

## Owner loses battle between gas, God

Texaco said the buck stops with it. Barry Davis said the buck stops with God. On Thursday, Texaco said Davis's bucks will just stop.

Davis claims Texaco and the government are attempting to infringe upon his freedom of religion. Texaco says it just wants Davis to honor his contract.

Davis leased three Texaco gas stations, including one in Eugene, and was required to keep the stations open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, Davis, a fundamentalist Christian, decided to close his stations from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday to observe the sabbath.

Texaco twice took Davis to court for violating his leases and won both times. Davis, however, has ignored the courts' rulings. Davis began closing the stations last year, after several years of running them in compliance with his leases, according to Texaco.

**Davis signed his leases with full knowledge that he was required to keep the stations open around the clock.**

Obviously, this is a delicate issue. Davis certainly has a right to observe the sabbath or any other religious belief he has. And few would be willing to grant the government authority to order people to violate their religion.

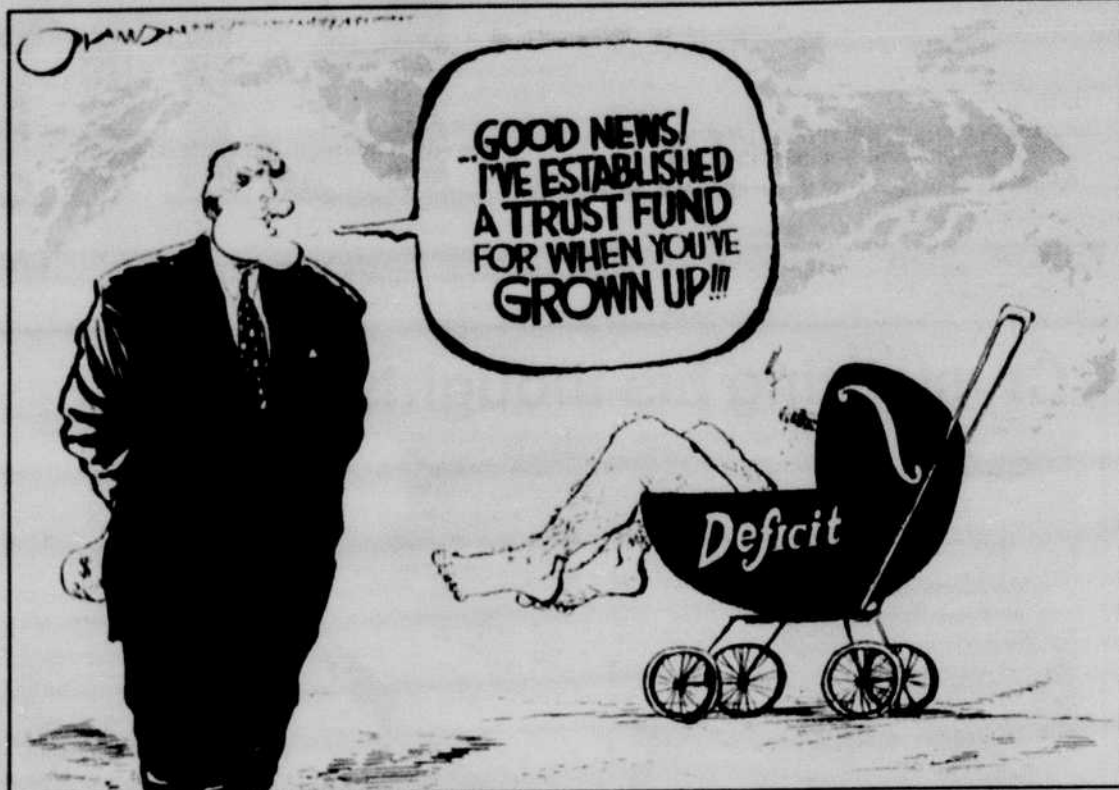
However, that is not the case here. Davis signed his leases with full knowledge that he was required to keep the stations open around the clock. When he decided to start closing them, he should have known he was violating his agreements.

Davis argues that his freedom of religion is being oppressed. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one is telling Davis what religion he must practice or that he can't practice his religion.

All Davis has to do is get others to run the stations for him during the sabbath. His religion does not apply to the individual stations, it applies to him. He could stay home, observe his religion, and every one would be happy.

Granted, Texaco could have at least considered making an exception for Davis. It would probably have been little skin of Texaco's nose if three of its Oregon stations were closed once a week. However, Davis himself appears to have made little effort to seek a resolution to the problem. His unilateral closing of the stations and ignoring of court orders suggests an unfortunate lack of flexibility.

