

Traffic booth OK; cost way too much

The Office of Public Safety wants to protect students from traffic snarls on 13th Avenue with a new traffic booth.

Located between Oregon Hall and the Student Health Center, the booth cost the University \$43,000 and was paid for with money from parking tickets and a bicycle improvement fund.

Once the booth is operational, an OPS employee will staff the it from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and ask incoming drivers for their destination. If there is another way to reach that destination, the driver will be asked to turn around and use the alternate route.

There's nothing especially wrong with booths. Some campuses use them as informational facilities, especially at central campus entrances. Some schools use booths for security when the campus is located in a dangerous area. But the main purpose of this booth, according to OPS, is to reduce car traffic on 13th Avenue.

Because of the one-way nature of 13th Avenue, it is an especially dangerous place. When drivers don't realize they have passed from a two-way street to a one-way, they can end up heading straight for bewildered bikers legally using the bike lane on the north side of the road.

There is also a problem with some impatient drivers who have made the unfortunate mistake of driving to the corner of 13th Avenue and University Street when classes have let out.

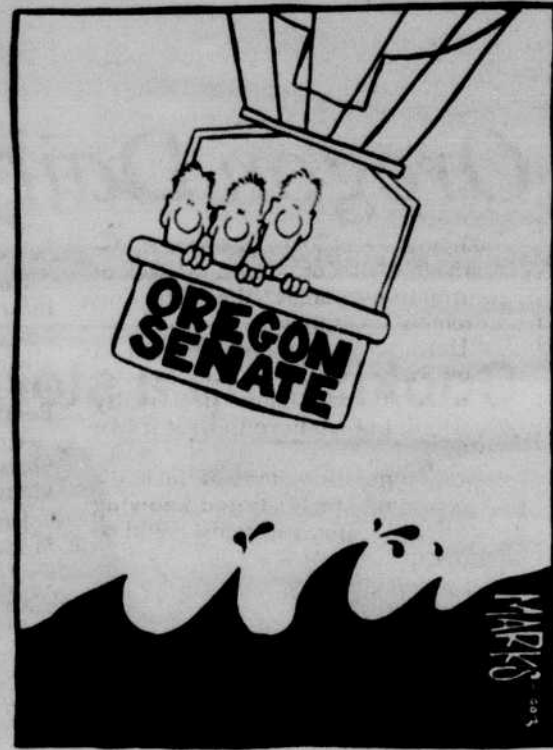
After waiting several minutes for the never-ending stream of students to clear the street, many of these drivers begin inching forward in a confrontational manner in order to break through to the other side of the student blockade. No serious confrontations between pedestrians and autos have occurred yet, but the potential is there.

With the booth in place to ferret out unnecessary traffic, these snarls are unlikely to occur. More importantly, people who can justify traveling up 13th Avenue can be warned that they may face a delay.

The only questionable aspect of the new booth is its considerable cost. There are some places where you can still build a house for \$43,000. Although the idea of the booth is a good one, \$43,000 is way too much money to invest on such a small project. This is the second time in the past few months the University has spent a significant amount of money on a questionable project. The covered bike racks outside the EMU cost \$98,000, and there is no proof that more people ride their bicycles to school now than before.

The traffic booth is a good idea, but all other options should have been evaluated before such a significant amount of money was spent.

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LETTERS

Will always be

This is in response to Martin Fisher's column that states he resents being labeled as a Euro-American (*ODE*, Jan. 26). I, too, would like to be "just an American, no hyphens, thank you." But when I tell people that, they start to drill me about where I'm from. They usually don't seem satisfied with "Portland." They want to know where I'm really from.

Writer Toni Morrison has an interesting thing to say about the word "American" in her book, *Playing in the Dark*. She writes that "deep within the word 'American' is its association with race. To identify someone as a South African is to say very little; we need the adjective 'white' or 'black' or 'colored' to make our meaning clear.

"In this country it is quite reverse. American means white, and Africanist people (and other minorities) struggle to make the term applicable to themselves with ethnicity and hyphen after hyphen after hyphen."

Like it or not, Fisher will always be a Euro-American to me, as long as I am a Chinese-American to him.

Linda Liu
Journalism

Pre-judged

Apparently the proverb about repeating the injustices of history unless we heed their lessons, flew right by Steve Masat, Zoe Pargot and Barbara Rodgers, as they buried their noses among the pages of a provocative issue of the *Commentator*. (*ODE*, Feb. 3).

I commend their exquisite choice of reading materials, yet I cannot understand what possessed them to condemn Ed Carson because he is a conservative.

My displeasure stems from their protest of Carson being confirmed to a seat on the Incidental Fee Committee, simply because he is affiliated with a conservative journal (the *Commentator*).

Carson's opposition is acting in a fashion that is undeniably chic for the next four years. The plight of all conservatives today

is to be pre-judged and discriminated against in a manner that reeks of anti-semitism, or any other "-ism" that pertains to treating people poorly as a result of their beliefs.

Carson is neither a racist nor is he a homophobe. Labeling like that went out with the duck walk. Yet to reprimand someone for becoming active in campus publications and student government would certainly give Hitler a hearty chuckle.

Stereotyping and discrimination are not hip, even under the guise of diversity. Good luck to Carson and may harmony find a way to skinny through the fangs of the IFC.

Joshua Peterson
Undeclared

Good choice

Who does the Incidental Fee Committee think it's kidding? Several members of the IFC question the appropriateness of Ed Carson, managing editor of the *Commentator*, being involved in allocating money to student groups — and yet several current IFC members are themselves members of these groups.

Do they have some reason for thinking they can be so intimately involved in special interests and yet remain impartial in allocating student money to organizations campus-wide, yet Carson, who has no such conflicting interests, cannot?

Diana Collins, ASUO multicultural advocate, meanwhile complains that Carson's appointment sends a "... bad message to students of color..." She contends, "He has created a non-hospitable climate for women and people of color on this campus." (*ODE*, Feb. 3).

How many people did she talk to in forming this opinion? Far from being open minded, she has tried and publicly convicted him of bigotry on the basis of his *Commentator* affiliation.

I believe I know Carson well enough to say she is wrong, and the flimsy basis of her judgment reveals a serious lack of professionalism. It seems the IFC likewise has little respect for students outside its special interests.

In this light, I applaud ASUO President Bobby Lee's appointment of an informed and qualified candidate to the IFC. I would hope the members of this group who are so quick to judge and condemn will someday open their eyes and realize their's are not the only opinions that matter. Perhaps then voter turnout will at last reach the double digits.

John R. Ford
Biochemistry

Civil rights

I just moved to Eugene about a month ago, and I was excited the anti-gay measure did not go through in this state, but when I read about what happened to Steve Laliberty and his friend (*ODE*, Feb. 2) I was saddened and disappointed.

I wish we in this country could learn from our mistakes of the past, using history as our teacher.

In the 1960s, African-Americans, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, marched for their civil rights while bigots threw stones and yelled obscenities at them. In the South, civil rights activists, both white and black, were murdered, and the president of the United States had to call in the armed forces to protect African-American students who were the first to desegregate the all-white public schools in Arkansas.

I see a direct parallel between the way African-Americans were treated then and the way gay people are treated today. I would ask all homophobic people to take a long look at themselves and try to discover what they are so afraid of and why they are so hateful.

I think they will find their homophobia stems from their own insecurities about themselves.

We all know that the day will come when gay people are no longer treated as second-class citizens. And when your children read the history books, wouldn't you like to be able to tell them you fought on the side of civil rights and justice, not on the side of bigotry and hatred?

Kendel Bennett
Eugene

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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