

Enforcing insurance is not schools' role

Kudos to the University for its refusal to enforce proposed legislation that would require students to show proof of insurance before they can buy a parking permit.

House Bill 3638 is a watered down version of a bill that would have required high schools, colleges and universities to demand that students prove they have car insurance before being allowed to buy a parking permit.

The modified version simply gives schools the option — an option that Randall Stamm, the University's parking program coordinator, has said will not be exercised.

It is ridiculous for the Legislature to expect the education system, already overburdened and underfunded, to take on the role of policing student drivers.

It is already against the law to drive a car without insurance, a law usually enforced by police. And people cannot register their cars without insurance, which places the burden of checking for insurance on the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Patti Milne, R-Woodburn, is based on the dubious premise that drivers age 16 to 25 make up the bulk of uninsured drivers. The very fact the bill targets a specific age group smacks of ageism.

But aside from that, the opposite is just as likely. Most younger drivers are insured by their parents, and those that aren't probably make up no greater percentage than the number of low-income drivers without insurance.

It's highly unlikely the Legislature would draft a bill requiring low-income drivers to show proof of insurance before they could drive to pick up their food stamps or seek employment.

The House, an ever amusing happy room of misfits, continues to make strides toward ignoring Oregon's economic problems, and this bill is just the latest example.

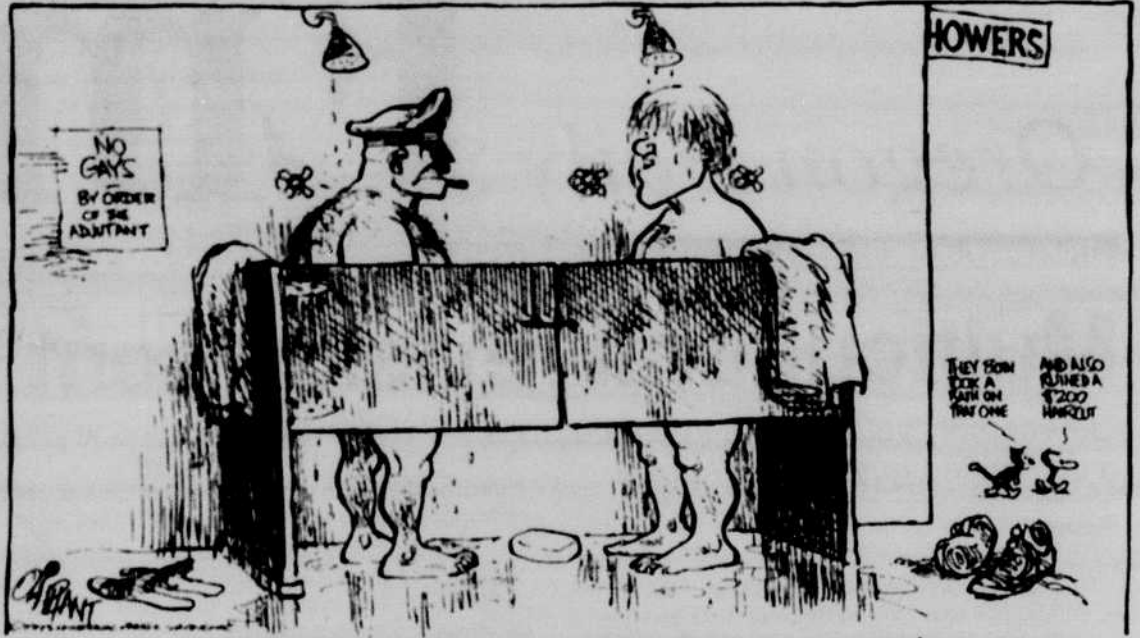
Before long, they'll be requiring us to provide proof of insurance and to show a helmet before letting us bring bicycles on campus.

From the past

"State Board Bans Student Autos," was the headline in the May 24, 1932, issue of the *Emerald*. Students caught driving cars would be expelled from school, a fact discovered on Oct. 5, 1932, by Ruth Ardiss Gorell, who was expelled from the University for driving her parents' car. Five days later, a second student, Omar Hoskins, was also expelled for driving his car the 22 miles between the University and Cottage Grove, where he lived.

The rule prohibited students from driving "to the University ... to any event or function ... or for any social purpose or for pastime."

