

Rogers' gaffe again embarrasses county

The debate on the local nuclear free zone issue has shifted from the city council's agenda to the county commissioner's office. On Tuesday, by a 3-2 vote, the commissioners voted to approve the first reading of a proposed amendment to the county's 3-year-old nuclear free zone ordinance.

The commissioners are attempting to revise the language of the ordinance so that it conforms to the existing city NFZ in effect in Eugene. The amendment would limit the ordinance to "prohibit design, development, manufacture, production, maintenance and storage of nuclear weapons and their components."

The current mandate not only bans nuclear weapons and their components, but also delivery systems. A public hearing is scheduled for the July 25 commission meeting, along with a second reading of the amendment.

Casting the negative votes at Tuesday's meeting were the unlikely pair of Jerry Rust and Bill Rogers. But while Rust cast his vote based on his beliefs, Rogers is apparently afraid of a possible lawsuit by Eugene Peaceworks, which contends that revising an ordinance through a county-wide vote is outside of the commissioners' authority.

Peter Sorenson, a lawyer working on behalf of Eugene Peaceworks, submitted a letter to the county suggesting the illegality of the commissioners' actions regarding the revision of the nuclear free zone ordinance. Rogers stated at the meeting that "if we adopt this (the revised ordinance), Eugene Peaceworks may go out and get a real lawyer instead of Peter Sorenson."

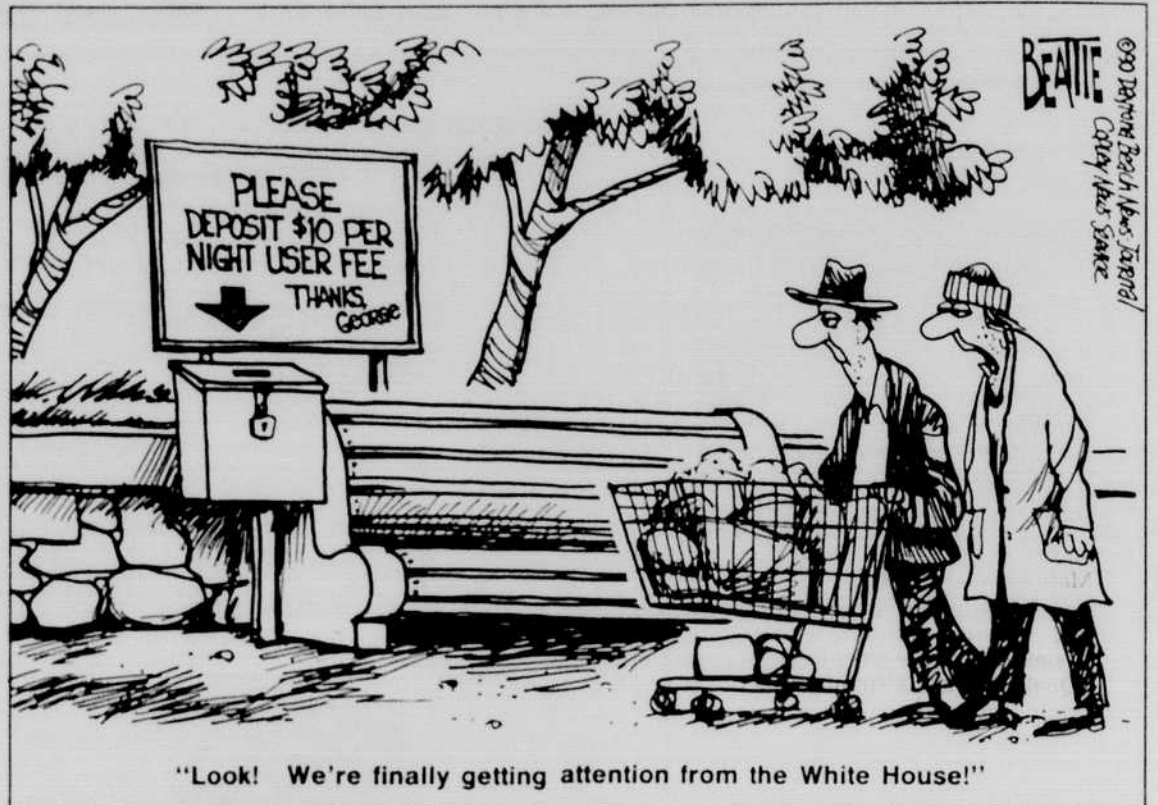
Rust charged Rogers with slandering a private citizen and abusing his position as chairman of the county board. Rogers responded by stating, "I will say what I want to say."

It's admirable that Rogers believes in free speech. It's unfortunate that he thinks it only applies to himself.

It was Rogers who had the environmental magazine *Forest Voice* removed from the county courthouse a few months ago because he thought it didn't belong next to *Timber*, the industry's magazine. He didn't bother to check into the legality of his actions. *Forest Voice* has since been allowed back into the courthouse.

