

Council must push harder for new tax

Eugene's proposed restaurant tax went down in flames last week, leaving the City Council with one pressing question: Now what?

The council had little choice but to put the restaurant tax on the ballot because the tax was the only tangible result of the Eugene Decisions survey. Eugene Decisions cost about \$400,000 and was supposed to reflect the voice of the populous.

It clearly did not, as the tax lost by a 60 percent to 40 percent count. Just as naysayers warned, the survey was filled out only by citizens concerned with finding a tax alternative, not by people content with the status quo.

The City Council now has to find an alternative revenue source. It isn't quite dead in the water yet, although it made a big mistake not putting its full weight behind the restaurant tax.

The council is going to have to accept that voters won't rally behind a new plan until the council itself does.

Mayor Ruth Bascom said there will be another revenue measure in September or November, as well as more cuts in local services. In the past, the council kicked around ideas for an energy tax or a progressive income tax — both promising, yet unlikely, ideas. The council must now reconsider these ideas or develop a new one — and then stand behind it.

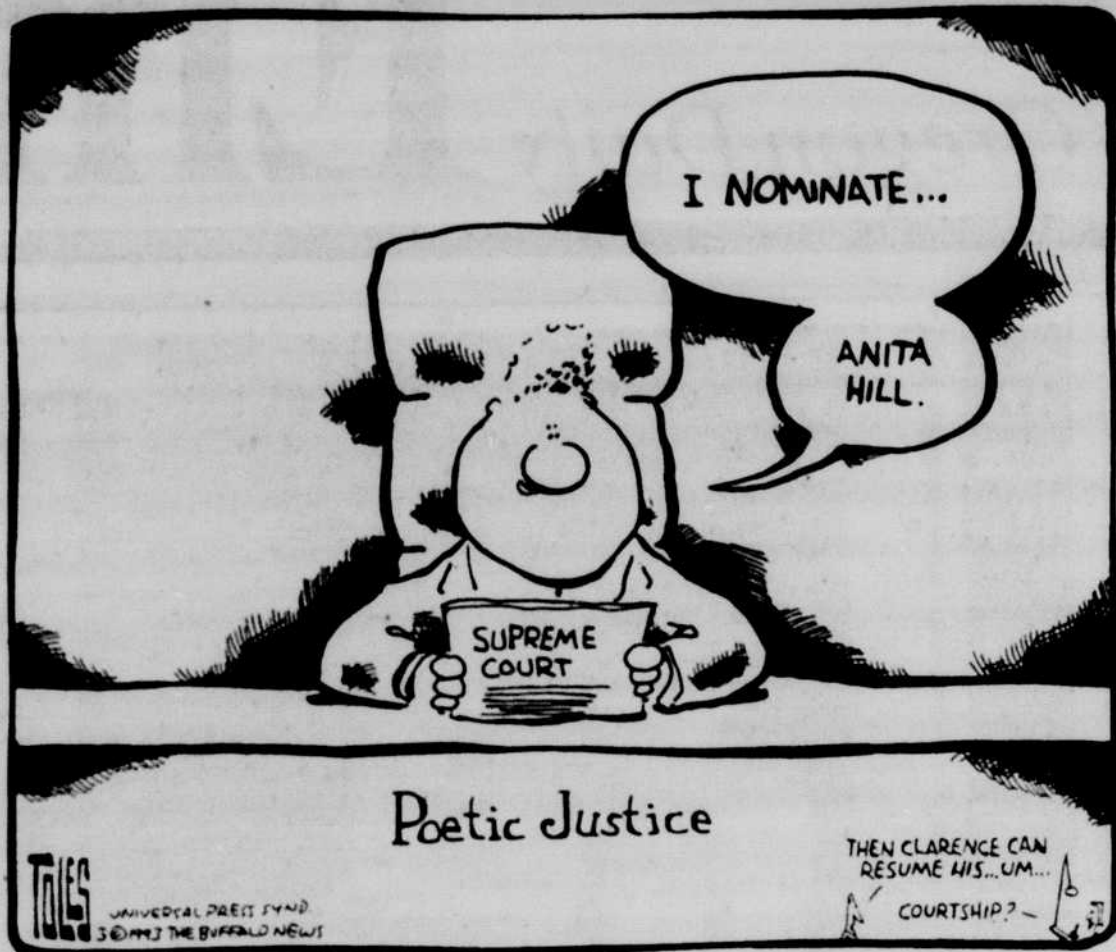
Voters have proved time and time again that they don't want new taxes. They've defeated a sales tax, reduced property taxes and now nixed a restaurant tax. They think fat needs to be cut from the budget. Unfortunately, the only fat that's left is in the voters' heads.

