

UNIVERSITY

Voter registration aimed at students

18- to 24-year-olds have lowest voter turnout in nation

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Reporter

When state primary elections were held last May, fewer than 50 people voted in the precinct encompassing the 3,100 University dormitory residents.

That low number is typical of the voting habits of 18- to 24-year-olds across the country. During the 1980s, only about 20 percent of the total number of people in that age group voted in the United States. This is the lowest percentage of any age group.

Locally, members of the ASUO, the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group and the Oregon Student Lobby are working to change that trend.

Reasons for those low figures are difficult to pinpoint, but apathy and frequent address changes coupled with a 20-day cut-off registration period are probably major contributors, said Traci Manning, ASUO state affairs coordinator and Betsy Matsch of OSPIRG.

Oregon's 20-day cut-off period requires that a resident must register to vote at least 20 days before any election, which presents a particular problem for students, Manning said.

Voters must re-register each time they move, and students in the 18 to 24 age group tend to be more mobile than other age groups, especially during early fall.

To participate in the Nov. 6 general elections, voters must register by Tuesday at 5 p.m.

"We hope to get (the cut-off law) repealed because it is a



Photo by Sean Poston

ASUO State Affairs Coordinator Traci Manning helps students register to vote Wednesday. The deadline to register to vote in the Nov. 6 election is Tuesday.

disadvantage to one age group — ours," Manning said.

"It's just that many more people who can't register," Matsch added.

Voter registration drives on campus are now under way. A registration table will be at the EMU terrace today.

OSPIRG reports that although voter turnout among college students is extremely low, once people in the 18 to 24 age group register, they tend to

vote at a 70 percent rate.

Monday, members of Oregon Student Lobby — a group comprising representatives from the states' colleges and universities who focus legislative attention on student issues — will present the OSU Voter's Guide. This booklet will include state lawmakers' voting records on issues such as higher educa-

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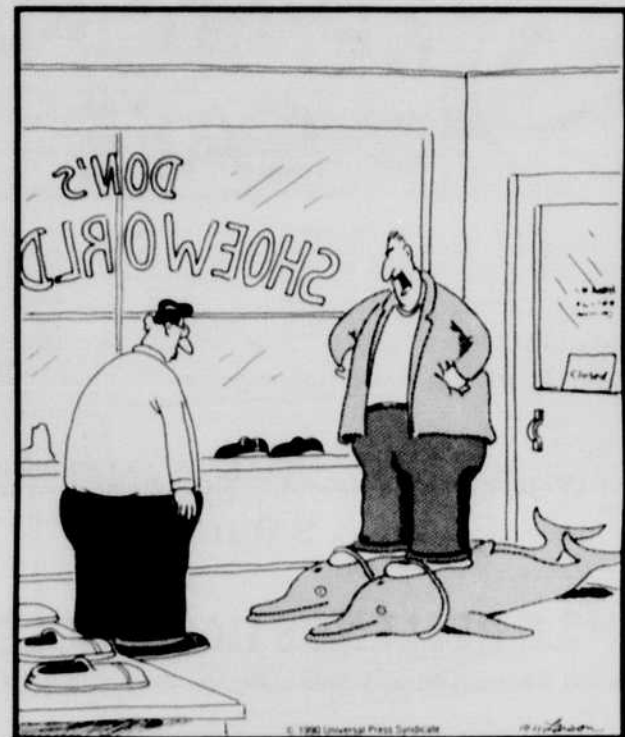
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