

Editorial

Award encourages integrity in politics

Former California Supreme Court Chief Justice Rose Bird will receive the first annual Wayne Morse Integrity in Politics award in Eugene on Saturday. The awards dinner should be well-attended and the honor encouraged to continue.

This award is designed to exemplify politics as an honorable profession and to recognize individuals who uphold Morse's pledge of independent judgement. Morse is a former U.S. Senator from Oregon.

What is now commonly known as the Wayne Morse pledge reflects the criteria used for selecting the first recipient of the award. Morse stated: "I will exercise an independence of judgement based on the evidence of each issue. I will weigh the views of my constituents and party, but cast my vote free of political pressure and unmoved by the threats of loss of political support."

Laura Olsen of the Wayne Morris Historical Park Corporation said the award was initiated to show the good side of politics. "Too many people see politics as a dishonorable profession because we only hear about the bad things that happen," she said.

Hopefully this award can promote and highlight the quality and integrity Wayne Morse exemplified as a Senator. In a time when politicians are scrutinized and punished for their faults and indiscretions, this award comes as a pleasant spotlight.

The dinner ceremony will take place at the Valley River Inn. Tickets to attend can be purchased at the Literary Lion, or by contacting Randy MacDonald at 344-5306 or by leaving a message at the Sister University Project in Suite 3 EMU, extension 3194.

Media attention given to girl excessive and unnecessary

The ability of the media to rally people to a cause was demonstrated in full force recently when 18-month-old Jessica McClure fell 22 feet down an abandoned well in Midland, Texas, last Wednesday. The world followed the fate of the child as she was rescued and millions continue to follow her medical progress.

While the story of the child is touching and important, the news coverage it received was excessive. The Register-Guard and The Oregonian ran the story spread over the front page on both Friday and Saturday. Cable News Network, a 24-hour cable news station, aired live reports from the scene every 15 minutes while rescuers worked to save McClure.

This amount of coverage was not necessary. Granted the story was tragic and brought to the forefront, once again, the dangers of abandoned wells. But it does not merit the attention it received.

It is sad that with a power to inform and persuade the media devotes so much time and money covering this story when it could be covering more important issues.

Other issues, such as Contra aid or the fighting in the Persian Gulf have a much greater impact on our everyday lives. Even though the plight of a small girl in Texas gives us something to hope for and something to care about with immediate impact in our lives, it should not be taken to such an extreme.



Commentary

Nicaraguan policy based in bias

We all know what is behind our policy toward Nicaragua, right? Why else would so many people in a nation so well informed either explicitly support through action or tacitly support through inaction the current policy and tactics.

Commentary By
Will Holbert

According to the eminent scenario artists of Washington, the story goes something like this: All sectors of the Nicaraguan society rose up against a vile dictator. But since then, a small opportunistic group of communists bullied their way to power, silenced the opposition, ruined the economy and began preparing an army of conquest.

Fortunately, a small band of patriots held out. Most of the original political leaders of the revolution joined the armed opposition. The United States began supporting the rebels because the Nicaraguan people want to be liberated from communist tyranny. The United States has a long-standing policy of supporting freedom-

loving people in struggle, well, at least most of the time.

If you don't believe that scenario, there are viable "national security" reasons for supporting the rebels. It is only a matter of time before refugees are streaming across the Rio Grande, Soviet military bases line the Caribbean and the Panama Canal is closed. Besides, the Nicaraguan government supports other revolutions and is involved in drug trafficking, right?

It's simple. Facts support scenarios, scenarios support policy, and policy supports action. That's why Vice President George Bush received the loudest applause at his announcement of his presidential candidacy when he promised ongoing support for the Contras.

The discriminating reader may observe some problems with these arguments, not the least of which is that they are built on suspicious or fabricated evidence. Because Nicaragua has open borders, there has been no shortage of fact finders and unbiased media scouring the countryside looking for evidence of repression or expansionism. You can read analyses from the U.S. government and it's supporting intellectual cadre, and you can read international and unaffiliated studies. With some attempt at synthesis and correction for bias, you will undoubtedly come away with serious doubts about the credibility of the these arguments.

There is little evidence that the Nicaraguan people want to be liberated, much less by the United States (or its proxies), which have already liberated Nicaragua on several occasions. Outside of fanciful conjecture, there is no evidence of threats to American life or property by Nicaraguans. Although the national security argument can be extrapolated to a hysterical extreme, that is one of the less savory rationalizations you are left with when the facts are exposed.

The Reagan administration seems to have accepted the in-

validity of the more appealing justifications. Why else would they be grasping at logical straws and turning up the hysteria in their public posturing? If the facts supporting their policy held any semblance of reality, why would they resort to these pathetic tactics?

One of these pearls is the old standby that Nicaragua is masterminding a disinformation campaign. Without even relying on the many thorough analyses of Nicaragua, it challenges the imagination of even the ill-informed how a country the size of Arkansas, ravaged by war, underdevelopment and poverty manages to manipulate the American press and public opinion. Given the media's and the government's singular attention to emotionally loaded incidents and anecdotal evidence supporting U.S. policy, it would be easy to reverse the accusation.

The latest brilliance is this drivel about the Contras somehow insuring progress toward democracy. It is painful to hear seemingly intelligent people like Secretary of State George Shultz and his assistant Elliot Abrams attempting to advocate that by funding a gang of mercenaries we are accomplishing anything more than the terrorism of an impoverished and defenseless civilian population. The more likely tactical purpose of the Contras' putrid little war is that it helps to fulfill a prophecy of economic disaster.

Undoubtedly we are due to endure all sorts of misrepresentations about the degree of success of the Arias peace plan. The administration has already tipped its hand that it will call the plan a failure on Nov. 8th and seek massive funding for the Contras before Thanksgiving. Clever how so many in this country are now poised to see Nov. 7th as a deadline for peace in the region, when in fact the plan is to begin on that date.

If you support by action or inaction the administration's policy and the rationalizations behind that policy become un-

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