

Recall petition fair way to resolve issue

It should come as no surprise that ASUO Vice President Jo Sonja Watson is the subject of a recall effort. It should also come as no shock that the petition drive is being led by College Republicans.

Once again, our campus political factions raise their ugly heads. Watson and the recallers have been subjected to some of the most vicious mudslinging seen in these parts since Michael Colson was ousted from the IFC last year.

But it doesn't change the basic nature of the issue.

Watson is guilty of shoplifting from the University Bookstore in November, 1990 — of that there is no doubt. She was tried, convicted, sentenced to do community service and fined.

What is at stake is whether Watson's "mistake" reflects on her ability to do her job. Members of the College Republicans think so and have started the recall. Watson and ASUO President Jennifer Bills disagree.

The only fair arbitrators of this dispute are the voters. Students will have to decide whether the punishment of a recall election fits the crime of shoplifting.

Both Watson and Bills contend the crime was just a mistake and has no reflection on her political life.

Perhaps, but what a leader does in his or her private life definitely has ramifications in the political arena. It is not unfair to ask whether Watson's error in judgment will be repeated again.

Watson and Bills claim the shoplifting charge would have made no difference had it come out during the election. That opinion has no possible verification except from a recall petition. If students feel strongly about the recall, they will sign it. If they disagree with the petitioners, they'll simply walk the other way. But if voters get that opportunity, it will be enough.

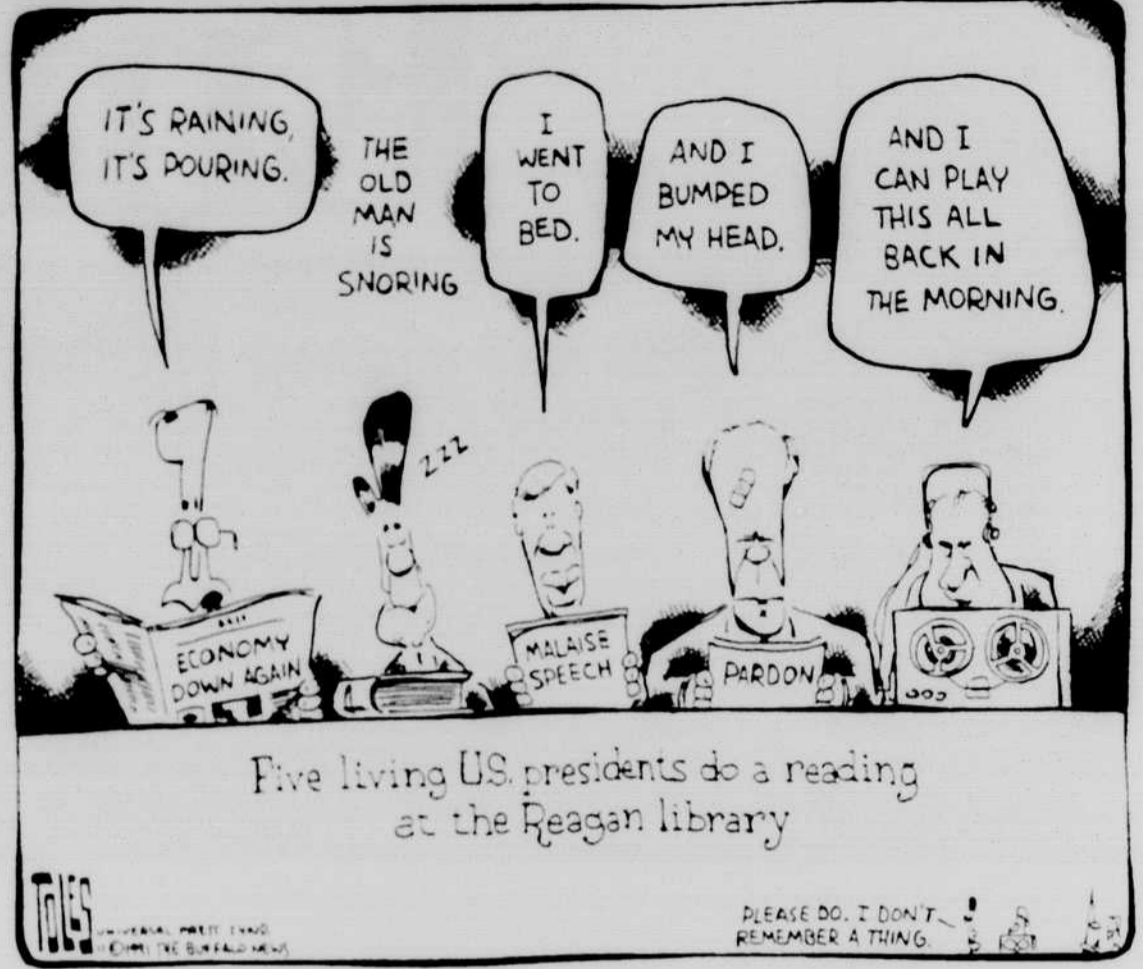
From this corner, there is no support or condemnation for removing Watson from office. However, to deny students — voters — their legal right to speak on this matter is neither fair or just. Opposition to this petition simply removes the "student" from student government.

