

## Put voting booths in residence halls

It seems to be such a frivolous issue for people to get uptight about. Putting voting booths in or near residence halls. Why debate it?

Voter turnout for student elections at the University is usually pretty dismal, hovering somewhere around 20 percent every year. That's pathetic, and should send warning signals to all members of student government: something must be done to improve the number of voters.

One way to increase voter turnout is easy access to polling places. You can't force people to vote, but you can make it easier for them. Putting voting booths in residence halls would expose a large segment of the University population to student government. That cannot possibly hurt.

But an education program for all University students must be coupled with increasing the amount of voting booths. It does no good to have a large turnout of voters who may barely know the candidates, let alone the issues.

In defense of ASUO president Andy Clark, an attempt to improve voter education has been made. Clark has spoken several times around campus and in the residence halls. He has truly tried to help "get out the vote," as he promised in last year's campaign. So far, so good, but don't stop there. Continue the program, and when this year's elections are held, hopefully there will be a significant change in the amount of ballots cast.

In addition to the education program, there need to be more voting booths, not just in the residence halls, but all around campus. Try and give all students open access to polling places. A suggestion would be one at the corner of 15th and Alder, and another at 19th and University. Maybe the Panhellenic Committee and Interfraternity Council would pitch in to help defray the cost of the booths.

Of course, some people are going to be upset with this proposal. Obviously, not every student will have the same access to booths, especially those who live miles from campus. But that doesn't mean an attempt to increase voter turnout shouldn't be made.

One last thing: Who will staff the booths? Members of the Residence Hall Governance Committee have offered to do it. No objections from this side, as long as ASUO and Election Board representatives are present at every residence hall booth as well as any additional booths off campus.



## Elections deadline sooner than you think

If you're thinking about running for a student government office this spring, be it ASUO, Student Senate or Incidental Fee Committee, you'd better think hard. The deadline for filing applications is March 30, three weeks from today.

So far, there has been the usual lack in announced candidacies. Two teams have formally declared themselves in the bidding for the ASUO presidency and vice presidency. Steve Maples, IFC member, and Diane Cushman, of the greek system, announced last week. Kirk Bailey and Sheila Stickel of the ASUO Executive announced Thursday. Neither team has officially filed to run.

In fact, nobody has officially filed with the ASUO Elections Board to run for anything, according to Ken Dodge, ASUO elections coordinator. Dodge says this is not surprising, because people like to hang back strategically, checking out the competition.

While that may appear to be a wise poli-

tical move, such hesitancy to declare is a disservice to the student voters and can actually damage a campaign. The primary elections are set to happen April 19 and 20. If students wait until the end of March to declare, it gives candidates only three weeks to promote their campaigns and the voters only three weeks to become informed on the issues.

There are important decisions to be made every spring. This year, with complicated issues such as student health insurance, dorm voting and campus racism expected to make the headlines, campaigns can't afford to take on knee-jerk stances or make snap decisions.

The election deadline is coming sooner than you think. If you're going to run for student government office, do yourself and everybody else a favor. Decide now, and declare now.

## Letters

### Mac-bashing

As a University undergraduate and information systems professional employed by a \$36 million organization which has chosen Apple Macintoshes over IBM-compatibles for its micro-computing platform, I feel compelled to respond to Johnmichael Monteith's Mac-bashing letter (*ODE*, Mar. 2).

If Monteith were a real industry analyst instead of an arm-chair observer, he would realize that Macintoshes have gained popularity in the business world in recent years, while IBM-compatible manufacturers have struggled to retain market share.

His assertion that University graduates will "almost certainly be using MS-DOS-based machines" in the business world is weak; more likely is that tomorrow's University grads will use Unix workstations and X-windows ... which resembles a Mac's graphical interface, not the typical MS-DOS machine.

In addition to the goal of becoming "computer literate" in preparation for the business world, University students also need to be able to use computers now to assist them with their academic work. In this re-

spect, they are better served by Macintoshes.

I can teach virtually any student regardless of academic major, how to network Macs using LocalTalk in about 15 minutes; I can teach a few bright CIS majors how to set up a Novell or token-ring environment for MS-DOS machines in about 15 hours.

Enough said?

Rudy Asercion  
CIS/math

### Freethought

Careful study of daily newspapers reveals the concept "God" is a fiction used by clergy to exploit the gullibility of believers in order to advance the power and wealth of established leaders.

Recent stuffing of lurid theist religious tracts describing the "Rapture," as paid advertising, into subscribers' secular home-delivered daily newspapers distributed in Springfield and Eugene, in *Springfield Life* and *The Register-Guard* illustrates the collaborative exploitation of the public by religion and the press.

These newspapers, like most municipal newspapers nationwide, constantly cater to reli-

gious groups. They publish copy (propaganda) favorable to religious organizations with little, if any, presentation of abundant evidence of individual and social harm ("anomie") resulting from irrational theist religious claims.

The democratic process is thoroughly compromised when tax-exempt religious organizations promote their political/social agenda by monopolizing media.

The only publication regularly presenting information about the many serious crimes of religious leaders, including cases of sexual abuse and murder, often effectively hushed by powerful local administrators of religious organizations who insist such cases are unusual aberrations of individuals not typical of their churches, is the monthly *Freethought Today*, published by Freedom From Religion Foundation, Madison, Wis. Church authorities are often aware of earlier crimes or improprieties by these religious criminals but fail to take appropriate protective measures.

*Freethought Today* helps alert people of the reassignment of such criminals, from area to area, by church administrators. This feature alone commends the periodical's ac-

quisition as a research asset for permanent collection by municipal, public college and police department libraries.

Bert Tryba  
Eugene

### Preregistration

Well fellow students, it's dead week again; that time of the term when everyone puts their brains into overdrive because next week is finals week. And not only is it dead week, but it's also the dread Romance Language and English Department's Preregistration From Hell! week.

Does anyone understand the logic of holding Romance Language and English preregistration on dead week during class time? And why the Romance Language and English departments have two or three people staffing the preregistration tables for the inevitable crush of hundreds of students every term? As if we can afford to miss classes during dead week!

Couldn't preregistration be held in the evening, or on a weekend in Mac Court or in the Ballroom, when we wouldn't have to skip a class in order to stand in the dreaded lines in Friendly Hall and PLC? And couldn't we hire a few more staff members during preregistration, or was all the money spent on the new science buildings?

Try standing in line every term for two hours, waiting to preregister for one Spanish or English class because you need the classes to graduate, and you'll know exactly what I mean. Or go to Mac Court during registration and look at the Closed board.

Can't the great minds at our beloved University, after 124 years in the student business, figure out a new system that runs a little smoother? Or maybe I should just shut up and pay my tuition quietly, as usual.

Steve Buck  
Student

### 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.