

Insurance problems persist after elections

To no one's surprise, students overwhelmingly rejected mandatory health insurance during last week's general elections. Most students breathed a sigh of relief at not having to add insurance costs to tuition hikes and increased incidental fees; for them the insurance issue is closed.

For others, however, including members of the Student Health Insurance Committee, the problem of providing coverage to students on this campus is still not solved. They are back at square one, faced with the task of providing an insurance policy for students next year that offers similar or better benefits at the same or a lower cost than this year's policy. And the committee is expected to find an insurance company to offer such a policy without a guarantee of a minimum number of participants.

In short, the committee must find a really good, really cheap insurance policy for a really small number of students. Good luck.

As SHIC chairman Scott Wyckoff said, solutions to the insurance problem have been approached, but students seem unwilling to accept any of them. All they know is that they don't want to be saddled with mandatory participation in an insurance program.

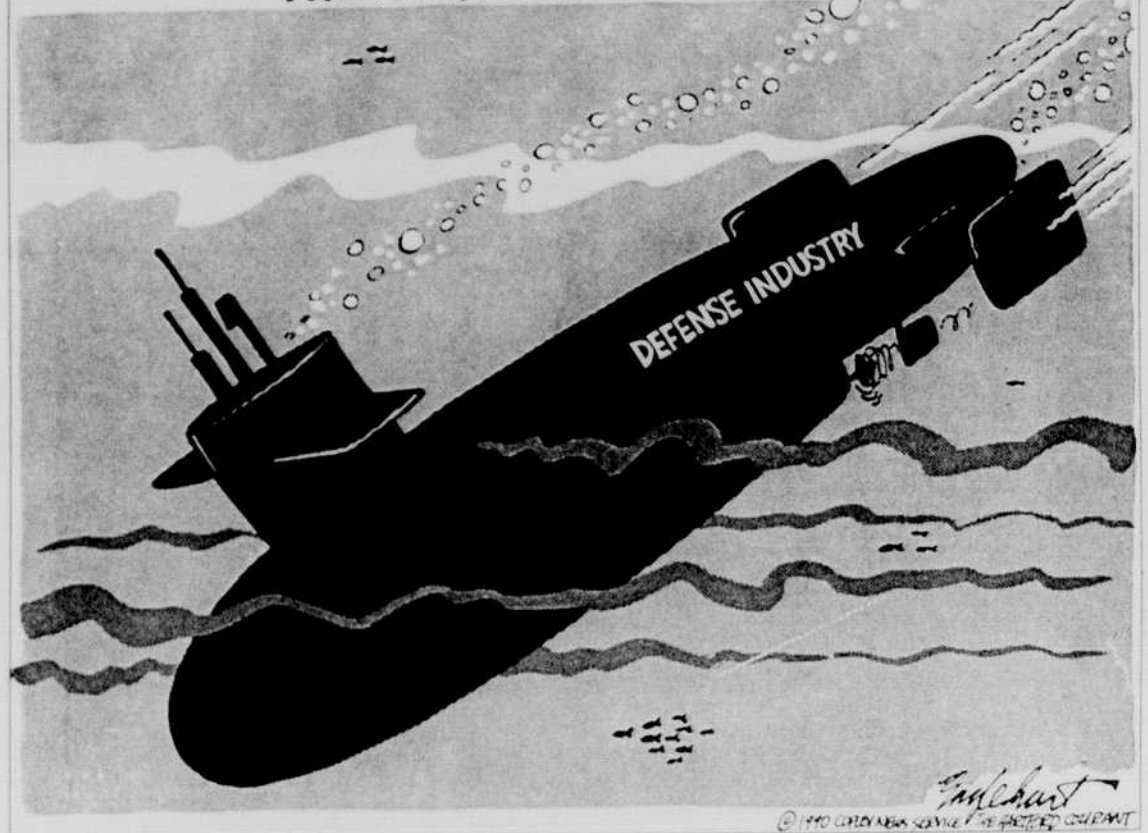
What students don't seem to understand is that changes must be made in the current insurance program for it to survive. Students can either make those changes themselves or wait for someone else to impose those changes on them.

A fundamental question facing University students is, do we want to continue to run our own insurance program? There are many arguments in favor of doing so, the most notable being that students now control the interest and profit on the premiums paid. They also have more say in the design of the plan, weighing for themselves the costs and benefits of different kinds of coverage.

But if University students would rather get out of the insurance business, who should take over that responsibility? The University administration? The State Board of Higher Education? The state board has already formed a task force to examine the possibility of creating an insurance program encompassing all state colleges and universities. Would participation in a statewide program, which would likely be mandatory, meet the particular needs of this University's student body? What — if any — insurance program should the University offer in the interim before a state program is in place?

These questions need answers. Students have only answered one question by making it clear they don't want a mandatory program. What they have not made clear is what kind of program they *do* want.

THE HUNT FOR A JOB



U.S. Forest Service should be more careful

Officials with the U.S. Forest Service say they are "embarrassed" about the recent logging of a wilderness area east of Eugene. Regardless of whether that feeling is justified, more care should be taken with federally protected lands.

