

Students might be forced to volunteer

Community service used to be a nice extra, a plus, for high school students. In addition to devoting countless hours to homework, athletics, extracurricular activities or even a job, students would somehow find time to bless the local YMCA, charitable organization or hospital with their efforts, in order to make their town or city a better place to live.

This was sometimes, but not always, done for altruistic reasons. After all, spending 10 or 15 hours a week at the local day care center tends to make an excellent college or scholarship application look even better.

A proposed plan by two North Eugene High School students, however, would change things on the community service scene. Eugene's 4-J School District will implement a plan in 1990 requiring all students who want to graduate with honors to complete 120 hours of community service. However, the North students' idea, if approved by Oregon's State Superintendent for Public Instruction, would make community service required of *all* students across the state before graduation, regardless of whether they want "with honors" written on their diploma.

To begin with, Eugene's honor student plan is flawed in that it applies factors that aren't of academic origin to academic honors. This might say something about the status of public education in the United States — isn't an American A+ in school good enough any more?

In addition, Oregon's teachers, administrators and staff have enough to worry about without having to keep track of Johnny's community service hours. The system probably would soon fall into disarray, and although many students would follow through with their obligations, the possibilities for cheating would be too numerous to count.

Many high school students either choose or are forced to take on a part-time job in addition to their school work. Hours spent performing mandatory community service would take up a lot of valuable time students could spend either working for money for college or their families. Forcing students to volunteer when they don't want to is wrong; forcing them to volunteer when they can't is even worse.

Finally, this "mandatory volunteerism" would mutate the very purpose of community service. Students should perform "good deeds" because they want to, not because diplomas are hanging over their heads. That's what the magic of volunteer spirit is supposed to be about.

Tailoring programs, staff unfortunate but inevitable

Though there may not be a lot of things for which Eugene is famous, among them would have to fall the quality of education in its 4-J District. Unfortunately, due to plans to streamline the 1989-90 budget, the city might even lose this distinction.

Last fall, the district's budget panel learned that its tax base would have to grow about 23 percent if current programs and staff were to continue. In an effort to avoid asking the voters to approve a 17 percent increase above the district's 6 percent safety net, the panel instead decided it would be easier to approach voters this spring and ask for a 7 percent increase over what the net allows. With this plan in action, programs are being streamlined and staff positions will be cut for next fall.

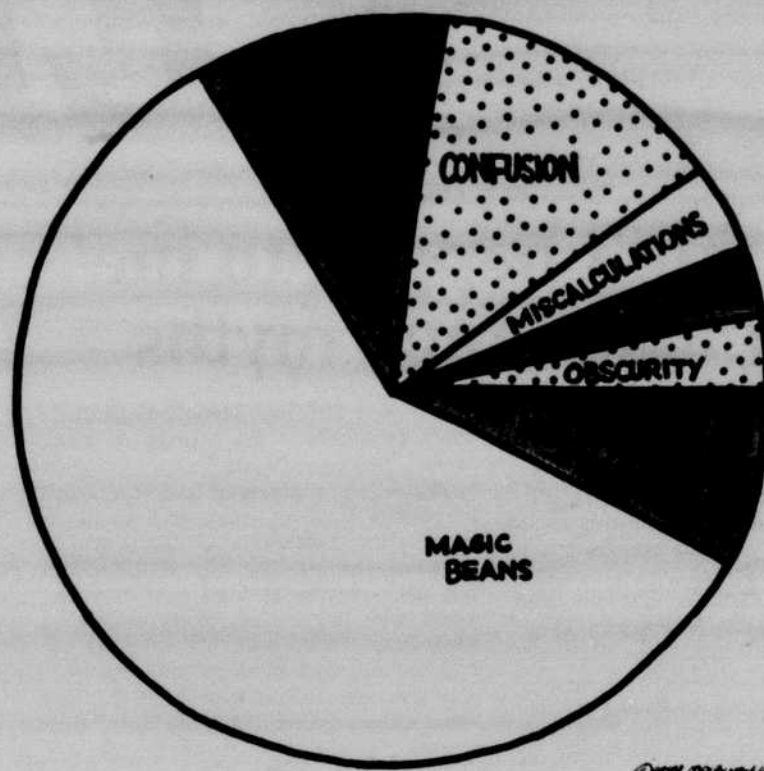
According to David Piercy, assistant superintendent to the 4-J School District, there is a district redesign in operation at this time. He said there is a movement toward building-based decision making and a move away from centralized district decision making.