Reducing the city's deficit could come at the expense of Eugene's services — swimming pools, the Hult Center or the Eugene Celebration. Although these services may not be entirely necessary, they all make Eugene a more enjoyable place to live.

If the council is truly committed to finding replacement revenue rather than increasing cutbacks, it needs to convince voters by rallying hard behind one particular tax solution. When the majority of council members support a proposal, the entire council needs to stand firm, whatever tax solution they pick. Dissension among specific members won't help anything. It only increases doubt in the voters' minds when the council itself can't agree on a tax.

The council also needs to focus the funding more, a problem it has already recognized. A new tax measure must tell voters exactly where the money will go. Citizens are distrustful of money that goes into a general fund. They believe the city will use it in the usual wasteful ways. But if the measure were to specify exactly where the money is going, voters would feel slightly more at ease.

The City Council still has a lot of work to do. But before it gets anywhere, the council is going to have to accept that voters won't rally behind a new plan until the council itself does.



COMMENTARY

Students need instructor support



Write Angles

JEN ELLISON

While wandering through my college career here at the University, I have been discouraged again and again from pursuing my dream career: magazine journalism. Professors tell me I'm good, but not good enough.

Sitting in classes in the School of Journalism, I constantly listen to stories of how hard it is to find a journalism job and how ready I should be for the mailroom or secretary's desk when I graduate. My personal favorite is, "You can try and try and try again and still may never find a job."

This warning of preeminent failure scared me into applying for internships the summer before my senior year. I asked a professor if he could connect me with anyone in entertainment journalism in Los Angeles.

I wrote a letter explaining what I had done and what I want to do when I graduate and sent it to my professor's friend. My letter and resume were passed on to three entertainment magazines, all of which were interested in meeting me while I was in LA for spring break.

I interviewed with three entertainment magazines in Hollywood, inquired about internship opportunities and future openings in the field, and shared my journalistic experiences.

The response I received from these professionals was astounding. They were excited about me taking the time to visit them over break and assured me they were always looking for new talent, just like any other field. They were impressed by my initiative to hunt down editors and ask about internships, as well as jobs.

They liked my writing style,

unlike my professors, and assured me I would not have trouble getting a job in magazine journalism because of my initiative, motivation, love for the field and talent. They told me there are jobs out there. After four years of journalism schooling, I was finally assured I was OK.

Two of the magazines offered me internships — one paid, one volunteer — and the third encouraged me to apply for a beginning position that will open in August.

The moral of my story: Don't let people discourage you, even those who seem like they should know, such as a professor. There is a fine line between pushing students to do better and discouraging them altogether.

As a peer adviser for the School of Journalism, I have seen a great deal of discouragement and its effects on the students. How do we, as students, know that we aren't good enough? Didn't Robin Williams teach us anything in *Dead Poets Society* when he told us to "seize the day"?

Think for yourself. Question authority. Don't let anyone tell you you aren't good enough. You are as good as you let yourself be. If I let myself believe what I was told, I would never have met those people in LA, nor would I have a summer internship with my dream magazine. It's all a matter of what you're willing to believe about yourself.

Professors need to encourage us where we have strengths, in addition to helping us with our weaknesses. We aren't paying \$900 to \$2,700 a term to be told we aren't good enough and that we'll never get a job when we graduate.

We students need to be reminded of our strengths. Too much criticism can destroy a very talented person's confidence. There will be rough times out there for some of us, but leaving this place with the belief that we will fail only hinders us. This goes for everybody, not just journalism majors.

Some people are lucky enough to have companies visit the University looking for talent. There are hundreds of jobs out there for every employer that comes to campus. (I'm not counting *Playboy*, this week's visitor.)

Start calling around early. Get internships or other forms of experience that help you build toward your career. Internships can help you decide what you like and don't like while you're trying to decide on a career. These things look good to future employers and show that you are a responsible person with initiative, a desired asset in employees.

The most important thing to remember while wandering the campus grounds and pushing through those degree requirements is believing in yourself. Don't let anyone make you believe you're not good enough. I can't stress this enough. Too many people have left school because of these feelings.

Go out and meet professionals in your future field or the fields that you're interested in. Most will be more than happy to invest a few minutes. We are the future, and they know it. Show them what you've done. Get their feedback. Ask how your resume looks.

Is there something you can do while you're still in school to help you get a job when you graduate? Are you on the right track? Ask professionals what you could do to better prepare yourself for the job market and raise your chances for getting a job.

Don't depend on what your professors say as the final word. I felt like a better journalist talking to professionals than I ever did in the classroom.

When it comes to your shot at a career, talk to the experts — the current professionals in the field.

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