

Roberts picked the lesser of two evils

In an expected move Gov. Barbara Roberts endorsed a proposed \$600 annual tuition surcharge for students attending state colleges next year.

Although it was bad news for students, Roberts had no other alternatives. It would have been nice to hear her stand up for students and say she could not support the proposal, but it would have done more harm than good. The tuition surcharge is expected to raise \$36 million of the \$74 million the higher education system has to cut from its budget.

Without the surcharge, even more programs would have to be slashed from universities and colleges throughout the state. Higher education would be crippled and possibly sent into an irreversible downward spiral as fewer and fewer students would want to attend Oregon schools.

Until public higher education is funded in some way other than property taxes, the surcharge is the only way out. So plan on forking over an extra \$200 per term plus a proposed 6.7 percent tuition increase.

Next year college students will be asked to shoulder a financial burden no students in the past have been saddled with. It is certainly unfair. That is the point students must make with legislators and voters of this state.

Youth's hair is none of school's business

It is hard to believe that hair length is still controversial in some parts of the United States. But for a little four-year-old boy facing a trauma most of us never will, it has become a battle for his public education rights.

Joshua Garcia, a four-year-old Texas youth, missed two days of school last week after officials contend that his hair violated the public school's dress code. Regulations prohibit students from having hair longer than falls below the collar.

Joshua has a ponytail, the kind kids wear nowadays, with short bangs and hair cropped closely above the ears. His hair hasn't caused any hygiene problems, but it does raise First Amendment questions. His parents aren't trying to cause trouble or make a political statement by not having their son's hair cut; they made a vow to God to let it grow until Joshua is cured of cancer.

The child's attorney is seeking an exception to the rule, claiming Joshua's hairstyle is protected as religious expression under the Constitution.

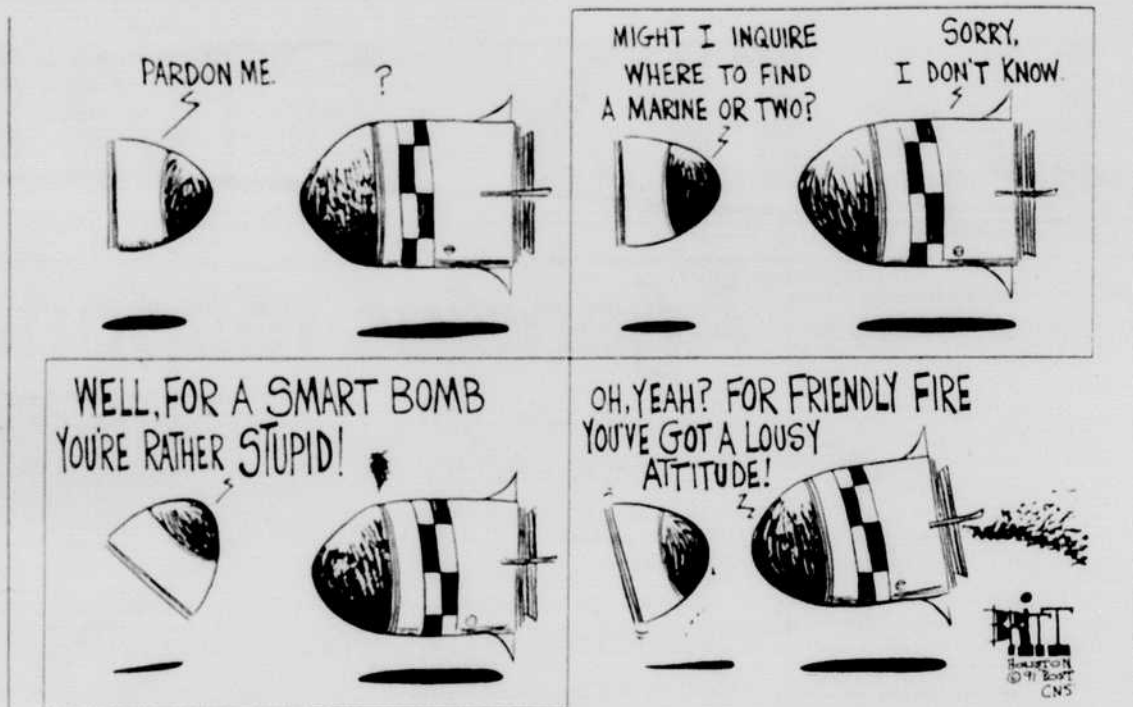
It's OK for schools to have dress codes to the extent that students are wearing clean clothes and have bathed bodies. However, in a public school system there is no room for any restrictions covering dress or appearance not harmful to the other students. As long as Joshua's appearance does not interfere with the education of others, school officials have no right to tell him how long it can be.