The issue is not one of religious freedom but of honoring a contractual obligation. With a little flexibility by either side, these two concepts could coexist peacefully.



## LETTERS

### Equal time

I am baffled by University Provost Norm Wessells' letter (*ODE*, May 14). He adamantly defended Jacob Beck, J.T. Sanders, Tom Givon, Glen Love and Paul Csonka, the "respected" professors slandered by the *Student Insurgent*.

"Advocacy of a point of view that relies on blatant efforts to intimidate faculty or any others who wish to engage in enlightening examination of a complex question should be rejected by the University community," wrote Wessells.

I am confused why our provost did not defend with such vigor the integrity of Clarence Spigner, Sandra Morgen and the rest of the Multicultural Curriculum Committee.

In a three-page memo distributed to all faculty, Givon used language that implied Spigner and the rest of the Multicultural Curriculum Committee were anti-Semitic "ayatollahs" of politically correct views and that they were outright racist themselves.

Wessells did nothing.

On April 7, Beck grabbed Morgen's wrists at the University Assembly meeting. It was captured by local news reporters, and if you missed the broadcast, look in the April 8 *Register Guard*.

Where was Wessells?

At the last assembly meeting, Sanders moved to delete the identity of Asian-Americans and all people of color from the requirement. Why am I so vehemently against the generic term "minority"? It belittles the experiences of my people. No other oppressed group has been enslaved, interned, exploited or murdered en masse in the United States, with the exception of people of color.

Why isn't Wessells defending us?

I do not support the *Insurgent*, but I demand equal treatment and justice.

Dick Lee  
English

### Definitions

It is sometimes asserted that people, practices, ideas or institutions are "racist" or exhibit

"racism." Without addressing the propriety of making such assertions, I would like to offer some suggestions as to what they might be taken to mean.

Racism:

A) The belief that people can be divided into several "races" so that everyone is assigned a race, and no one is assigned more than one.

B) The belief that such a division makes possible useful processes of human reproduction.

C) The belief that such a division makes possible useful predictions about external anatomy.

D) Internal anatomy.

E) Behavior.

F) The belief that such a division should or must play a determinant role in law.

G) In behavior.

H) In the valuation or evaluation of individuals.

Note that A is an obvious mathematical truth, but B is biologically, or at least historically, false. C, D and E contain potentially testable hypotheses and F, G and H do not. Almost all Americans are implicitly or explicitly racist according to at least six of these definitions. I do not claim to have exhausted the possibilities.

Jerome Berryhill  
Chemical Physics

### Precious gift

Thank you Bob Weigel for being courageous and standing up for your beliefs (*ODE*, May 18). I too believe in pre-marriage celibacy. It takes lots of determination and self-control, but it is worth it.

There is a woman out there who will value the precious gift you are saving for her. Just remember, there are many who are on your side. You are not alone.

Sharon Graville  
English  
Psychology

### Bigot crusade

May 17 brought the upsetting experience of evangelists on campus — and they weren't even students. Did campus crusaders hire "Rent-a-Bigot?"

They have freedom of speech, but they do not have the right to attack others. At such a central location of campus, it is impossible to ignore them.

If they had been preaching racism or anti-Semitism, they would not have been allowed, so why were their homophobic and violently anti-choice ravings? A university should be a community where diversity is embraced; instead I felt attacked and threatened. I am here to learn, but how am I to concentrate on taking a test when outside of the classroom people are shouting that I do not deserve human respect?

I do not want to make an issue of my sexual orientation. I am very tired of being an issue, a cause or a statistic. I am a person who is not heterosexual. But these attacks force me to wear a pink triangle everywhere I go, to "out" myself to strangers. I have many important things to worry about, and defending my safety and civil rights should not need to be a focus.

I appeal to all campus powers that be that there not be a recurrence of this nauseating event. As I respect the rights of all Christians to exist, I demand the same respect.

Heidi Bowman  
Comparative Literature

### All washed up

An open letter to the person who stole my detergent:

We live in a society, and in doing so we agree to consent to certain limitations to our behavior. By accepting the benefits of societal living, we also accept the drawbacks. One such drawback is that it is not OK to take other people's possessions, for example, detergent.

If you are in the Bean Complex laundry room and see someone's nearly full box of detergent, and even if your every cell yearns to grab it and run away, you simply cannot. We do not live under martial law. We are not savages. Might does not make right.

Here is a simple rule to live by: If it is not your detergent, do not take it. Please, let's work together to stop this madness.

Josh Paddison  
Pre-Journalism

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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