

Voters want cures, give only diseases

Voters signed the state's death warrant when they passed 1990's Ballot Measure 5. Property taxes were sliced dramatically — no replacement tax was proposed — leaving a monumental budget crisis on the governor's hands.

Gov. Barbara Roberts was elected just in time to face the brunt of the dilemma. Since then, she has worked to pass a sales tax — to no avail — and has proposed a comprehensive budget-cutting plan to be discussed in the Legislature's next session.

Despite her efforts, some Oregonians aren't happy with Roberts. They accuse her of wasting her time in office and failing to understand the priorities of citizens. Disgruntled voters launched two recall efforts, which have failed.

Her only crime is not solving a voter-imposed crisis to the satisfaction of the electorate. True, the state has yet to settle the Measure 5 dilemma in a positive way. Drastic budget cuts are likely, many of which will devastate statewide programs — including education.

But in Roberts' defense, nobody could handle Oregon's situation to everyone's satisfaction. She tried to put a sales tax on the ballot, but the Legislature killed it when the members' egos were not stroked sufficiently. House Speaker Larry Campbell stubbornly opposed Roberts — probably leading to the tax's defeat — presumably because of the political threat a sales tax imposes to any politician.

The only shame is the treatment Roberts gets from the people who elected her.

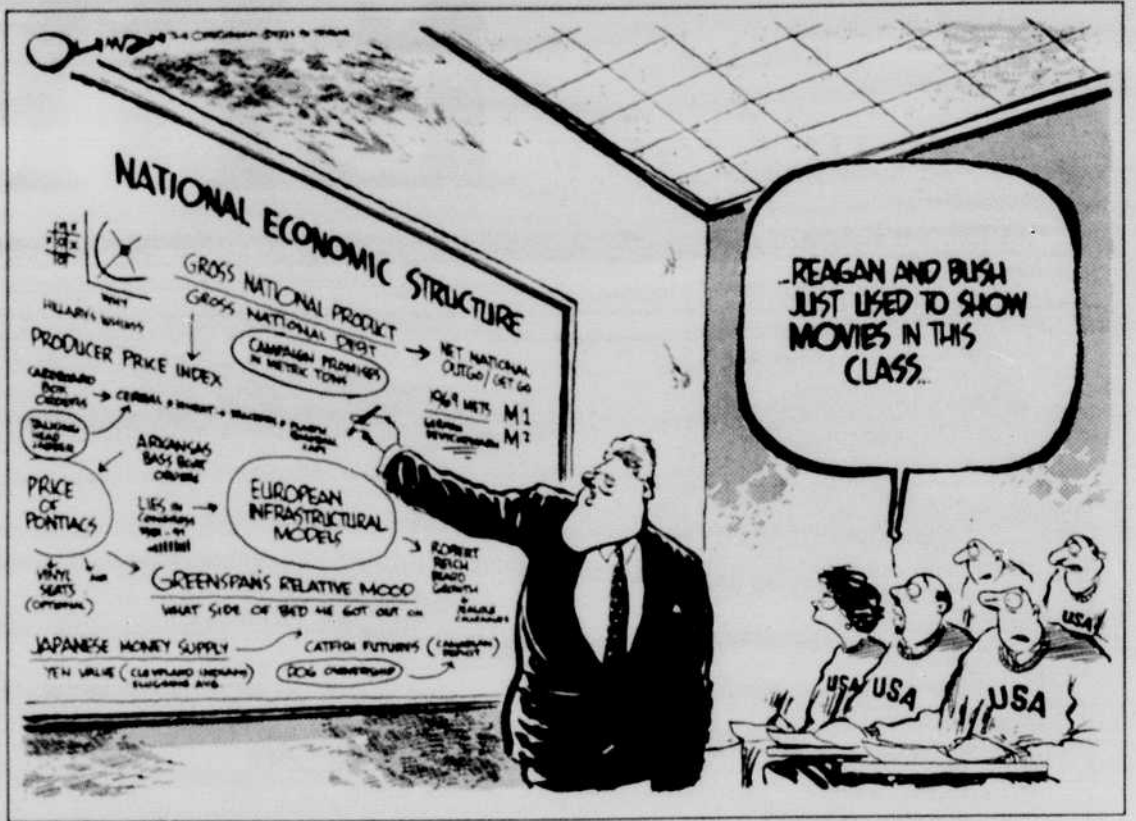
And as most Oregon citizens are aware, voters would probably turn down a sales tax anyway. It's been done countless times before.