America is supposed to be the great melting pot of people and cultures. No one group of administrators should decide what is and is not proper appearance for attending a publicly funded school.

It's too bad Carnahan Elementary School officials can't have a little heart. If they are going to try and enforce such discriminatory rules, at least this four-year-old boy with cancer deserves a little slack.

Who knows what effect this situation will have on Joshua? Television cameras and reporters have interviewed him about his plight, and he realizes it has something to do with the length of his hair.

His mother said that because Joshua's health improved dramatically after making the vow, she will abide by her promise until he is completely cured. Making promises to God is not an everyday procedure for challenging public school regulations, but any action that might humanize the school officials in Pharr, Texas is worth a try.



LETTERS

Choice office

As a co-director of Students for Choice, the campus pro-choice organization, I feel as it is my responsibility to respond to Matt Emrich's letter (ODE, Feb. 8).

Students for Choice shared an office with the College Republicans during fall quarter. We had put bumper stickers on the office door urging students to "vote no on 8 and 10." There were no bumper stickers with the "yes on 8 and 10" message posted on the door, as Emrich suggested.

The issue of choice is a non-partisan one. While the National Republican party platform is anti-choice, the state platform takes no position on the issue. We received a great deal of support from the local chapter of Republicans for Choice during elections.

I am not attempting to address the other issues in Emrich's letter, but rather to point out the diversity of support that the choice issue has in this community.

Sara Stankey
Co-director, Students for
Choice

Valuable

Notwithstanding your obvious lack of awareness concerning the respectability of the law school, I found your editorial on the American Bar Association situation appalling (ODE, Feb. 13).

Granted the law school currently has financial difficulties, as do now all the departments at this university, yet your disregard for the high quality legal education still being received by many at the school shows an editorial board with horse blinders on, as well as displaying a complete lack of sensitivity to the dilemma the entire University faces. I find it horrifying that a student organization such as the Emerald dares to make value judgments on the viability of one program over another.

John McDonald
Law student

Measurements

I am shocked by the apparent callous disregard for our young

people. This "emergency" is a farce designed to force Oregonians to vote for a sales tax — after which time, I'm sure sufficient money will be "found" to continue your education.

The Governor's 1991-1993 Recommended Budget calls for more funds to be spent. All of the hoopla is obviously a carefully orchestrated hoax. General Funds call for \$750 million more, reflects an increased growth of \$852 million, etc., etc. I would suggest you order a copy of the 1991-1993 Recommended Budget from the Executive Accounting Division, 155 Cottage St. N.E., Salem, Ore. 97310 and draw your own conclusions.

Don't take my word for it — or anyone else's for that matter.

Velma Hartwig
Eugene

Number's up

I would like to get a list of phone numbers of all the bandwagon war supporters that have written in praising the war and "president" Bush, so I can give them a call when I get drafted. I am sure they would be happy to take my place since they have been so enthusiastic about kicking Hussein's butt.

I guess I would be doing them a favor by letting them go in my place; they would be getting the chance to show their support in the most direct way possible. If you support the war, fight it yourself. Leave me out of it.

Doug James
Architecture

No respect

Hey Mike Russell, Hudson Van Curen is entertaining. I like it. But turning Bill the Cat into a pseudo farmer is not (ODE, Feb. 8). There is a lot more to farming than milking cows, spitting chew and sitting

around the shop making fun of college students who draw cartoons. So please, show them a little bit of respect.

Bill Lanning
Architecture

Remove blinders

Not everyone who suffers is a victim; not every victim is entirely innocent. While our troops may suffer, it is the Iraqi people who are their victims. While Israelis may be victims of Iraqi bombings, they are very guilty of oppressing Palestinians for two generations. The absence of pure black and white issues in the Persian Gulf War policy and participants, does not, however, excuse us from making clear, unequivocal moral judgments.

While I may empathize with the fear, loneliness and confusion of young U.S. soldiers in the Middle East, I cannot "support our troops" as instruments of war, trained and willing to kill — and currently doing just that.

I value the ideals expressed by our Constitution and Bill of Rights. I cannot adhere to a blind patriotism that presses me to uncritically support a president whose policies I find not just ill-advised, but racist, elitist, arrogant and blood-thirsty.

Our founders' sought to ensure that open debate would always counterbalance any potential autocrat's despotism. While I am appalled by the roiling bigotry of some that have turned the words "peace lover" into an epithet, I am equally distressed by those who profess to agree that this war is wrong and yet, for the sake of "community consensus," refuse to name the evil and oppose it.

Barbara A. Keller
Alumnus, Architecture

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.