

Nude dancing bill should leave stage

There are some people under the age of 21 who have no problem getting into bars. They work there. In Oregon, as in most states in the country, one need only be 18 to work as a barroom entertainer.

The entertainment exemption covers musicians and comedians, for example, but it also applies to more dubious performers — such as nude dancers. That may change.

A bill requiring people to be 21 years old before they can perform nude in a bar passed the House by a 53-4 vote last week. The bill, sponsored by Rep. David Dix (D-Eugene), is currently awaiting a Senate vote. We urge that this measure be rejected.

We assume Dix's measure was entered with the best intentions. We agree that stripping is an unseemly, perhaps dangerous profession that youth should not be encouraged to pursue. We are familiar with the argument that pornography leads to violence against women. But despite all this, we have serious reservations with the bill.

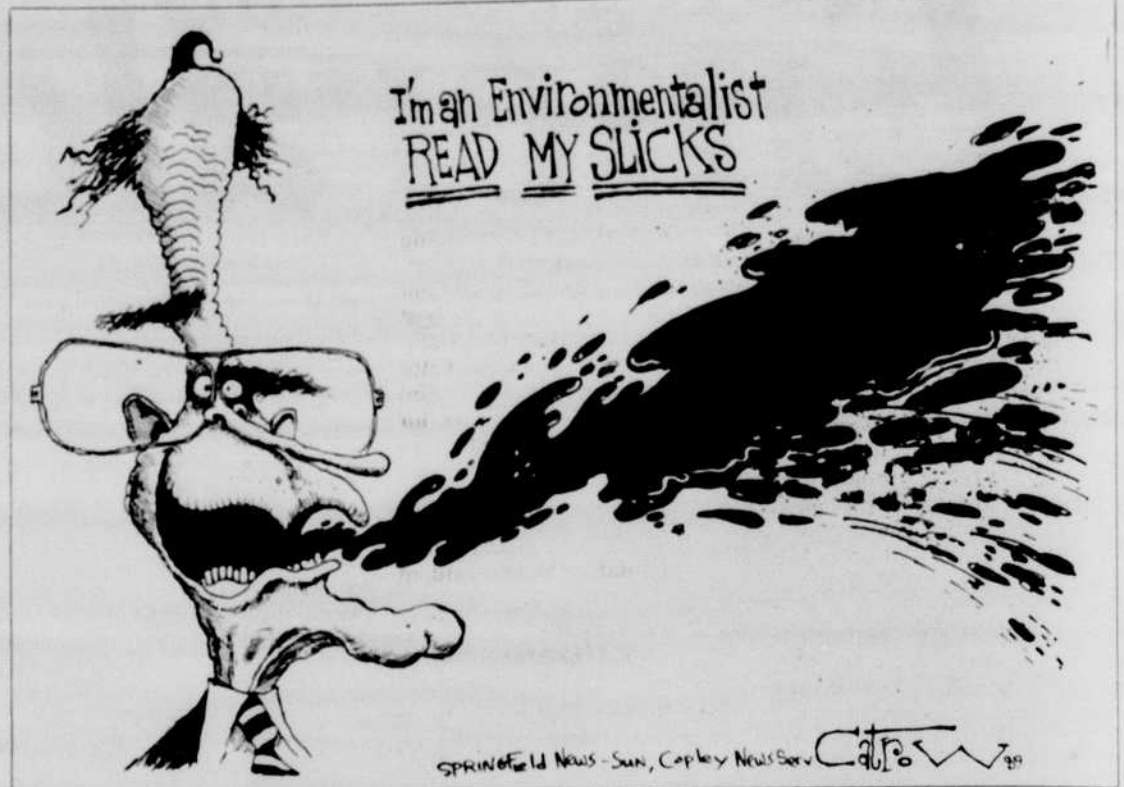
First of all, there is doubt over whether the bill is constitutional. There is a clause in the bill, introduced by Carl Hosticka (D-Springfield), allowing minors to dance nude in "legitimate theater productions." Well, who's to decide what's legitimate and what's not?

In Oregon, and arguably at a federal level as well, nude dancing could not be considered legally obscene. Therefore, we challenge the state's ability to regulate this form of expression.

Then there is the question of whether it is proper for the state to regulate this behavior by age. Dix says "It doesn't make any sense that the government can set a minimum alcohol age of 21, but allow nude dancing for people under 21." Using that argument, does it make sense that other underage performers, such as musicians, will still be allowed to work in bars?

The age issue raises other questions. Passage of the Dix bill, for example, would not prohibit 18- and 19-year olds from posing for nude pictures. It makes no sense at all, whether applying Dix's logic or not, that we would prohibit the fleeting, alcoholic memory of a naked body cavorting on stage while allowing someone to hold an indelible photographic record of the event.

Right now, once a woman has reached the age of consent (18), it is assumed that she controls her own sexuality. Given that many people are sexually active by 18, the age over which women take full responsibility of their bodies should not change. The Dix bill intrudes unfairly where government never should, and it does so in a haphazard way.



