

## Don't complain if you don't bother to vote

We've all looked at our elected representatives at one time and thought, "What fools."

We seldom realize who put them there.

Elected officials determine local, county, state, and federal policies — for education, law enforcement, roads and infrastructures, and taxes, to name a few.

On a local level, elected officials have the power to:

- open the downtown mall to traffic.
- declare nuclear free zones invalid.
- set the amount of traffic fines.
- regulate landlord/tenant policies.

People seldom care about such issues until they are personally affected by them. By then it's too late.

No one can keep up on every issue. Our elected representatives have support personnel in their offices to assist them on policies and issues.

But pick out an issue or two that concerns you and find out how the candidates feel. It's a start. Especially if you have never voted.

Oregon has one of the easiest voter registration procedures in the country. One merely has to fill out a card stating name, address, and party affiliation, if any.

Voter registration cards are available almost everywhere. The Lane County elections is located at 135 E. 6th Ave. Forms can be picked up at the ASUO office.

Everyone with the right to vote elects our representatives. Especially the people who do not vote at all.

In a time of voter apathy, when voter turnouts are sometimes less than 50 percent, a minority of citizens are controlling our governments. When you don't vote, you are supporting the eventual winners.

In the coming November elections Oregonians will vote on abortion rights, property tax relief, recycling, and the shutdown of the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant. Something for just about everyone.

People between the ages of 18 and 24 vote the least. Approximately 25 percent of that age group votes in elections. This is in contrast to the 75 percent of senior citizens who vote. University students take heed.

Absentee ballots are available for voters who will be out of town on election day. Absentee voters elected Congressman Denny Smith over Mike Kopetski in 1988 by 700 votes. The outcome was not decided until the absentee votes were counted.

If you don't vote, and don't like the election results, you deserve the fool that's elected. But look into the mirror for the real fool.

## List Pacific Yew trees

The current political battle over listing the Pacific Yew tree as an endangered species is complex.

Environmentalists claim that the Yew needs to be protected to ensure a large supply of the cancer fighting agent Taxol for the future.

Because the tree is a "weed" tree found in old-growth forests the issue is also influenced by the fight to save the spotted owl.

In clear-cutting operations the Yew is often gathered into slag piles and burned instead of being set aside so the Taxol could be extracted from the bark. Environmentalists claim the endangered species petition would end this process.

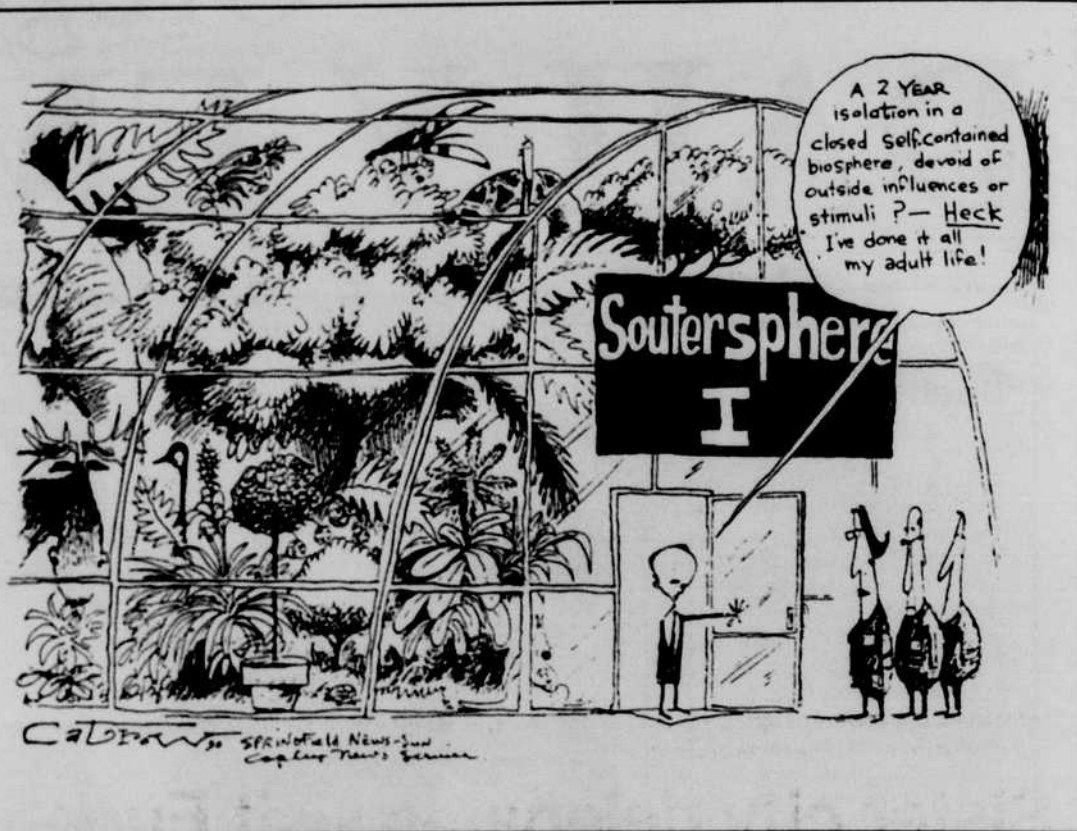
Timber groups claim the petition is an indirect effort to end more old-growth harvesting.