To us, this sounds strikingly familiar to George Bush's budget. The district administrators, like Bush, have transferred the hard decision making to the individual schools so that they can decide how to handle budget cuts. (Bush did the same thing to Congress, probably to avoid making the decisions himself.)

Fears also exist with proponents of the "Talented and Gifted Program (TAG)," the "At-Risk Program" and the "Impacted School Program." In light of fears that these programs will suffer under budget cuts, Piercy has done his best to waylay the concerns by his assurances that these services will continue to be provided within the individual school buildings, though, he notes, they may not be exactly the same.

The fears are real, and not misguided. Though it is unfortunate the cuts and redesigning have ensued, it looks as though nothing can be done about it. However, those who wish to voice their concerns may do so March 29 at a public hearing before the Eugene School Board.

THE BUSH BUDGET



Handwritten signature: "Confusion"
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Letters

Mad as hell

I'm mad as hell. Last Friday morning I was racially attacked and harassed on the University campus by a white male, medium height, thin with short brown hair and driving a steel-gray sports car, perhaps a Trans Am. I'm offering a reward for his identity or license plate number. All information should be reported to the Office of Public Safety, the Eugene Police Department or to me at the Native American Student Union office in the EMU.

At approximately 11:30 a.m. in front of PLC on Kincaid Street, a man approached my car and pounded on my car window, vomiting racial slurs and demanding that I move my car because I was parking in his place. When I refused to budge he opened my car door and made threatening moves. I managed to jerk the car door closed and locked it.

He stood by his car yelling a stream of racial slurs while countless students listened and watched but didn't budge to intervene. I decided to go into PLC to call campus security. He yelled "f---ing red bitch, why don't you go back where you came from!" Excuse me, this is where I came from. He further threatened to damage my car.

Just as the Republicans got David Duke, so the University attracts this type of student by not taking a firm stance.

Any organization or person opposing racism wishing to contribute to this reward fund contact me at NASU or write. Reward payable on conviction.

Myrna Bobb
 NASU Director

Choose

Recently, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh asked the Supreme Court to overturn its decision on Roe v. Wade, which upholds the right for all women to have the option of abortion. The ACLU has written a letter to Thornburgh requesting that he stop his attempts to overturn the court's

decision. This is the letter:

"I understand that you have asked the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade, the historic 1973 decision that recognized the constitutional right to choose an abortion. This decision gave every woman in the country the right to a safe and legal abortion, affirming the right of privacy. It has dramatically improved the health and lives of millions of women.

"Making abortion illegal will not stop abortion. It will make it difficult at best, and life-threatening at worst. All women will be affected, but it will be especially hard on poor people. As a sworn guardian of our Constitution, you understand how important it is that there be equal rights for everyone.

"I have no vote on the Supreme Court. But since you represent my interests there, I hope you will urge the court not to take away a fundamental constitutional right."

If you feel that it is important for women to have the right to choose an abortion, please make a copy of this letter and send it to the ACLU, who will forward it to Thornburgh: ACLU, Department R, 132 West 43rd St., New York, NY 10036.

Rachel Brown
 Student

Totally

In reference to Mr. Paul Arblaster's commentary (ODE, Feb. 22), I totally agree, without reservation.

Tony Piculell
 English

Defund

I am writing to defend the IFC's decision to defund the

Eric Wilson
 Sociology

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.