

## President straddling environmental fence

President Bush announced Tuesday a ban on offshore oil drilling around most of the continental United States for the rest of the 20th century. He says more studies are needed to weigh the environmental impact and scientific concerns of oil exploration.

Bush made his decision based on the recommendations of a task force he appointed just days after taking office. The report, released in January, has never been made public.

The ban does not affect current offshore oil drillings, nor is it a permanent decision which cannot be rescinded or altered in the future. The administration does not desire an outright ban, and tried at first to entice local coastal governments into allowing some offshore drilling in exchange for shared revenues from the drillings.

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan Jr., who headed the task force, even hinted that some new offshore oil drilling would be permitted. But pressure from environmental groups compelled the president to propose a complete ban. His supporters claim he is finally showing that he is the environmental president.

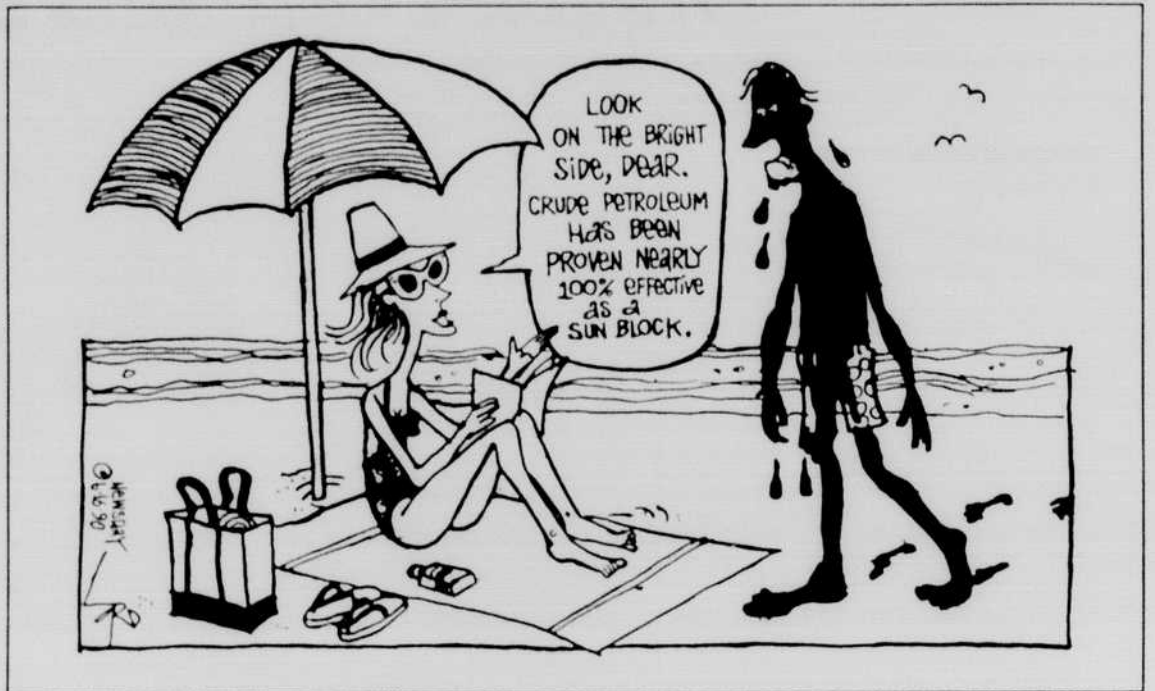
But one token decision on oil drilling does not qualify the president as an environmentalist. While the Exxon tanker Valdez was spewing oil into Prince William Sound in Alaska, Bush twiddled his thumbs in the Oval Office. And one day after listing the northern spotted owl as a threatened species, the Bush administration on Tuesday called for a revision of the 1973 Endangered Species Act which would prevent court challenges to timber sales proposed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

This action undermines the recommendations of a panel of government scientists who urged the president to set aside an additional 3 million acres of old-growth forests to help protect the imperiled bird.

Nobody is happy with the 10-year ban on offshore oil drilling. Oil companies, driven by the need for profit, must now search for other unchartered waters to desecrate. Environmentalists want a permanent ban on offshore drilling and a commitment to alternative energy sources.

There is untapped potential for solar and geothermal energy possibilities. If the federal government spent as much time and money on these alternatives as it does for the oil companies and their priorities, the sun and earth would be supplying most of our energy needs.

The current administration is not ecology-minded. George Bush is not the environmental president. That label can come only from environmentalists — not polluters and big business.



## Court ruling leaves too many questions

This week, the U.S. Supreme Court addressed an issue which it had never before considered. Its decision on the "right-to-die" question may prove to be as controversial—and as far-reaching—as its opinions on other divisive issues such as abortion.