On Oct. 18, the State Board of Higher Education toned down the measure, requiring students register their cars with authorities and the University. However, students were still forbidden to drive on campus.



'LET'S COMPROMISE, GENERAL — WE'LL BOTH PICK IT UP.'

LETTERS

More Rousseve

I agree with Ron Rousseve's commentary "Academia should test beliefs" (*ODE*, March 12). Let's start by testing his beliefs.

To prove something scientifically, one uses the scientific method. An event in history cannot be proved scientifically because it is impossible to repeat and observe a historical event under controlled laboratory conditions. You can't even use the scientific method to prove you went to work or school this morning.

The way we prove a legal/historical fact is by showing that something is a fact beyond a reasonable doubt. One type of evidence used is written testimony. Using the legal/historical method of determining facts, you could prove beyond a reasonable doubt you went to work this morning because your boss remembers seeing you, you signed dated material, etc.

On historical events, we rely on historical documents. No one doubts that we have genuine poems by Aristotle, yet he lived around 343 B.C., while the earliest manuscript we have is dated around 1100 A.D., a 1,400 year gap — and only five manuscripts exist.

To contrast, over 20,000 manuscripts of the New Testament exist dating to before and after the second century A.D. Using textual criticism, scholars have found only 1/1000th of questionable-meaning New Testament text. That amounts to half a page of Greek text that does not include any major Christian doctrine.

Professor Rousseve needs to admit that just as you cannot prove a hypothesis, you cannot prove a belief, and his is no more valid than mine.

John Weemhoff
Biology

Confused

The recent spate of accusations of racism confuses me a lot. I've always thought we were all members of one race — the human race.

Sure we have our psychological differences, but don't we all have feelings, intellect, etc., that are far superior to those of lower life forms? My question is, when people say "racism," are they talking about what X's

granddaddy did to Y's granddaddy, or are they talking about why we cannot tolerate certain people?

And by the way, the much maligned Professor Tom Givon (or Tom, as he is known in our department) is a very interested member of my dissertation committee. Academic interests aside, his interest is also due to the fact that my dissertation addresses some of the issues related to the survival of indigenous peoples.

Now I hear that Tom, a man with whom I've had several discussions about the brutal suppression of ethnic minorities, could be a racist. Well, I would have never guessed. Sign me confused.

Lainunthangi Chhange
Graduate
Linguistics

Not hard

This question is addressed to Kristen Kessler (*ODE*, May 28): What is so hard about remaining celibate? I do. While I might appear to be celibate N.B.C. (Not By Choice) because the opportunities for the alternative fail to present themselves, I have in fact made a choice.

I choose not to engage in juvenile "singles" scenes wherein the object is to drink enough to find someone else who has drunk enough in order to enter into an awkward, gut-wrenching, second-guessing, insecurity-promoting relationship.

By not actively seeking to meet a potential partner, I have also chosen not to become prey for a soul-stealing, heart-stomping vampire whose sole apparent purpose is to drive me to suicide.

Celibacy, for me, is not hard, nor is it a decision to be proud of. I'm not making a grand gesture by denying my libido. Frankly, I just don't care.

Rich Peterson
History

First Amendment

This letter is in response to the *Emerald* editorial about the last University Assembly (May 7).

It was stated that "... faculty and students should be embarrassed by their behavior at the University Assembly meeting," especially Associate Professor Rob Proudfoot, who voiced his feelings. What, may I ask, is proper, acceptable behavior? The fact that a majority, older, white male group voted to throw out a requirement that would educate people beyond stereotypes? What gives the *Emerald* the right to decide what is and isn't appropriate behavior?

Those who left the assembly were frustrated and disappointed at what was happening. Many voiced their opinions as they left, but that was only because student senators, faculty and administrators eligible to vote were allowed to voice their opinions. This requirement affects all students, yet none were heard.

There's no doubt money is important in our society, but what's more valuable in the long run: money, or an education? I agree most students would see this requirement as a hindrance to graduation, but what about cluster requirements in addition to our major requirements?

This multicultural requirement is not trying to pit one group against another, saying "our experience is more important than yours." It's saying to the white majority that our experiences as people of color are important parts of American history and deserve to be seen that way.

You cannot tell me that someone of color is treated as unconditionally equal as someone who is white. I have American history to back me up.

Tina Kolda
Asian/Pacific American
Student Union

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