

Return of measures earns Nelson praise

ASUO President Steve Nelson gets our salute for putting three ballot measures back on the general election ballot. His decision for doing this may seem like a political move to some, but whatever his reason, we're glad to see the measures back on the ballot.

Ballot measures 5, 7 and 9 were removed from the ballot last Friday by the Constitution Court. Measure 5 supports preserving the Southbank Riverside Field from development and construction; Measure 7 proposes an increase in funding for the marching band; and Measure 9 proposes an increase in funding for non-revenue sports.

Incidental Fee Committee member Bob Baldwin created a stir last week when he approached the court and asked it to declare unconstitutional all measures placed on the ballot by referendum. The court agreed with Baldwin and declared all signatures gathered by sponsors of the measures "null and void."

The court's decision was technically correct. Sponsors of the three measures had failed to get wording of their proposals approved by the court before soliciting signatures for their measures, a violation of Section 13.5 of the ASUO Constitution. But late approval of ballot measure wording by the court is not a new thing. Last year the court altered the wording of some measures after signatures had been gathered.

The court was not following its own precedent regarding this issue. Furthermore, the court restricted voting rights inappropriately by interpreting the constitution too narrowly.

Sponsors for these measures were not totally at fault for failing to adhere to the constitution. They had been acting under the assumption their measures would be placed on the ballot, and wording of their measures would be approved later. Elections Board Chairman Carlton Clark and ASUO Vice President Caitlin Cameron assured the sponsors their measures would be placed on the ballot and gave the sponsors a standard referendum form. The signatures, then, were gathered in good faith.

Sponsors of the ballot measures in question should have demanded the court approve their measures' wording before they solicited signatures regardless of the assurances they received from Clark and Cameron. That would have saved a lot of time and frustration.

The ballot measure sponsors received little sympathy from the court, however. The court should have upheld Section 11.1 of the constitution, which maintains that ASUO elections "shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the best interests of the student body." Allowing these measures on the ballot is in the best interest of the student body because access to the ballot should be defined as broadly as possible. The measures should not have been removed by a technicality.

We agree with the dissenting opinion, written by Constitution Court Chairman Andy Clark, who stated "blind adherence to specific constitutional provisions will not serve the goals of consistency and fairness which are the benchmarks of any judicial system."

Vocal opposition to the court's decision may have pushed Nelson into putting the measures back on the ballot. That issue is moot, however. The important thing is the measures are back on the ballot, and students will have the choice in seeing them pass or fail.



Letters

Charleton

Is it really possible to be a political science major at the University and never read a newspaper? One might easily get that idea from reading some of Dan Goulet's letters.

No, Dan, the current backlash against Oral Roberts is not because he uses his position as self-appointed head of his own religious organization to extract money from a gullible American public — he's been doing that since day one.

What you obviously haven't heard is that Mr. Roberts' claims that God has told him he will die unless he raises a specific amount of money by the end of March.

Even the conservative bible-belt Oklahoma television station which carries his regular program found this claim so outrageous that it banned him from the air unless he would stop making it.

If Oral Roberts truly believes his own words, then his first motivation, whatever ultimately becomes of the money, is selfish rather than charitable: i.e. he wants to save his own life.

On the other hand, he may

simply be one of the most unconscionable religious charlatans and con men of recent times.

Hiawatha
Music graduate

Toxic issue

OSPIRG is being sued. It seems like every time we try to get something accomplished, there is massive disapproval regarding our methods.

I fail to see how writing a letter to a legislator or researching a report or holding a news conference on issues such as clean water, clean air or the potential dangers of hazardous waste accumulation — issues which affect every member of society — can be considered by certain individuals as partisan political activity.

If the suit brought against OSPIRG is successful, it will effectively bring an end to such activities.

Partisan activity is that which is adherent to a particular political party as opposed to the public interest at large. The Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group works on issues serving the public interest; that's our middle name.

OSPIRG gives students an opportunity to become involved in creating a cleaner and healthier society for the future. Our detractors intend to curtail our efforts by disallowing us funding.

It is a case of harassment by an elite few with extremely limited student support. Should such individuals be somehow privileged to prohibit a publicly supported organization from its

freedom to work in areas advantageous to society as a whole?

Ken Petri
Coordinator,
OSPIRG Toxics Project

Far right zone

After reading her letter (ODE, April 6), I would like to think — or at least hope — that "Thelma Crimp" (who is not listed in the phone book) is someone's idea of a carefully-crafted practical joke.

In that respect Ms. Crimp bears an extraordinary (but probably only coincidental) resemblance to Brandon Shepard, Michael Cross, Dan Goulet and other implausible denizens of the Far Right Zone.

Michael E. Stamm
Graduate Secretary
English Department

Our Choice

This letter is in response to an article published in the ODE on Friday, April 3 entitled "Organization offers alternatives to destruction of substance abuse."

Although generally pleased with the content of the article, there is one major clarification of misinformation that arose which we feel must be cleared up.

Attributed to Glen Synoground was the statement that Our Choice had met with "administrative resistance." This is not the case. Here at the University, Our Choice has been constantly encouraged by the administration and feels very good about our current relationship.

I would hope that in the future, any comments given by members of Our Choice are stated in the proper context and with the additional details that could alleviate such situations.

Glen Synoground
Public relations
Our Choice
Carine Green
Our Choice President
Friday, April 17, 1987

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