

# Networks' decision shows little class

Once again, West Coast voters will know who has won the presidential election before they vote.

In 1984, the TV networks projected Ronald Reagan as the winner as early as 5:15 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. The polls on the West Coast don't close until 8 p.m.

This means when people who came home from a long day of work and turned on the TV, they were informed of the winner of the presidential race. Their response was likely, "my vote doesn't matter."

The networks say there's nothing wrong with the practice. If they get the news, they are going to share it with us.

Normally, that's fine. The networks have a responsibility to deliver the news in as quick a manner as possible, especially when it's important. But when it comes to politics, it's an entirely different issue.

The networks are effectively discouraging people from voting. If someone doesn't think his or her vote matters, there's nothing to stop that person from staying home. The entire point of voter registration drives this year were to encourage people to vote. Now the networks are reversing the trend.

People may argue that projecting the presidential winner is no big deal. They may believe the candidate would have won anyway. But there are other races going on within

**It's dangerous to underestimate the laziness of the average voter.**

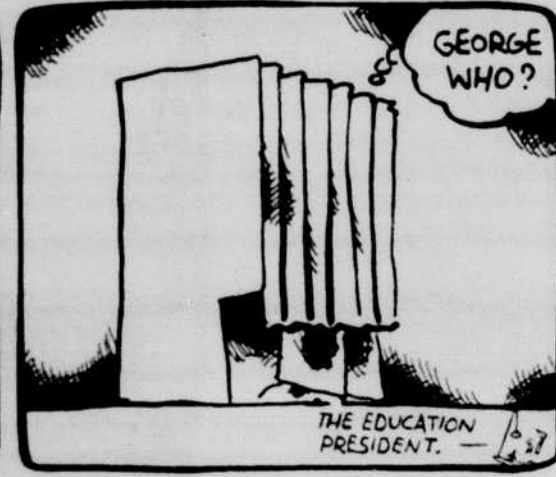
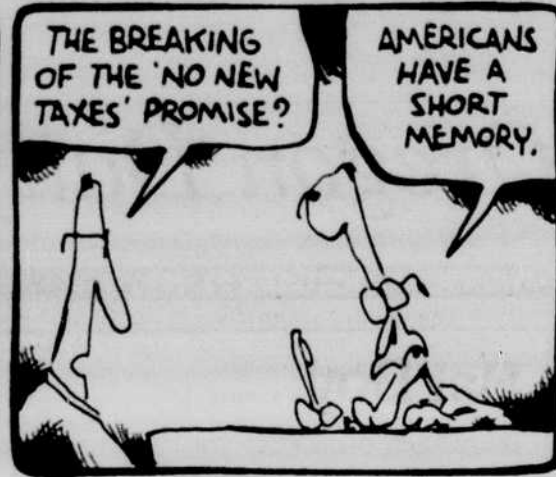
individual states that are a big deal. Oregon has the Au-Coin/Packwood battle and several significant ballot measures, including Measure 9. That particular measure should be enough to encourage people to vote because not only the state — but the nation — is watching.

The networks also argue that people will be responsible enough to vote anyway. And they're right. The average person should realize the importance of expressing his or her opinion on matters of national significance. And according to an *Oregonian* poll, only 3 percent of those not voting in 1984 chose that path because of network projections.

But it is optimistic to assume that everyone will fulfill their voting responsibility. It's dangerous to underestimate the laziness of the average citizen. People need more reasons to vote, not less.

The question is why networks insist on projecting winners when it could potentially affect so many voters? Two reasons: ratings and scoops. News organizations are always looking to get the big story before their competitors, and the networks are no different. Certainly ABC isn't going to delay its projection if NBC and CBS are broadcasting the story. They know their ratings will be down and the other two will be up. One of the networks needs to step up and say, "We're not going to do it."

Unfortunately, that's not likely. They want the story too much. West Coast voters deserve better, though.



## LETTERS

### Neet's not neat

Loretta Neet of the Oregon Citizens Alliance held a press conference last week, a sneak preview of what's in store for Oregon teachers if Ballot Measure 9 passes. And what an odious little tale Neet helped spread.