It is Rogers, also, who does not believe that county employees should be allowed to have earnings deducted from their paychecks for donations to environmental groups.

Chairman Rogers' constituents in South and East Lane County should be concerned. His verbal poke at Sorenson is the latest in a series of gaffes that undermine an elected official's boundary. Although he voted correctly on the ordinance amendment, it was for the wrong reason.



Campground good answer for homeless

In the past three weeks since the closing of the Opportunity Shelter, local homeless activists have worked hard to make their position known and their voices heard.

They've set up demands and stuck with them, keeping constant pressure on county and city governments. Recently it appears the advocates are focusing their energies on getting the city to revoke its ban on camping in public areas.

The city had previously declined the request based on concerns about health and safety regulations and state laws governing public campgrounds.

While there is validity to the city's concerns, there is still an immediate housing problem that needs to be solved. The county is working on expanding its already existing family shelter and developing low-income housing, but until the work is complete and there is adequate shelter for these people, we need another option. The obvious solution is opening a temporary campground for homeless families.

Granted, there are many problems involved in opening up this kind of campground. It would need to be staffed 24 hours a day. This could be done on a volunteer basis by members of the community, or the city could hire staff people.

The campground would need to be equipped with the same services as most re-

creational campgrounds: running water, showers, toilets and garbage service. While these services might be complicated and expensive to operate they would be an absolute necessity to keep conditions sanitary, especially with a lot of children around.

There is also concern that, once the campground is opened, people would flock to it and Eugene would become a mecca for the homeless. This problem could be lessened if the campground is open only to homeless families.

Money seems to be the biggest obstacle to opening the campground. The city and county would have to use money that has already been set aside for other homeless housing projects to set up the campground.

At this point it would be money well spent. Homeless families need a place to stay and maintaining a campground for the summer would be more cost effective than operating a shelter for the same period of time.

Offering homeless families a safe place to camp while long and short-term housing plans are developed and constructed would reduce the immediate problem of housing homeless women and children.

With greater community involvement and volunteer work, a carefully supervised campground could be just the solution the city and county have been looking for.

Letters

GTF complaints

With regard to the lifting of the enrollment cap and tuition waivers:

Recently, the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation at the University has received an unprecedented number of complaints from graduate teachers who have been told that they do not qualify for summer tuition waivers (the so-called "sandwich") because they did not have full academic year teaching appointments for 1989-90.

Many GTFs believe that a spring term appointment with a contract for the following fall term entitles them to a summer tuition waiver. Language in the academic year fee book seems to support this belief.

It is ironic that the University, committed to an academic

mission, appears inclined to be conservative with approval of tuition waivers to a critically important group of modestly-paid scholars and teachers, but is willing to grant tuition waivers to a group (student athletes) whose mission is generally considered to be non-academic.

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education has declined to consider an obvious solution to its funding problems, namely allowing the University to drop from the Pacific-10 Conference.

Athletics reaches out and touches the citizenry of this state in a way that academics does not. If fall were to come with no green and gold glitz to entertain Oregon sports enthusiasts, maybe some among them would realize that the funding crisis in higher education is genuine. Maybe some of them would begin using their

ideas and their votes to find a solution so they could once again say: "How 'bout them Ducks!"

Diane Rau
GTFF

Just as easy

In the timber industry article (*ODE*, June 28), logger Sam Hale believes that the timber controversy is a matter of priorities, and is quoted: "I don't think we should destroy an industry that is over a century old just to save a bird."

I'm not in favor of protecting endangered species to the detriment of everything else, but you could just as easily say: "I don't think we should destroy a species that is a thousand years old just to save an industry."

Or: "I don't think we should

destroy a planet that is 4 billion years old just to satisfy our own greed."

It's really all the same, isn't it? It's just a question of priorities.

James Drew
Computer Science

Wrong as a right

Thank you, Deborah Frisch, for your commentary on homosexuality (*ODE*, July 3). Here is my response.

You're assuming that there are no "moral absolutes." It's up to each person individually and to society to decide what's right and what's wrong. Well, if this is the case, you're right and it doesn't make sense to ask whether homosexuality is

right or wrong. Or drug abuse? Or rape? Abortion? Animal abuse? Murder? Suicide?

Our society has defined, generally, what is right and what is wrong and those who step outside of the circle are labeled "deviants." But who is to say that what is right for one person is right for another?

A lot of people think that it's OK to commit suicide. That doesn't affect anyone else, right? Or drug abuse? If an act causes only one person to stumble, feel pain, or puts obstacles in their life, then it is a moral issue. Homosexuality is biblically a sin; it is a conflict of interest, and it causes people to stumble. We are a confused people when we try to justify wrong as a right.

Charles Armsbury
Eugene