

# Congress holds party without inviting us

Should Congress proceed with the hefty pay hike it has so generously promised itself, look for heads to roll during the next elections.

Not that we could hope for more integrity from a simple political transfusion, but members of Congress seem to underestimate the memories of their constituents. We should check to see if Congress has its car idling in the driveway. Perhaps congressmen have adopted a "take the money and run" mentality, and do not intend to extend their political careers. Otherwise, they should display a little more humility, and a bit of sensitivity to those among the public who have lost their jobs and their self-respect, but not their voting power.

Recommendations by our own Rep. Peter DeFazio that Congress should restrain itself also should be remembered. DeFazio has promised to ignore any pay increase his colleagues decide to approve. DeFazio has said all along that Congress should not be willing to increase its pay more than it is willing to raise social security benefits. He has said that he will raise his own pay only by 4.1 percent, the amount approved for recipients of social security. The proposed Congressional raise amounts to a boost in pay of 50 percent, which follows on the heels of a 15 percent raise Congress voted for itself in 1987. For the record, DeFazio refused the 1987 raise, too.

Another point that Congress wants voters to overlook or to forget: members of Congress already enjoy sizable expense accounts not figured into the \$89,000 base salary about which they are weeping.

But while an \$89,000 beefsteak with lots of gravy has the rest of us salivating, some still defend higher salaries for Congress. Those in favor of fatter wallets for members of Congress point to a reduced competitiveness with similar jobs in the private sector because political salaries have not kept pace with the salaries of corporate presidents, for instance. Toward this argument, we only can say that public office should hold no economic attraction for starry-eyed corporate-ladder climbers anyway.

If Congressional jobs offer no financial incentive beyond opportunities offered by a beefed-up resume, then voters are saved from several of those candidates who may be closet dog-kickers and baby haters who have their eyes on a new Cadillac and a date with the California Prune Queen. Instead, public service jobs would and should attract members of the community who have a sincere interest in serving the public.

If members of Congress can take all of the above into consideration — not to mention the hundreds of thousands of causes which are more deserving, are crying out for immediate help, and are being summarily ignored — then perhaps they will renegotiate their contracts with their own consciences.

If they still want more money, they can try out for the NBA.

# Precedent called for with Bush subpoena

Expect lots of continued worming by Ronald Reagan and George Bush regarding their subpoenas in the Oliver North trial. Both the President and the President-elect will try every way possible to bail out on this issue. But Reagan soon will not have executive privilege for protection.

Bush, on the other hand, will be able to laugh and point to his new position as king of the mountain. But if the North trial continues as long as some have projected, Bush, too, could be out in the rain without his galoshes. Of course, he could just pardon North and get a good chuckle out of the entire activity.

Although little mention has been made about a North pardon, raising the possibility is warranted. In spite of what the majority of people in Eugene believe, many people in the country consider Oliver North a patriot and a hero. Even so, unless more people are somehow recruited to the ranks of the North supporters in the coming months, Bush would commit political suicide by such a maneuver, just as Gerald Ford did when he pardoned Richard Nixon.

Legally speaking, no actual precedent has been set for a situation quite the same. The legal system demands some accountability on this one. Once and for all, the precedent for presidential testimony should be set. After all, don't the cynics always come out of the woodwork and tell us that political corruption is alive and well in every administration? We should expect to have to subpoena the President, rather than being surprised by it whenever it comes up.



## Letters

### Speculation

Mr. Dawson, your summation of racism and its destructiveness to our society was very well put in your letter "Racist climate" (ODE, Dec. 5):

"Racism is destructive and oppressive both to its victims and to its perpetrators. In the face of the rising tide of racism in this country, we must all educate ourselves about racism and refuse to tolerate it from others."

Yet, you based your persecution of a group of people, the Greek fraternities, on evidence that was speculative. The two gentlemen in question were not actually known to be members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, members of any fraternity, or even American citizens for that matter. The point being that two people who appeared to be Greeks are not a fair means of judgment on the character and worth of the entire Greek system. Similarly, it is not fair to judge a person's worth by the color of their skin or gender. There seems to be a very severe contradiction between your definitions/beliefs and your analysis.

As a proud member of the University's Greek system, I am outraged and offended by your naive and discriminatory remarks toward this system. How can you be so ignorant as to believe that two people are representative of the entire Greek system of approximately 3,000 people?

Yet, there is a much greater issue to be addressed here. The act of passing judgment based on circumstantial evidence,

pertaining to an excluded incident, and declaring it to be the nature of a much larger constituency is prejudiced! Prejudice is the foundation of racism!

Mr. Dawson, I write this in hopes of educating you because I refuse to tolerate this from others — for as things stand now, you're not only prejudiced, but a hypocrite too.

Tom Oberhue  
Fraternity member

### God of wrath

It is rare to come across a report so courageously honest about the inhuman and pettifogging role of the United States toward the Palestinians as that by Gary Murrell (ODE, Dec. 6). If only someone had a magic wand to sweep away the delusions, prejudices and apathy of average Americans on this subject, official Washington couldn't persist in its pharisaical attitude.

Both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue nurture this attitude. Congress is tied to Tel Aviv by golden chains. Jewish organizations throw the politicians opportunities for trite speeches that are rewarded by fat honoraria. In addition, the lawmakers tremble in their boots before Jewish voters — so much more alert than their gentile fellow citizens — and rabid fundamentalists whose God of wrath blesses the oppression of the Palestinians just as He blessed similar happenings in the Old Testament.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Ronald Reagan made the administration as partisan toward Israel as is Con-

gress. This resulted in the sorry spectacle of Secretary Shultz first looking like Don Quixote on his pseudo-peace mission, and now barring Yasir Arafat from the UN.

Yet, there is hope. When governments fail, citizens do their own thing. Jews, Muslims, Christians, and agnostics come together in a U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East — which has a branch in Eugene — in which Rabbi Kinberg and Dr. Munir Katull play leading roles. Thus, instead of cursing the darkness, let us light a candle by supporting this committee.

Finally, let us give credit to those five American Jews who braved Shamir's rage by meeting with Yasir Arafat.

A. E. Brettauer  
Eugene

### Insight

I'd like to thank G.A. Baker, the "Republican student" for sharing his extraordinary insight with those of us whom are confused (Friday, Dec. 9). Over the years I've spent an inordinate amount of time studying for poli-sci classes. It never occurred to me to just make a table of "strong-minded winners" and "weak-minded losers" as a foundation for past American political achievers. I suppose a subscription to Soldier of Fortune, a few ROTC classes and a pledge pin would also be beneficial for me. And whew! Finals are just around the corner. Thank you.

Matt Luster  
Political Science

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