The timber groups have said listing the Yew as an endangered species would tie up the harvest of the tree and the subsequent Taxol in government red tape.

But it is also a way to ensure that the tree is not wasted in clear-cutting operations. The petition to list the Yew contains wording that specifically emphasizes that the listing would not prevent utilization of the species for the development of Taxol.

Listing the the Pacific Yew as an endangered species would protect and guarantee a supply of Taxol for the future. The claim that the listing would cut off the supply of Taxol is just another political move by a scared timber industry.

Hopefully the preservation of the Pacific Yew will not get buried and lost underneath the old-growth controversy.



## Supreme Court decision makes sense

Oregon's ever changing November ballot has been rearranged again thanks to some insightful (and quick) decision making by the Oregon Supreme Court.

The Court wisely ruled that a clerical error should not take away the citizen's right to decide important issues.

This is especially encouraging in the face of the current trend toward issues being decided by the judicial branch of government rather than the representative, legislative branch.

The Supreme Court was correct in making its ruling in favor of the spirit of the law rather than by the letter of the law.

The court decided the fundamental right of letting the voters make important decisions outweighed the legality of whether written certifications were needed rather than oral ones.

In today's no-holds-barred political arena it is easy to imagine what kind of precedent a decision to remove the measures would have set. Opponents to certain measures would simply spend their time looking

for ways to have those measures removed rather than trying to persuade voters to reject them in the democratic process.

Although the so-called measure crisis seems to have found a satisfactory end there is certain to be, and should be, some fallout yet to come.

Most obvious is the effect this will have on the gubernatorial campaign of Secretary of State Barbara Roberts. It is her office that is responsible for compiling the November ballot.

It's too bad her campaign has been negatively affected by the judgment error of an employee. But the bottom line is, she was the boss and ultimately the responsibility for her office's work is hers.

Robert's should pinpoint where the problem began and correct that problem. Voters will be watching the situation to find out how she deals with the crisis.

Hopefully the political wrangling of special interest groups will not kill the chance for an election decided on the candidates' platforms.

## LETTERS

### Skeptical

In the Sept. 25 issue of the *Emerald* there was an article on the University study determining how many jobs in Oregon are timber related.

I feel that the reporter (through miscommunication) and the editor (through an editing decision) misrepresented my opinion on the subject.

First, I'm skeptical about the study considering it was funded by Weyerhaeuser, a multi-national forest products company.

I also said that if through this study Weyerhaeuser was hoping to imply that if jobs were lost, all of these jobs would be affected. I thought that was a slimy tactic.

And concerning job losses, I'd like to start hearing what these giant companies and our elected officials are going to do about the inevitable job losses, instead of denying reality.

I might add that currently these companies are exporting 3.7 billion board feet of timber overseas. The Jack Ward Thomas (this is the one all the hoopla's been about) only sets aside

1.2 billion board feet for protection. It follows that if these multi-nationals cared about their workers they wouldn't be exporting their jobs overseas.

**Rebekah Ledwith  
Southern Willamette  
Earth First!**

### Beware

Does the truth make you mad? Are you losing respect for priests and ministers when hearing the shocking number of sex cases many are involved in, especially child molestation?

There has been little awareness of the problem because it is no concern of the state as to why a church expels or transfers its clergy. They are free to hide the facts.

Children are taught to look up to their clergyman as a trustworthy man of God. One who feels it in his heart to teach that the Bible offers the highest morality and ideals everyone must live up to.

The clerical collar some wear helps build up an emotional feeling for guidance from a "caring father." We now know

it serves as a blinder in some instances of sexual misbehavior.

Studies show two of every three victims are boys. Some former altar boys said they were told to accept molestation as a special religious rite.

The startling number of these crime cases appearing in the news show that the molesters are not solely "dirty old men" but "men of God" who have access to children and women.

The cost to cover-up this betrayal runs into the thousands of dollars for some churches and its reputation. Church camps, day-care centers and schools of some denominations are under the spotlight.

Check your library for resources and refer to the Child Abuse Hotline. *It is your job to judge.* Child molestation must be treated as a public threat.

Thankfully, there are many clergy who do their proper job and who are worthy of confidence. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:16-20.

**Catherine Desmond  
Springfield  
Monday, October 1, 1990**