Last week, it was revealed that a small portion — about 14 acres — on the west boundary of the Sisters Wilderness Area was mistakenly sold for logging purposes in the mid-1980's and clearcut. It seems a surveying error had placed two logging units and part of a third on Sisters wilderness land.

The error itself is understandable. Most surveying boundaries are landmarks, such as mountains and rivers. The boundary in question in the Sisters case is an 8.1-mile-long described line (one without landmarks), using the junction of Elk Creek and the McKenzie River as one of its many base reference points. When the meeting of the two rivers shifted, so did the line. This shifting led to the surveying error that caused the land to be zoned for logging.

However, logging of wilderness lands

should never happen, regardless of the acreage. After centuries of clearcutting, there is very little untouched land left — anywhere. The Sisters wilderness, one of the first created by Congress' 1964 Wilderness Act, is popular for recreational use and, as one of the few completely wild areas left in America, should be left completely alone.

The Forest Service is putting forth a commendable effort to correct their mistake. This summer they will invest thousands of dollars to use a satellite global positioning system to pinpoint where the boundary is and avoid future wilderness logging.

This probably won't be enough. Future errors are bound to occur, and if they are to be prevented, the old tried-and-not-so-true methods should be replaced entirely. In these days of cheapening technology, it is hoped that someday satellite and computerized methods will map *all* of the country's threatened forests.

New aerial photos have been taken, the line has been redrawn — 600 feet out from the site — and the logging has been done. Hopefully, it won't happen again.

Letters

Fair and equal

My purpose in this letter is not to argue for or against homosexuality; I fully recognize and will even defend the rights of any and all persons to organize, to campaign for fair and equal treatment and to express themselves freely.

However, the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, an endeavor funded by every pocketbook on campus, is asking us this week (*ODE*, April 23) to permit sexually explicit and offensive public journalism in the name of the gay rights movement.

The issues which set homosexuals apart from heterosexuals must unavoidably deal with physical attraction and sexual practices; yet when the majority of students on campus undoubtedly find homosexual practices unpleasant and distasteful, at the very mildest, then it is the heterosexual majority which must defend its right to a fair and unbiased student newspaper.

I would venture that the *Emerald* staff would not dare risk a

majority uprising supporting a "Nuclear Pride Week." How about "Environmental Destruction Week?" Or, God forbid, a musical entitled, "The Sound of Vivisection."

I believe the homosexual community is lucky to have the support of the *Emerald*. But the media as well as gays must recognize that they live in a society which is still strongly conservative, unfortunately for them. Applauding behavior that is repulsive to the very people from whom gays are seeking equal treatment hardly seems to be in their best interest.

Kathleen Strecker
GTF

Superior species

Well, Phil Zuckerman (*ODE*, April 23), you obviously believe you are a member of the superior species here on Earth. Maybe you haven't noticed that it's that exact line of thinking that has created the global crisis we face today.

Human interference has caused diseases, toxic waste and ozone depletion, to name only a few. Huge numbers of animals are used to find cures for these human-caused afflictions. Why is it that other forms of life have to suffer for our failure to care for our environment and bodies?

If a greater focus were placed on preventative medicine and education, your unfortunate Devon Rex kitten would not have to be hooked to electric shock for 10 years. Hopefully, people will take care of themselves so that we may not have to choose between "Here lies Spot" and "Here lies Tommy."

Animal rights activists deal with human rights and animal rights — the two cannot be separated. Just because we oppose the use of non-human animals does not mean we advocate the use of humans in research. Rather we support a shift in the scientific paradigm to a point at which scientists no longer have to use and exploit any living creature in the search for knowledge.

By the way, if you feel that your kitten is worthy of such torture, I'd be glad to give her a loving home where her life is not in danger.

Monica Semeria
Psychology

Courage

I would like to thank the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, reporter Denise Clifton and especially Maureen Burke and Robin Madell for the wonderful story on the couple's upcoming marriage (*ODE*, April 23).

In a climate too often marked by distrust and misunderstanding, everyone concerned in telling this story demonstrated considerable courage. This courage is especially impressive in light of Madell's statement that she and Burke must be "very selective" in who they tell about their plans. I feel honored that Madell and Burke have chosen to tell the University community about their upcoming marriage, and

can only hope that all of us prove worthy of their trust.

Too often, public comment on lesbian and gay lifestyles seems limited to puerile graffiti and tasteless insinuations on this campus. I would like to think that the openness demonstrated by Madell and Burke in declaring their love would inaugurate a new spirit of understanding on this campus, encouraging others who pursue alternative lifestyles to openly speak about their experience, and encouraging those of us whose lifestyles are more "mainstream" to listen.

The sexual orientation of any couple should not be criterion for adjudicating normalcy; rather, the mutual love and respect that comes through so beautifully in the article, and which is there for all to see in the splendid front-page photo, should be our only basis for evaluating normalcy. This is a condition which all of us desperately need to aspire to and realize in our lives.

Michael Bruce McDonald
English

Thursday, May 3, 1990