Her front person, a Thurston Middle School parent, said her daughter "felt uncomfortable" taking a shower in the presence of a teacher (KUGN, Oct. 15). She said the teacher "stared at" her daughter (*Register-Guard*, Oct. 16), although she didn't exactly say the teacher "was a lesbian."

She then said she hadn't planned on filing a complaint until Neet "explained the process."

What else about the process might Neet have discussed? Thirty lashes at the public pillory? The public "dunking seat"? (If the teacher didn't drown, she's innocent ... if she did, well ... that proves she's gay!) Burning at the stake?

Neet's trial by innuendo is not one whit removed from the hysteria enacted by the religious extremists in Salem, Mass., circa 1700s.

Make no mistake, if Measure 9 passes, more of these witch hunts will be aimed at Oregon teachers ... fear and suspicion will be the order of the day for Oregon's schools.

But we can put a stop to Neet's and the OCA's ambitions of being Oregon's Morality Police and Witch Hunters, Inc. Vote no on Measure 9, Nov. 3. Cast your vote opposing bigotry and supporting diversity, equality and freedom for all Oregon citizens.

Carol Berg  
Eugene

### Mad as spit

I went to the memorial for Brian Mock and Hattie Cohens a couple of Fridays ago. I never thought things could get this bad. Didn't we determine that consenting adults could sex

each other up all they want in private?

Now, suddenly, when pressing fundamental economic questions should be read-dressed — concerns that affect the material lives of all people whether they be gay, straight or bored — some self-righteous, self-centered sexual fascists think they can barge in and lobotomize our social conscience.

I am horrified at the murders of innocents slain because of their love. I am mad as spit at Ballot Measure 9 and its diversionary impact on the debate over the nature of our political economy. The million-plus dollars raised to fight Measure 9 would be better directed against AIDS.

But it's like we're battling a house-fire and someone's kicking us in the crotch. I think it could all be a very successful ploy on the part of the right to distract attention from the fact that the entire wealth of the country is quietly being sucked up by a few cold capitalists, while their fundamentalist, moronic minions shriek about queer teachers in the schools as the entire educational system teeters on the brink of farcical collapse because of the very policies of their bosses.

The limits of my patience for the Measure 9 crap have been reached. Now we transcend the passive tense. Trash it. Next!

Chris Brady  
History

### Oregon's home

I have been a resident of Oregon since 1968, when my father retired from the military and moved our family back to his home state. I have many fond memories of my childhood spent on a farm a few miles south of Tillamook.

Now in 1992, I am afraid for the future of this state I am proud to call home. When I was a teen-ager attending Tillamook High School, I began to realize that I was different from most of my classmates. Although no teacher or counselor spoke of homosexuality at

school, I gradually became aware that I was lesbian in my orientation.

I met my partner Laura in 1982, and last year we purchased a home in Eugene for ourselves and our five cats. We are fortunate to have supportive families and good friends, both gay and straight. We are not "militant," nor are we unhealthy or intent on molesting children. We do not ask for "special rights" — we simply want to live our lives peacefully and without fear of verbal or physical attacks by people who have been encouraged by the OCA to view us as perverse and abnormal.

The defeat of Measure 9 will not grant special rights to anyone, but it will demonstrate that Oregonians do not want to legalize discrimination against any citizens of this state. Please vote no on Measure 9 and keep Oregon a place we can all call home.

Catherine Johnson  
Eugene

### Foot of Gorax

I am writing in response to Norm Kuehl's letter (*ODE*, Oct. 16) about him being a Satanist in favor of Ballot Measure 9. Kuehl expresses feelings that are not felt by all Satanists. I am a Satanist, as well, but there is a big difference between Kuehl and myself; I am a gay Satanist. I personally don't know any Satanist who favors Measure 9.

I feel that we all need to learn how to get along, what is done in the privacy of one's home is his or her choice. I hope that some day, all Satanists will get along whether they be straight, bisexual, into bestiality or whatever they choose to do.

Unfortunately this day has not come, so I will conclude with a personal message to Kuehl, "I curse you with the foot of Gorax."

Russell Loomis  
History

# Oregon Daily Emerald

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