Agency knowingly imperiled owls' future

Who speaks for the endangered spotted owls of Oregon? Not the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

According to a BLM report leaked to a Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney last week, the bureau has concluded that continued logging of the state's old growth forests is reducing the spotted owl population every year. The report stated that the decline of owl populations may be irreversible, and the survival of the species is uncertain.

What's perhaps most surprising about this report is not its findings; the threat old growth logging poses to the spotted owl is well documented. The fact that this report was completed almost two years ago and never released is what has sparked a valid outcry from environmentalists.

The BLM has not come up with a believable excuse for the suppression of this document. Nor has it explained why the agency, with the knowledge it had, pursued continued logging in court which ran against the bureau's legal mission and further endangered the owl.

The BLM's official position is that the agency has enough information to allow planned logging in owl habitats without risk

to the owl. This position stands in conflict with these findings from the unreleased report:

- The population of 2,400 spotted owls in Oregon and Washington is declining at a rate of one to four percent a year.
- Spotted owls strongly prefer old growth forests for their habitats. A pair of spotted owls needs 2,200 acres of land. The BLM has set aside only 32,000 acres of the 316,000 old growth acres it oversees for the spotted owl. Logging operations since the 1800s have cleared out two-thirds of the total old growth acres in the state.
- The logging of old growth lands and the disruption it has caused appear to be the major contributor to owl population drops, and the damage may be irreversible.

While the BLM campaign of suppression was going on last week, President George Bush, self-proclaimed environmentalist, took the position that the spotted owl should not be placed on the federal endangered species list. Does anybody at the federal level speak for the spotted owl? Apparently not. If this trend continues, the silence that pervades halls in Washington will also reign in the old growth forests.

Letters

All that jazz

To Barry Starr and Bert Tryba (ODE, April 4):

I think the profound words of the hip-hop band Stetsasonic pretty much sum up what I want to say. I quote the song "All That Jazz":

Lies/That's when you hide the truth/It's when you talk more jazz than proof/And when you lie and address something you don't know/It's so whack that it's bound to show

and ... Well I heard talk is cheap/and like beauty, talk is just skin deep

and ... It's important to remember, though/What you reap is what you sow./Talkin' all that jazz.

Robert Hartsock
Leisure studies and services

Alternatives

My name is Dalene Lovie, and I am a candidate for Student Senate seat No. 3. I am deeply committed to a student government that is open and re-

sponsive to the students' needs. I have a strong background in liberal arts and student activism, and I am confident that I can give you the strong representation you deserve.

I would like to share with you my primary goals for the coming year. I will work to alleviate the overcrowded classrooms that have affected so many of us. There also have been many violations of the dead week and finals week policies. I will see to it that students are educated about their rights and that these policies are strictly enforced. In addition, I believe that alternatives in ethnic and gender studies should be expanded, for education is the key to decreasing the amount of verbal and physical violence against women and people of color.

I also would like to express my support of all candidates who have been endorsed by Students for a Progressive Agenda (SPA). SPA will work to protect your rights and to improve the overall learning environment at the University. Please become active in the de-

cision-making process by casting your ballot this spring. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard, and together we can truly affect positive change at our University.

Dalene Lovie
ASUO candidate
Student senate 3

Nude dancing

Rep. David Dix has sponsored a bill that would require nude dancers in Oregon to be at least 21 years old (ODE, April 3). He thinks that the minimum drinking age should naturally lead to a minimum age for nude dancing. He asserts the government's right to regulate certain behaviors by age.

Why is this form of age discrimination tolerated? What can we expect in the future? Will people have to be 21 before they can buy birth control? Before they can publish opinions without censorship from school boards? Before they can think without someone else's permission? Before they can get drafted? Oh, I forgot, Congress doesn't think 18 is too young

for that.

Maybe some behaviors should be regulated by age, such as driving, drinking, and running the country; but age discrimination is going too far. Who has discovered that 21 is the magic age when children suddenly become adults and should be first granted their rights? Some of the "adults" who make the laws should get certain priorities in order. The Constitution is more against age discrimination and oppression than nude dancing, and so am I.

Alice Berry
Eugene

Natural assets

I wish to clear up the misconception that the article on the Riverfront Research Park appeal perpetuated (ODE, April

4). I have consistently been a supporter, not an opponent, of the building of a research park associated with the University. My appeal is based strictly on the belief that the proposed uses of that part of the Research Park which lies north of the railroad tracks and east of the Millrace outlet violate the Williamson Greenway criteria established by the city of Eugene and the state of Oregon.

If we at the University cannot protect our own valuable natural assets, open spaces and recreational facilities, how can we expect to protect ancient forests, the North Slope of Alaska, or even more remote tropical rain forests in Borneo, Brazil or the Congo. We must act locally as well as think globally.

Al Urquhart
Geology Department

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.