

Local elections rife with controversies

Usually, school board and county levy elections don't have much controversy. But Tuesday's local election provided more furor than expected, with charges of racism and "pro-sodomy" flying all over the place.

First, the Position 5 seat for the Eugene School Board. Incumbent Tom Heger narrowly beat challenger Jeff Hoyt, 11,541 to 10,299, according to unofficial returns. The race was marred by an Oregon Citizen Alliance newsletter that labeled Heger — a steadfast proponent of gay rights — as "pro-sodomy." Hoyt, a member of the local OCA board, received that organizations support.

Hoyt and OCA actions in this election were nothing short of ridiculous. The whole controversy smacks of a desperate political ploy to throw mud on a highly-qualified candidate. Gay rights had nothing to do with the necessary qualifications for a school board member, and it is repulsive that Hoyt and his cronies tried to direct the election spotlight away from critical policy issues.

Heger, a pastor at the University, rightly contends the debate took away from the real issues of the campaign. That his margin of victory was so small goes to show how narrow-minded and idiotic some people in supposedly "liberal" Lane County can be.

There was another controversy over the Position 1 seat in the same school board race. In this, current board member Judy Moseley, was seeking to stave off challenges from computer store owner Henry Luvert and freelance writer Anne Kern.

Moseley won the election, garnering 9,148 votes, with 7,669 for Luvert and Kern checking in third with 4,126. Unfortunately, the election was tainted by racial issues, mostly stemming from a March 13 editorial by *The Register-Guard*.

The editorial said Luvert, who is black, and Moseley were both equally qualified for the post, but that because racism has become such a topic in Eugene school districts, Luvert might make a more logical choice as a representative of minority concerns.

The *Register-Guard's* reasoning behind their endorsement was sound, but the actual implementation of it in the editorial caused a big stir. Luvert claims the editorial hurt his chances for election, because it implied he should be elected because he was black, regardless of his qualifications.

It was unfortunate this needless controversy surfaced. There is no doubt Luvert would have made a fine board member; not because he was black, but because he was competent for the job. Racism is becoming an increasing problem in local schools, and Luvert could have gone a long way to diminish this. However, it looks like his merits were perhaps overshadowed because of his race.

This is no slur against Moseley. She has been a fine, well-respected board member in the past, and there is no reason to think she won't continue to be.

One election that got little notice among the local press was the one for the Lane Community College tax levy. The four-year serial levy would have raised an estimated \$725,000 to finance much-needed repairs and replacements of some of the college's buildings.

Because it failed, albeit narrowly by less than 150 votes, LCC administrators are now forced into the role of damage control — finding the money to make the necessary repairs. It is something they are well familiar with. LCC tax levies are notorious for being struck down.

What makes the levy defeat even more difficult to understand is that it would not have increased local property tax levels. The current levy, approved in 1987, runs out next year. The recently-defeated levy would only have extended the current tax level to 1995.

This is just a sampling of Tuesday's numerous elections, but should show just how complex — and sometimes, ludicrous — county politics have become.



Letters

Disregard

Perhaps not coincidentally, while the *Oregon Daily Emerald* was not publishing, and most students were away on break, the University's Animal Care and Use Committee met to approve Dr. Richard Marrocco's new primate experiments. Here are a few highlights of the meeting:

1. Stating that the protocol for primate experiments had contained numerous "deficiencies" cured only after many reviews and modifications by the committee, one member asked for, but was denied, ten more days to consider the protocol.

2. The committee went into closed session, in apparent violation of state Public Meeting laws, to deliberate on the protocol. The meeting's agenda stated that private deliberations between Marrocco and the committee had taken place prior to this meeting as well.

3. When the public was allowed back into the meeting, the committee took pains to retract the outspoken committee member's use of the word "deficiencies," dubbing the defects "non-disclosures" instead.

4. The committee proceeded to approve the primate experiments unanimously.

Prior to this meeting, the University had refused to provide students and the public with copies of the primate research protocol on the illegitimate grounds that animal research proposals, even after they have been funded, are not public records until they are finally approved by the University. This, of course, makes it impossible for the public to be represented in decisions on animal uses, in blatant disregard of federal regulations designed to ensure community representation in these matters.

Lucille Kaplan
Eugene

Anniversary

Twenty years ago, in the midst of nationwide protests against the Vietnam war, state

police killed two African-American students at Jackson State University in Mississippi. Ten days earlier, four students were killed by the National Guard at Kent State University in Ohio.

These are well-known events of the past which proved important lessons for people today, whether we are struggling against racism on our college campuses, for our reproductive rights, or against U.S. foreign policy in Southern Africa and Central America.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the killings at Jackson State and Kent State, several national student organizations are organizing a conference at Kent State University on May 4-6, 1990. This national student conference, with the theme, "Learning from the Past, Building for the Future," will attract upwards of 1,000 people: activists of today and of 20 years ago.

All interested individuals and groups are invited to attend this conference. For more information, contact: Student Organizing Committee, 340 Cherry St., Kent, OH 44240.

Kim DeFranco
Student Organizing Committee
Jackson State and Kent State
Commemorative Conference

Enlightenment

To extract a critical response from anyone such as myself — usually content to quietly lament the evils of society in my own home — involves a good deal of incentive. Pity the poor starving young advertising genius, unknowingly giving me the motivation I needed.

"Graffiti" on a "wall" behind a sun-seeking man and a scantily-clad bathing beauty promises a week filled with mind-numbing enjoyment such as hot mineral pools, mini golf, and the always popular volleyball and tennis (*ODE*, March 9).

Oh, and last, but definitely not least, *Girl Watching*. Someone must have made it an NCAA sport while I wasn't looking. Sneaky, sneaky.

Come on, people. I often wonder what kind of mind it requires to concoct such things, but I guess I should be glad I was blessed with one a little more enlightened.

Christine Corbett
English

PR hype

Americans should at once put to rest any notion that George Bush is an environmentalist. While it may be comforting to imagine that Bush is working in the public interest on environmental matters, this is simply not the case.

Bush's claim to environmentalism during his campaign was an effort to deflect and manipulate a rising tide of public alarm. But rather than actually lead the nation on these issues, Bush abuses our trust and threatens our collective future.

His record is consistently anti-environment, and recently has become hostile to even the most modest efforts to stem pollution, save the last scraps of wild land, or work toward solutions to international emergencies.

Let's recognize the truth and not be duped by fancy PR work on Bush's part. Bush recently opposed protection for wetlands in order to help pave the way (literally) for the oil industry's march into Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Bush's "Clean Air Act" contains major concessions to big oil corporations and the auto industry. His Forest Service and Interior Department continue to promote deforestation of the American West at a rate that far exceeds deforestation of tropical rain forests.

Bush has opposed efforts to control ozone layer-destroying chemicals, and has ignored the problem of global warming, mouthing the wishes of the oil industry against the public interest.

We must work to elect true leaders, not PR men who talk out of both sides of their mouths.

Tom Ribe
Eugene

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.