

## Time to just say yes to a state sales tax

The budget crunch of Measure 5 has caused program reductions and closures at the University. Despite administrators' attempts to convince the public that only the size of the University will be affected and not the quality, education is bound to suffer.

Along with University program cuts, many human service agencies are going to be reduced and eliminated as well. While assistance for the disadvantaged deteriorates, large businesses, mostly property management companies, will be stuffing their wallets. Considering that about 60 percent of all property taxes were paid by businesses and landlords who made up a small percentage of the per-capita tax base, the average property owner now receives few benefits compared to the windfall profits big business takes in.

State government will not be able to operate normally and budget cuts will continue to grow unless some form of alternative revenue is found. That alternative revenue should come in the form of a sales tax.

Oregonians have traditionally bucked the call to implement a sales tax. But now that voters have backed themselves into a corner, they may see the light the next time a sales-tax initiative is placed on the ballot. That's why it is important for students and others affected by budget cuts to be as vocal as possible in the coming months. Letting citizens know about the hardships caused by Measure 5 may convince them to look seriously at adopting the long-avoided sales tax.

The Legislature should quickly present a well-written sales tax to voters. So far, the politicians in Salem have adopted a wait-and-see attitude for solving the budget mess. But people on the losing end of Measure 5 don't want to find out what the budget ax is going to cut next. They want a solution before more cuts have to be made.

A sales tax on non-essential items — everything but food and utilities — would be an equitable tax system. People who buy luxury items, or expensive basics, would be taxed according to what they can afford.

It is time for Oregon to adopt a tax system resembling that of other states. Education and human services should not be paid for by one system, whether that is a property tax, an income tax or a sales tax. A combination of different revenue sources should fund these important agencies.

## Satisfy the ABA by June or forget the law school

The University's last-minute proposed law school cutbacks are unfortunate, but reasonable under the circumstances.

University President Myles Brand received a letter last Thursday from the American Bar Association threatening to remove law school accreditation unless specific requirements are met. Two important improvements include student-to-teacher ratio and funding sources.

The law school will reduce freshman enrollment next year by up to one-half. Between 90 and 125 students will be admitted to the law school next year, down from the normal 180. This will enable the law school to have an ABA standard ratio of 25 students for every instructor.

The law school has been under the accreditation cloud for some time. According to the letter Brand received, the law school has until June to make progress.

Since the University has the only public law school in the state, it would be foolish to cut it completely. However, it is hard to see the logic in cutting well-respected athletic and teaching programs while hanging on to a law school that is barely surviving.

The University must make an absolute commitment to the law school for it to remain open. With the Measure 5 cuts and the accreditation problems, the University has until June to satisfy the ABA.

We hope the law school can be saved. But if the University can't meet the ABA's June deadline, then it should get rid of the law school and put money into programs that are more respected and will remain accredited.



## OPINION

### Thanks for the reminder, George

One of the saddest ironies of war is that people who fight the battles don't get to make decisions concerning their own welfare. Those moves are left to bureaucrats who wear expensive suits and silk ties.

When Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, traveled to the Persian Gulf "theater" this week, they already had "use ground forces" stamped on their ticket stubs. The ground-forces rhetoric was voiced the loudest by the non-military man, Cheney. The two politicians went to the Middle East to assess the situation and get advice from commanders in the field.

When they returned, it was obvious that talking to the men who everyday see the faces of the kids doing the fighting had changed their minds. President Bush emerged from his briefing with Powell and Cheney saying the air attacks would continue and the use of ground forces would wait.

It is no surprise that Army commanders in the desert — mostly combat veterans — were not so anxious to use American soldiers as bait to lure the Iraqis out of their foxholes. The bureaucrats wanted to shell out a few lives to get the war rolling; the soldiers talked them out of it.

Of course, all of this assumes we can take what the "highest authority in the country" says at face value — a giant leap of faith during a war.

Bush did use the opportunity to remind us all of the position he holds and its importance. He said when the time comes to employ ground forces, he "will make that decision because that is a decision for the president of the United States." He picked an odd time to flaunt his power, but what can you expect from a man who wanted to be president so he wouldn't have to eat broccoli.

War, and especially committing the lives of people who choose the military because it is the best of limited options, should always be a last resort. There is a lot to be said for compromise. If giving Saddam Hussein one small concession so he could retain his dignity could prevent so much destruction, why not give it a chance? At least talk to the man before you begin to destroy his country and its people.



### The Fine Print

by PAT MALACH

Children draw lines in the sand and refuse to speak with each other; mature leaders always favor dialogue over bullets. Bush and Hussein never once spoke to each other. They didn't even discuss the possibility of communicating through emissaries until a month before the proclaimed deadline for war.

Imagine, the lives of tens of thousands of people are at stake, and the two leaders involved won't allow talks to take place because they are in a power struggle over who will set the date for the meeting. One way to appear tough is to argue with your adversary about it and refuse discussions in order to show him that he can't dictate to you.

Another way to handle the situation is to rise above that adversary's pettiness and tell him you will talk to him anywhere at anytime about resolving the issue peacefully. It doesn't matter if the person thinks it is a sign of weakness as long as you are secure about your own strength.

Now that our president has decided that throwing a war tantrum is the only prudent alternative for getting his way, let's hope the advice from commanders who truly understand the nature of war can keep his ego in check.

A Vietnam vet once told me if middle-aged men were sent to fight, wars would never take place. He reasoned that older men develop more compassion and would ask themselves why they were in a foreign land killing people they had never met.

True, Bush is a veteran of World War II. But as a pilot did he ever see the faces of the people he may have killed? Did he ever sit in a foxhole and watch a friend's head get torn off by an enemy bullet? Did he ever have to hunker in a trench for months at a time while bombs are dropped by some ominous force from above, his only crime being born in a country with a leader who does not value life? Did George Bush ever witness, up close and personal, the faces of children in a war-torn country?

His actions say he has not.

