

War over old trees rages about special

Just when you think you've got a handle on the whole environmentalist-timber industry feud, it crops up again in the most unexpected place.

Last Sunday, Turner Broadcasting System aired a special entitled *Ancient Forests: Rage Over Trees*. The show, produced by the National Audubon Society, focused on the current turmoil over old growth forests.

Timber industry officials got wind of the program, and convinced sponsors to drop their advertisements from the show. All nine advertisers dropped out, including Dean Witter and Ford Motor Co. TBS reportedly took a \$250,000 bath on the program.

The Audubon show had special implications for Oregon. The documentary was filmed in Oregon and focused on the Opal Creek forest, a drainage which contains large amounts of old growth.

Environmentalists and Audubon representatives say the show was a balanced, well-made documentary about old growth forests and the ongoing spotted owl crisis. Timber officials claim it was a biased film directed against the industry.

The two sides are even arguing over who benefited more from the sponsor pullout. Environmentalists say the industry's heavy-handedness was a blessing in disguise, giving their cause more publicity than it would have received otherwise. Industry officials disagree.

We don't.

In the days building up to the program, newspapers and television shows covered the controversy over the show. This probably pulled in more viewers than would have watched the show had their not been such a fuss.

There seems to be no end to the furor over the old growth forests. Sometime this week, a joint House-Senate committee may take action on an amendment that would lift current bans on old growth logging, while keeping large amounts of old growth forest land intact.

Environmentalists oppose the bill, and are lobbying Congress to block it. The Audubon show, if nothing else, just brings the whole controversy to the political forefront once again.

The industry did achieve one small victory in the fiasco. Because TBS lost a large amount of money on the show, other networks aren't going to be in a real hurry to air documentaries on the subject. This will eliminate an important forum for the environmentalist's views.

But for the most part, the show will prove to be an embarrassment to the timber officials. In their haste to get rid of the rope around their legs, they shot themselves in the foot instead.



Smoking ban amendment not worth fuss

In the past few years, we have seen a trend toward eliminating cigarette smoking from American society. Last Thursday, the U.S. Senate took another step in the process, voting to ban smoking on all domestic flights.

The House has already passed a similar bill, and both versions are now headed for a bicameral conference committee. The House bill makes the current smoking ban permanent, but does not extend it to all domestic flights.

The current ban, passed in 1987, prevents smoking on all domestic flights of less than two hours. Some individual airlines have taken it upon themselves to ban smoking on their flights altogether.

The Senate floor fight over the smoking bill captured the attention of the national media. For days, the American public was deluged with the sight of various Senators posturing on the dangers or merits of the ban.

Cut through the rhetoric, and an interesting point comes up. Most of the Senators opposed to the ban were — not surprisingly

— from the tobacco growing states. Not interested in health dangers, they were only trying to protect their state's cash crop.

We support the smoking ban. We have nothing against smokers, in fact we came out against the Oregon ballot measure last year which would have banned smoking in most public places. However, we do recognize the health dangers of smoking, and the rights of non-smokers. Nobody should be subjected to hours of cigarette smoke in a crowded airplane unless they want to.

Besides, the new bill is really only an unneeded extension. The current ban keeps people from smoking on domestic flights of less than two hours, but when was the last time you were on a non-stop domestic flight longer than two hours? In reality, the new ban does nothing radical, and will not change things as much as some Senators would lead you to believe.

To spend days debating on what amounts to a clean-up-the-language bill is not only worthless, it's stupid.

You would think the Senate has nothing better to do with its time.

Letters

Scared

The front page of the Sept. 26 edition of *The Oregonian* pictured President George Bush proposing an 80 percent reduction of chemical weapons for both the United States and the Soviet Union. Only days earlier, Bush's comment on the spilling of American blood by a user of a semi-automatic weapon was "it's bound to happen."

George Bush's contradictory statements and poor decisions have disappointed Democrats and Republicans ever since he took office. His response to gun control is one of the most saddening.

Richard Wiener, your letter entitled "Overkill" (*ODE*, Sept. 26) was embarrassing and scary. Surely nobody wants to be armed, or to have others armed, with bazookas and shoulder-mounted tactical nukes. The National Rifle Association's escape: "guns don't kill people, people kill people" is very lame.

I am a conservative too, but I am discouraged at the fact that our party doesn't seem to move

and change with the times. Assault rifles are becoming easier to get, like drugs. Your letter protested the ban of dangerous weapons. You might as well advocate the legalization of cocaine. Nobody can justify any sort of domestic, assault rifle use. Obviously an effort must be made to prevent all people from possessing these guns.

Assault rifles, George Bush, and the NRA: three irrational and dangerous ideas that cannot be tolerated.

Mark Salvo
Political Science

Stand up

A message to freshmen.

Get up — stand up — stand up for your rights. There are an inconceivable number of people and organizations at the University that want something from you. Can you spare a minute, a quarter, an hour? Would you like to come to our meeting?

Many of the organizations, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, target freshmen because most of you have left all your

friends and family at home, making you an easy mark. Join a special interest club and zap! Instant group of friends. I don't mean to knock Campus Crusade; if you're interested, talk to them, but don't join anybody because they offer friendship. If that's the reason, there are probably 10 other groups offering the same, only more suited to you, i.e., Cycling Club, Fencing, Chess, OSPIRG, etc.

As for fraternities or sororities, keep your dignity. Just remember whenever you dress up in some stupid costume or go out at 3 a.m. on finals week to sweep the lawn and mow the driveway, you are getting laughed at by childish fools just like the poor retarded kid at junior high got laughed at by childish fools who hid his books. Show some guts and taste. If you think no, say no.

Jeffrey A. Hawkins
Student

Health sting

Most graduate teaching fellows at this university are by now familiar with the problems

caused by the lack of adequate and affordable health care at the University. Many have applied for an alternative health care plan, some have struggled to find money to pay for the ASUO health care plan, and some will unfortunately go without health insurance this year.

But what many don't know is that international GTFs cannot teach here unless they have health insurance; they are not even allowed to register without proof that they have, or will have, such insurance. They, then, have no choice. They have to come up with the mon-

ey. They, then, are the most hurt by the University's refusal to sponsor a deferred payment plan for insurance.

But all of us have been hard-pressed this last week to find a health plan. It isn't easy when we have to live on \$469 a month. But our health — and the work and teaching we do — is too important to be thus trifled with. It is important that all GTFs realize the rights we deserve and to raise our voices in demanding and defending these rights.

Cindy LaCom
English GTF

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

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.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.