

Sign field burning ban ballot measure

Before they took on the grass seed industry, proponents of a field burning ban should have hired a linguist, not a lawyer.

Last week, Oregonians Against Field Burning suffered a major setback when the state Supreme Court altered the title of the group's proposed November ballot measure. The reason? The Oregon Seed Council, the major lobbying group for the grass seed industry, had asked that some of the language in the title be changed.

The original ballot title was "Phases down use of field burning." Now, it reads "Permits phased reduction of grass seed field burning with exceptions."

Semantics; and very costly to field burning opponents. The court decision invalidated more than 15,000 signature petitions OAFB had already sent out, and cost the group an estimate \$10,000.

The wasted money and petitions aside, OAFB lost another valuable commodity: time. To get the measure on the November ballot, the organization will need 63,578 signatures by July 6. If the group can manage to circulate new petitions by the end of this month (no easy task), it will mean an average 4,000 signatures a week.

The setback is just one more in a long list of delaying tactics used by the OSC, and is another example of what strong lobbying groups and a money-generating industries can do if they set their minds and dollars on it. During the last legislative session, state Sen. Grattan Kerans (D-Eugene) authored a bill to phase out field burning, but met strong opposition from the grass seed industry. Despite support in the legislative and vigorous tongue-lashings from Kerans, the bill didn't pass.

The ballot measure is a virtual rewrite of Kerans' bill. It would gradually reduce the current level of 250,000 acres burned annually, to 50,000 by 1995, and also includes other restrictions.

The chief sponsors of the measure are Kerans, Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and Rep. Ron Cease (D-Portland), and it has received support from other lawmakers. The amount of pollution the practice generates, and the potential for accidents (remember the Interstate 5 tragedy two summers ago?) is just to great.

Field burning must go. Not immediately, as some people would like, but a gradual phase-down, as the ballot measure recommends. The five years it will take to scale down the practice will give grass seed farmers plenty of time to develop new ways to clear excess brush from their fields.

If you signed the petition before, be on guard for the new one and sign it again. And those who didn't know about the measure, now you know about it. Sign the petition.



Gorby's Headache

Let voters have input on smoking policy

Sometimes the best of intentions can ignite a controversy.

Last week, Lane County Administrator Jim Johnson announced a restriction that will completely ban smoking in all county buildings and vehicles starting Feb. 5. His intent is applauded; his tactics are not.

Johnson acted after he received a petition from county employees who wanted tougher smoking restrictions in their workplace. He acted to promote good health, and cleaner air will indeed be one result of his decision.

The transition toward a utopian vision of a smokeless society continues gradually. While many smokers are making modifications in their behavior to keep their own consciences clear, the process is speeded up somewhat with an upswing in the number of rules and ordinances here and there.

Smoking-designated zones everywhere shrink and disappear, and more smokers choose to quit or at least take their habit outdoors. The changes occur to the delight of health-conscious individuals.

However, many others, non-smokers and smokers alike, view the imposed restrictions with more than a bit of alarm. Johnson's ban is buoyed with justified health considera-

tions, but more than that is at stake.

The fact that the ban was announced without a vote of local citizens, or even the county employees affected, is reason for concern. As recently as November 1988, Oregon voters jettisoned a similarly strict measure that was intended to ban smoking in commercial areas statewide.

The public message was clear: restrictions on smoking may be well-intended but some are too far-reaching for their own good.

The defeat of the 1988 ballot measure indicated that though Oregonians' sentiments toward smoking may be shifting, personal rights and health issues must be weighed carefully, yet separately.

If state voters decided that keeping cigarette smoke out of commercial areas was too restrictive, certainly they would agree that the same is true with county buildings and vehicles. Even if they didn't, these areas are owned by the public, and decisions such as smoking bans should be up to a public vote.

We say bravo to Johnson for moving to keep smoke out of county buildings and vehicles, but we give him a raspberry for doing so while keeping voters out of the process.

Letters

Salvation

This morning I had an awesome vision. In it, a multi-colored unicorn in a fiberglass cowboy hat revealed something to me which I must share with every person alive: canned pineapples can save the world.

The unicorn told me that if everyone on Earth eats a can of pineapples at exactly the same time, all of the world's problems will just dry up and disappear! I have spent the entirety of today in deep meditation, seeking the true meaning of my vision.

I have been enlightened that on Monday, May 28 at 8 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, every single person on this Earth must eat a can of pineapple. My meditation also helped me realize what an enormous burden is on me now, and how difficult it will be for me to educate all the world on the wisdom of the multi-colored unicorn.

I have decided that the best way for me to spread the news

is to write to the editors of all the world's newspapers and ask them to aid me in alerting the populace of the severity of my cause. Please help me. The salvation of the world is at stake.

John Shenon
Student

Truly skilled

Please let me compliment your op-ed article on textbooks (ODE, Jan. 9). The ethics of a professor requiring his/her own textbook has been an issue for many decades, and has concerned me since I was an undergraduate more than 20 years ago. Since you have raised the topic, I'd like to offer my opinion.

I think it is not ethical for a professor to require any text for which s/he stands to earn any profits. For years, it has disturbed me that this is a common practice in most American universities. In some way, it is symptomatic of the way the

teacher-student relationship has been reduced to an instrumental one.

However, if the professor's work is made available as a photocopied reading, or of if the small profits are somehow returned to the students, then I think the practice is more acceptable, the only fault being that of vanity.

It impressed me that my very best professors never engaged in the practice of requiring their own texts. If one is truly skilled at teaching, it seems to me that one can teach one's own material well without requiring one's own books.

Kenneth Liberman
Associate professor, sociology

Much more

Since being a University student, I have seen Tim Hughes in the media day in and day out. This flamboyant individual has managed to stick his opinion where it does and does not belong.

I don't believe it's a matter of gay/lesbian rights. It's something much more.

I have a cousin and good friend who, is in fact, gay. I've spent a lot of time with my cousin, and not once has he ever tried to push his homosexual beliefs my way. I don't feel for Hughes it's a matter of gay/lesbian rights. I feel Hughes won't rest until everyone on this campus turns gay or lesbian.

I'm sick and tired of hearing Hughes' invalid quibbles that are so far stretched from the truth. IF one really believes that everytime we say "you suck," we are actually saying "you suck, and are therefore a

disgusting faggot." well then, I take back all the time I jokingly said it to my father, friends and fellow colleagues.

I guess I should have known better and looked it up in the *New Abridged Hughes Dictionary For Blowing Things Out of Context*.

Hughes, it's not a matter of your sexual preference that makes you receive verbal thrashings by others, it's your unprecedented complaints and whining. Please do the University a favor: the next time you want to make a statement ... have a point to it.

Kent Jackson
Architecture

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.

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