.

Having nearly 20 years of law enforcement-related experience and teaching experience, I feel I

### Airport

A consultant for a national research firm told the Riverfront Research Park Commission that Mahlon Sweet Airport is "perfectly adequate for the types of industries (Battelle is) proposing for the Riverfront Park."

Battelle consultant Charles Minshall of Columbus, Ohio presented the results of the \$25,000 feasibility study to the advisory commission in a city hall meeting January 28.

Mr. Minshall's opinion seems at odds with the Register-Guard's stance on the airport bond election and also contrasts with Eugene mayor's comments at a work session last month that he "personally doesn't care" what other city programs have to be cut — he intends to see the airport expansion funded.

Copies of the Battelle feasibility study, titled "The Development of the Riverfront Research Park" are available for study at both the University and city libraries and at the city development department in the lobby of the Eugene Hotel building.

Fergus McLeth  
Eugene

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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