

Quayle has yet to prove competence

Things are heating up. Well maybe not in Eugene, but certainly in Latin America, where Vice President Dan Quayle just returned from his first diplomatic mission

...and reporters were just waiting for him to screw up. We have to wonder, whether or not Quayle was assisted by airline personnel on this lengthy flight — much as small children traveling alone often are.

But of course, Quayle didn't need the help of the airlines to make his connecting flights. After all, he was followed by a hoard of 25 reporters, hoping to catch newspaper fodder.

The very idea that so many reporters were needed to cover Quayle's trip is a joke. Quayle only was attending the inauguration of Venezuela's new president, Carlos Andres Perez, and delivering a human rights message in San Salvador to two political parties campaigning for a current election.

Hardly the stuff of which hard-hitting investigative journalism is made.

No, in this case, the reporters were merely on a "body watch" to see if Quayle either did anything newsworthy, anything stupid, or just anything at all.

One would think by now that the curiosity about Quayle would have died down. The pre-election fears of Quayle being only a heartbeat away from the presidency, coupled with his academic record, his controversial National Guard service and his lackluster career in Congress, may have been forgotten had he been given any responsibility during the recent administrative transition.

But Quayle has been conspicuously absent from the public eye since being told he was "no Jack Kennedy."

This is, in part, the fault of President George Bush, who has made very little effort to help Quayle prove himself. What Quayle needs now are the types of assignments that we can interpret as expressions of confidence in him.

The trip to Latin America could have helped matters, had Quayle not been followed by so many waiting for him to blow it. That is why we still hold our reservations about his abilities — and that is also why Quayle's recent jaunt was a three-ring circus.

Congress gets rich and looks good while doing it

If all goes well, members of Congress will find themselves with a 50 percent pay increase for doing absolutely nothing but keeping their mouths shut.

This is nothing but pure "political trickery," as many opponents of the raise have called it.

It's also a matter of shoddy tactics.

Last Thursday, the Senate voted overwhelmingly (95-5) to reject this 50 percent pay raise, thus throwing the issue over to the House. Both chambers need to reject the proposal in order to keep it from taking effect Wednesday morning.

While a Wednesday vote has been tentatively scheduled, chances are the House will choose not to vote on the issue at all. And this would secure the pay raise former President Reagan recommended and President George Bush endorsed.

In fact, even further political trickery abounds since the Senate has killed the issue. The House Democrats are now the center of attention and controversy because Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas, plans to let the raise take effect.

Wright is planning to hold a subsequent vote to reduce the raise to 30 percent, while banning all outside fees for speaking, writing and consulting — which is where the Congressmen earn their millions.

Wright's proposal also offers political covering for House members. The proposal will allow legislators and other top administrators to get some sort of raise while the House can cover itself to scale it back. They can say they voted against the 30 percent hike; never mind that the 50 percent increase will then take effect.

In essence, our Congressmen are going to get rich — and they're going to look good while they're doing it. So much for ethics in government.

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.



Letters

Ice idiots

As I was driving my car down University street Feb. 1, I encountered a horde of immature "Dorm-ites," about 100 on either side of the street. Because I needed to use the street, I proceeded on my way expecting at least a few snowballs to be thrown at my car. What followed enraged me and prompted this letter to warn other students and citizens of Eugene to avoid this area until the snow is gone.

My car was hit several times with "ice-balls" that dented my car. I, being the average car owner, stopped to check for damage to my car. Stupid mistake! As I opened my door, the bombardment continued. As I got back into my car and started to drive away the attackers charged to within 10-15 feet of my car, still throwing snow/ice-balls as hard as they could.

I was under the impression that there were more intelligent freshmen students attending the University this year. This year's freshmen were required to have a 3.0 grade point average for entrance to the University. Along with intelligence there is usually respect for other peoples' property. Obviously, there are several hundred college freshmen that don't own their own vehicles, otherwise they would respect how much money and time that comes with owning a vehicle.

Upon inspection of my vehicle I found 15 new dents in my car! Although I have talked to the Eugene Police Department, I will not be able to file a complaint with them. Being a student, I can barely afford liability car insurance. Therefore, my car will not be able to be fixed! Freshman idiots who threw snow/ice-balls at my car and me should be big enough to give me a fair snowball fight! One on one! Not 200 on me and my innocent car.

Yancey Fall
Student

Rifles

Jeffrey A. Hawkins' letter (ODE, Jan. 31) defending the right of Patrick West to own a semi-automatic, assault rifle, displays an incredibly callous attitude toward the rights of the children he murdered and terrorized. Come on, Jeffrey, do you really believe that the framers of our Constitution wished to guarantee the right of "an insane, drug-using criminal" to own an assault rifle? I doubt it.

Furthermore, semi-automatic, military, assault rifles have absolutely no use in the shooting sports. They are extremely inaccurate when compared to legitimate sporting rifles, which negates their use in either hunting or target shooting. They were designed for one use — to shoot human beings — a function which they perform very efficiently. They are completely unnecessary for any genuine sporting use.

I have been a hunter for more than 25 years and I'm tired of so-called "sportsmen" who recite the mindless drivel of the National Rifle Association, in defense of their desire to own a weapon designed to destroy human beings. It is my opinion that these potent weapons serve only to titillate some perverse need in those who own them. That's not a constitutionally guaranteed right, that's a symptom.

Steve M. Nasset
Springfield

Correction

In the Feb. 6 Emerald, an error in editing caused Fahad Alzarrah's commentary to call Yitzhak Shamir the leader of the Irgun Tsavai Leumi movement and former prime minister of Israel. This should have been Menachem Begin. Shamir is the current prime minister, and Alzarrah identified him as leader of the LEHI (Stern Group) movement. The Emerald regrets the error.

Amazon

An important school district issue is under consideration in District 4J. The Superintendent appointed a Committee to study overcrowding at Edison Elementary and under-enrollment at Harris. All options include moving Amazon students to Harris. This should be the last resort, not the first.

Amazon children are less able to locate their parents by phone for emergency transportation. They would have to cross three busy arterials to reach school. Because of their parents' dependence on alternative transportation, their access to after-school activities will be limited.

Changing boundaries will fragment the University population. Children from East Campus and Amazon attend Edison. Parent students often move from Amazon to East Campus, so leaving children in Edison would lessen disruption in their lives.

What does this have to do with you? Statements have allegedly been made by Committee members which, if accurate, betray a very troubling attitude about students. They have reportedly said the Amazon population is less "stable" thus should have a lower priority than other community members; Amazon residents do not pay property taxes therefore are the University's "problem." This is insulting, classist, and shortsighted. The University is the largest employer in Eugene. Our 18,500 students contribute significantly to the economic development in Eugene.

If you would like more information, feel free to contact me in Suite 4 EMU. Public hearings will be held Feb. 8, 7 p.m., at Edison and Feb. 9, 7 p.m., at Harris.

Karen Gaffney
ASUO President
Tuesday, February 7, 1989