Roberts has unjustly become a scapegoat for the problems of the state. Welfare and other social services will be cut, schools will lose money and police funding will be reduced. Roberts will, of course, be blamed for these problems because she drew up the budget.

She had few other options. She can propose another sales tax, but apparently it won't be considered until the Legislature and the voters truly understand the state's fiscal situation. Nobody's content right now, but nobody's taking responsibility — aside from Roberts — for the crisis either.

Realistically, blame can only fall on the voters' shoulders. If Roberts fails to work on other problems within the state, such as the gradual de-emphasis of timber as Oregon's primary economic industry, she is criticized. But can she be faulted for ignoring other issues when Measure 5 is present? It's a monstrous problem, and one that won't go away by blinking.

If the voters aren't happy with Roberts' performance, perhaps they shouldn't have passed Measure 5 in the first place. There is nothing shameful about the job Roberts has done. The only shame is the treatment she gets from the people who elected her.



COMMENTARY

University education not so great

By Daniel T. Frank

Here I am, the third term at Mickey's house (the University) here in Disneyland (Eugene), where "earthy" liberalism is the standard, and the quality of education is a poor dollar-for-dollar value.

As a Portland transplant, I am again wondering why the cost of a University education at Mickey's house is so expensive, yet so cheap in quality.

At Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, for \$350 a term, just a little more than one-third of the \$900 a term at Mickey's house, I can honestly tell you that my history instructor, who had a Ph.D., was a "real historian," eager and anxious to share his wealth of knowledge and experience with his students.

And my geology instructor, a "real geologist" who is as educated equally in the field as in the classroom; he, too, was eager and anxious to share his wealth of knowledge and experience.

This is not so true at Mickey's house. At Mickey's house, enduring boring, pre-packaged lectures directly from the publishers, laboriously delivered with a sense of apathy, are standard. Lectures are so twisted and tangled that you leave feeling like a rat exhausted from running within a maze.

Where is the interaction among students and between student and teacher? Or is it that Mickey's house has only lecturers and not teachers?

Then come the tests, endowed with plenty of time, and being the good student that you are, you have already read the textbook. With still more time, you study those interesting lecture notes and the textbook.

Now, complete with the "exuberance" of the lectures, the textbook and your lecture notes, you remember almost everything and get that A or B you desired, right?

Just last night I was talking with my fiancée, who after five long years, graduated from the University in 1988. This is what she said to me:

"When I came to the University directly out of high school — having been an honor student every year — I was very confident; I felt like I could do anything. But by the time I graduated from the University, I lacked most of the confidence I had when I came. I think a lot of it has to do with how difficult I found it to do well when the classes were so boring and impersonal. They don't teach you at the University. You teach yourself."

At the Clackamas Community College English department, the instructors promoted free thinking and creative writing, with the objective of providing the student with the necessary skills to write effectively.

This is not true at Mickey's house. At Mickey's house, you must write with the same opinion or outlook as the instructor. Is this what a liberal education is about? Isn't the purpose of the University to create people who can think independently and effectively express their views and opinions?

Let me quote what my previous 300-level English instructor said to me:

"Coming to the University, where the level of proficiency expected from the student is much greater than the community college, I can understand why you may have some trouble."

I was quick to point out that in my opinion, the education I had received at the community college level was very good, and I resented her arrogance at assuming otherwise.

If at the end of a hard day of lectures, crowded rooms and stale air you find yourself frustrated and feeling either too slow or too stupid to get that

I doubt many instructors really care about the opinions of the student body, and therefore probably don't read the Emerald.

or B, console yourself. You are not too slow or too stupid. As with most University students, you are just overworked and under-taught.

Having said so much, you may be thinking to yourself: Isn't this guy a little nervous about writing so critically of Mickey's house? After all, what if one of his instructors read this thing?

No, and this is why: First of all, I doubt many instructors really care about the opinion of the student body, and therefore probably don't read the Emerald.

Secondly, if any of my instructors do read this, they probably don't know who the hell I am anyway.

And third, if it is my English instructor, I doubt he could be more critical of my work than he already is. What's a few more destructive comments scribbled on my papers?

A word of advice: Don't waste \$900 a term in Disneyland at Mickey's house. First go to the community college until you can no longer — then meet me in Portland at Lewis and Clark or Reed College.

Daniel T. Frank is a sophomore majoring in pre-journalism.

COMMENTARY POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald welcomes commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community.

Commentaries should be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for grammar, style and length if necessary.

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