

System encourages foolish promises

Americans have turned the political system into an art form.

Candidates for the party nomination scratch and claw their way to the top, stopping at nothing to destroy each other's reputation. Once the party nominee is finally selected, he or she throws around unrealistic promises like confetti, hoping at least a few will hit the mark.

President Clinton is the latest in a long line of political artists. He was elected in November by voters willing to trust his judgments. He wasn't a desperate back-stabber, like Bush, nor a phony grandstander, like Perot. He was a genuinely committed dreamer with a vision for America.

Back to reality. Clinton won't fulfill anyone's promises for awhile because they're impossible to fill. He promised big things — too big — unattainable in this country's economic climate. Ironically, without those promises, he may have lost the election.

Clinton now admits he probably won't cut taxes for the middle class because the country can't afford it. No one should be surprised. The country could never afford it, but it was nice to think it could.

Clinton's college-aid plan, which would allow students across the nation to pay for their education through community service, is losing its steam. Rather than launching a nationwide initiative, Clinton apparently will recruit only 100,000 students for the program. The nation has neither the money nor the resources to employ millions of college students.

"It's the economy, stupid," was Clinton's pet phrase during the campaign, and he promised to focus his policies toward economic concerns. Yet his biggest decision so far was to strike down the military gay ban. Although the move certainly took courage, it wasn't the country's most pressing problem and perhaps didn't warrant the immediate attention Clinton gave it.

The point is not to deride Clinton's efforts, for he has made some admirable moves in his brief tenure. Both his abortion rights and family leave legislation were long overdue, and his progressive ideals will probably allow for many similar programs.

The point is that voters should no longer complain about broken campaign promises when they participate in a system that encourages them. Bush promised not to raise taxes in 1988. He did anyway. Clinton promised not to raise taxes on the middle class. He probably will.

Clinton would not have won had he told the country what it needed to hear. Perot made his pitch, but the last thing anyone wanted to do was pay a huge gas tax. Walter Mondale campaigned on a tax increase eight years ago — and lost by a landslide. In order to get things done, you have to get elected. And to get elected, you have to lie.

So don't be surprised or upset that Clinton is breaking promises. It's a prerequisite to the presidency. Without unattainable promises, the American public won't pay attention.



THE RETURN OF SLICK WILLIE.

LETTERS

Incense

I was incensed to read the article glorifying the extremely unhealthy methods employed by University wrestlers to make weight (ODE, Feb. 5).

Significant weight fluctuation is hazardous, even for those in "top physical shape" who are "closely monitored."

In addition, self-starvation, dehydration and excessive exercising comprise some of the dangerous behaviors associated with bulimia and should not be glamorized, regardless of the reason behind this pursuit.

Christine Shepherd
Eugene

spent on the booth came from parking fees and tickets. Obviously, the source of money is not very reliable.

If next year OPS can't get enough money, what will they do with the booth and the person who sits in the booth to "reduce traffic"? Is OPS going to ask for money from the University?

There is one more problem. Because OPS put the booth in the middle of the road, there is not enough space for bikers. Maybe this is a good way to push bikers to ride on the sidewalk so OPS can give more tickets to fill that money pit.

Chun-lung Huang
Leisure Studies and Services

like to see the traffic jam because it is set away from the main road, Agate Street. The personnel will be restricting traffic, but at least the University is trying. Good for them.

What I really would like to see is the bike lanes repainted between Agate and University streets so cars are not driving in my riding lane. And where it is a one-way, keep the bike lanes separated to the sides of the road, not both of them off to one side.

It can be very confusing. Thank you.

Brian Erickson
Organizational Management

Foaming

Do you want to be able to bring your children up on this planet? Polystyrene foam never biodegrades. Therefore, it takes up valuable space in our landfills forever. It is lethal to at least 50 known species of birds.

Chlorofluorocarbons, which destroy the ozone layer, are released when certain kinds of polystyrene foam is produced, and polystyrene foam recycling is not economically feasible.

We should follow others like Portland, Salem, Minneapolis, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, San Diego and Tempe to name a few.

Like them, we can curb the use of polystyrene foam to help ensure our planet can support our children and our children's children.

OSPIRG is leading a coalition to stop the use of polystyrene foam, and we need your support.

We will continue with the cleanup.

Chuck Edson
OSPIRG

Misplaced brains

I am writing this letter in response to the editorial on Feb. 4, titled "Mandatory gun law first of many steps." It would be useful to political discussion if the *Emerald* staff would treat Rep. Liz VanLeeuwen as if she had actually thought about, and had justification for, presenting this legislation to the Oregon House (known wastes of the House aside), rather than assuming she is hopelessly stupid.

It is entirely conceivable she was inspired by such models as Kennesaw, Ga., where in 1986 crime dropped 80 percent in the one-year period following the adoption of similar legislation.

Although I feel such legislation is at best impractical for our state, it would be interesting for (*Emerald* editorial editors) Martin Fisher and Rivers Janssen to do some research to back their opinion for the editorial, rather than take the easy route of nay-saying by writing poorly constructed parallels to the proposed situation that don't approach being funny.

The underlying assumption of my proposed course of action is the readers are intelligent enough to formulate opinions based on hard information. To cause people to think, rather than to use a editorial as a soapbox, ought to be the goal of an editorial editor.

It appears the clouds inhabiting the elevated strata of arrogant commentary also cause the misplacing of brains.

Jeff Merten
History

Checkpoint

The University Office of Public Safety spent \$43,000 on a booth located in the middle of the road in front of Oregon Hall. OPS said the purpose of the booth is to "reduce traffic."

The question is — is there traffic? I have been at the University for almost two years. I have never seen any traffic problem that would take \$43,000 to solve.

More than that, this tiny booth is going to cost more money in the future. The labor and maintenance of the booth are long-term burdens for OPS and the University. OPS said the money it

Confusing

The new manned booth on 13th Avenue is a good idea. I'd

Having talked with Carson on international issues, I believe Carson possesses a wide knowledge on international subjects, not only in the Western hemisphere, but Asia as well. Not only has gained respect from me, but from other foreign students who also know him.

The IFC plays a main role in promoting diversity because of its funding control to various organizations on campus. If some members of the IFC believe Carson is unacceptable because of his different political views and just want to select one of its own, then the IFC is just another N.A.T.O — No Action, Talk Only.

Vincent Chin
Pre-business

Oregon Daily Emerald

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