The case presented involves a 32-year-old Missouri woman, Nancy Cruzan, who has been connected to a feeding machine since January, 1983. Her parents labored through the Missouri Supreme Court and finally the U.S. Supreme Court in an effort to remove their daughter from the feeding equipment.

The Cruzans insist that their daughter would not want to live her life as a "human vegetable."

In a 5-4 decision, a pattern which has become standard for the Rehnquist Court, the majority of the justices said that the patient's family does not automatically have the right to refuse medical treatment if the patient cannot speak for herself. According to the ruling the family must provide clear and convincing evidence that Nancy would want to die.

Although the decision sets some precedent, most of the decision-making power is left in the hands of state legislatures. Future confrontations are sure to come on this issue.

This ruling is unjust. The decision of

whether or not to remove life support equipment from a loved one who has been reduced to a vegetative state should rest with the family, not with state or federal courts.

While human life must be considered sacred, it is only sacred to those who can live it and enjoy its beauty. Nancy Cruzan can neither enjoy nor partake in life's pleasures.

The quality of life for the families of comatose patients is also severely reduced. It is the families of these patients that raised, nurtured, nourished, loved, and cared for them. They are also the ones who care for them when they are ill and pay for their medical expenses. After years of complete hospital care without any change in the patient's condition, it is not unreasonable for a family to end a life that is not even being lived.

Many people do not plan for the future and don't even know that "living wills" exist. How do family members provide clear and convincing evidence that their relative would want to die if they were reduced to a vegetative state?

The Supreme Court has left many of these questions unanswered. Perhaps they will be better answered by our state courts and legislatures. For the Cruzans, however, it is an agonizing and trying situation which has been indefinitely lengthened by the court's decision.

## Forum

## Emerald should cover more University-related activities

By James Drew

In the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, on June 21, Deborah Martin had a letter of comment published, one concerned with the content of the *Emerald* itself. I personally am in full agreement with the opening two paragraphs of her letter, and with the final two. What comes in between, though, needs some work.

### Commentary

Martin begins by pointing out what she sees as an injustice: the claim that, while the *Emerald* ought to be serving the entire University community, the largest portion of its concern is toward gay issues.

Indeed, it may well be true that the *Emerald* is giving more than its fair share of press to groups like GALA (and SETA —

they get a lot of coverage, too). However, one must consider the politics of creating a newspaper. One goal of the *Emerald* is to inform the public (student and community), while another must be to train prospective journalists. While it might be nice to see in-depth articles on the inner workings of the IMC, only a limited number of such articles can be produced and run. Simply put, those articles do not sell papers (yes, I know the *Emerald* is free — the statement still holds).

What people want to see is coverage of the issues, be they collegiate, local, national, or international. Since there are other papers more oriented toward producing news stories on the larger scale items, such coverage must of necessity be limited to what pertains to the collegiate atmosphere. For this reason, college activities must be the primary focus of the *Em-*

*erald*. And the activities that "sell" the most papers are those that are the most prominent, the most vocal. Ballroom Dance Club stays quietly in the background. The Interior Decorators' Association doesn't come much to the forefront of the issues. If equal time were given to all the student groups, you would see a pretty boring paper! No, the politics of newspaper publishing forces the *Emerald* to do pretty much as it does.

On the other issue mentioned in that section of Martin's letter, I am curious as to which individual issue of the *Emerald* covering Gay Pride Week you used to garner your 60 percent figure. Sixty percent! Do you realize what that means? Look at today's paper: 12 pages. Let us assume that this were a normal school year edition. There are about six pages of ads. That leaves six pages for "news"

coverage. Two pages would go to sports, and the gay issues coverage there is negligible. Three pages (60 percent) goes to gay issues. That leaves one page — one page — for everything else. American Studies, Dance, editorial cartoon, Et als, non-gay entertainment, non-gay pictures, "real news," etc. Maybe you had better rethink your 60 percent figure.

Incidentally, since your figure refers to all gay issues, not just GALA, GALA's membership figures have little to do with it. However, the Kinsey statistics say that gays and lesbians are about 10 percent of the population — that's about 1,700 students, give or take. Would you at least agree that gay issues deserve two-thirds of a page in this issue, then? They did not get it.

Martin then suggests that by raising the quality of the *Emerald*, the amount of advertising

could be lowered. I suppose that her thought is that a rise in quality — she gives no suggestions on how to do this, other than decrease the coverage of gay issues — will mean that advertisers will be willing to pay more for smaller ads, or perhaps that government grants will miraculously appear out of the air to fund the paper.

I fear that the world does not work that way. What one person sees as an increase in quality, someone else will see as a decrease. I know that I would not trust the *Emerald's* "journalistic integrity" as much if I knew that they were purposefully not covering certain issues (gay or otherwise), just to please some segment of the population — and heaven help us all if that segment were the advertisers!

James Drew is a computer science major.

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