However, irony is not entirely absent from this issue. For petitioners to get a recall on the ballot, they need signatures from 10 percent of the student population. Only 6 percent of the students voted in the last election. The discrepancy between the two numbers should not be overlooked.

Bills and Watson, who have claimed great student support since the story broke, should welcome this opportunity to clear Watson's name. If voters really do believe in Watson, they will not sign the petition and the recall effort will wither. If it does go to a ballot and is defeated, the same thing happens. There will be no further recourse against her. The voters will have spoken, one way or the other. For proclaimed defenders of student's rights, that should strike them as fair.

Yes, we have all made mistakes in our lives, but we are all not ASUO vice presidents. Politicians have an obligation not only to the people who put them into office, but the ones who voted against them as well. There is something called public trust, and University students will have to decide whether Watson broke it.

Ultimately it is up to the individual student. No urging, one way or the other; just think about it.



Five living U.S. presidents do a reading at the Reagan library

PLEASE DO. I DON'T REMEMBER A THING.

OPINION

Reagan as far as the eye can see



THE FINE PRINT

BY DON PETERS

To the sound of rushing F-16 jets and droning ex-presidents, the Ronald Reagan presidential library thus debuted.

These libraries are nothing new. Every former president has one. The idea of continuing their political influence from beyond the grave is just too attractive. Presidents can now screw up the next generation of voters with little or no effort.

There was enough gushing going on at the opening to run a hydro-electric plant, and sufficient hot air to float the *Hindenburg*. Five presidents — four ex, one present — attended the ceremony, which quickly turned into a Ronald Reagan love-in.

Said President Bush, "No leader since Churchill used words so effectively to help freedom unchain our world."

Possibly. If true, that surely tells the sad state of politics in the last 40 years. However, Churchill at least knew the day the Battle of Britain began.

Oops, wrong president. Sorry George.

Richard Nixon said Reagan "restored America's military might." Gerald Ford countered with "(he was) able to articulate the highest hopes and deepest beliefs of the American people."

Definitely not a day for those with weak stomachs. Hopefully, some benevolent airline issued to the crowd some complimentary "courtesy bags."

An entire library devoted to the Ronald Reagan legacy is enough to boggle the mind and sicken the stomach. There hasn't been this much self-congratulatory backslapping in a long time: something we can all be thankful for.

But the library isn't com-

plete. Not yet.

Through intrepid reporting and wide-spread doling out of bribe money, I have managed to get a preliminary list of displays that will be added to the collection.

Coming soon to the Reagan library:

The "Just Say No" reading room. Dedicated to Reagan's favorite post-presidential saying. Patrons can browse the specially made wallpaper filled with the infamous "I don't remember" quote.

The "What Scandal?" exhibit. A broom closet full of hot air, dust and skeletons. Iran-

These libraries are nothing new. Every former president has one. The idea of continuing their political influence from beyond the grave is just too attractive.

Contra never looked so good.

The "I'm In Charge Here" wing. The comedy portion of the collection. Watch the thrilling moment as Reagan's first Secretary of State Alexander Haig makes a fool out of himself on national television while attempting an ill-fated grab at the reins of presidential power.

The "Deficit, Smeficit" display. A continuously clicking monitor of the national debt. Reagan's biggest contribution to the American way of life, this exhibit has a few technical problems. The whirring speed of the numbers keeps burning out the engine.

The "Faces of Reagan" hallway. A pictorial of the different faces Reagan displayed during his eight years in office. All two of them.

The "Edwin Meese: Man or Myth" video extravaganza. Not for the faint-hearted. Listen to the former attorney general discuss — at length — his political views. Antacids tablets and cyanide pills are included in the admission price.

The "Better Than a Fortune Cookie" astrological chart. All of Reagan's decisions put in an easy-to-read format, corresponding to where his House of Venus was for the month. It explains a lot, most notably his nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court.

The "Now You See Him, Now You Don't" memorial. A summation of Donald Regan's contribution to the Reagan administration. A hard to find exhibit, it's located in the basement. Around a corner. Near the boiler room.

The "We Deny Everything" eternal flame. State of the art technology feeds copies of Kitty Kelley's Nancy Reagan biography into the fire to keep this display a burnin'.

The "Evil McEmpire" rotunda. A granite slab engraved with the names of all the former Red Army soldiers now flipping McBorsht burgers in Moscow.

The "I Wanna Be a President" corridor. Dedicated to former Reaganite James Baker, who, in his new job, continuously strives to make himself look good while at the same time racking up the frequent flyer miles. He should be eligible for that trip to Hawaii any day now.

Reagan had his faults (understatement) but at least he was fun to have around. Only Dana Carvey does a really good George Bush impression, but everybody can mimic the famous Reagan drawl and goofy grin.

Go ahead. Do something nice for yourself. Do a Reagan impression. It'll make you feel much better.

I promise.

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