

EDITORIAL

Forgiveness allows political comebacks

Perhaps taking their cues from the late Richard Nixon, who bounced back repeatedly from the jaws of political death, three candidates making the rounds of America these days have decided not to let the public's low opinion of them — an opinion often nothing short of disgust — keep them from seeking elected office again.

Call it audacity, call it courage. Dan Quayle, Oliver North and Marion Barry, three much-maligned political figures of the past decade, are all hitting the campaign trail. The risks are many, ranging from endless jokes on late-night TV all the way up to the ultimate defeat: a loss at the polls.

What gives these three men the guts to give it a go — again? Why would they return to the spotlight, after already enduring the merciless scrutiny of the public? And being ridiculed incessantly?

Simple. They think they can win.

Whether they can or not depends on the voters. But the fact that they're even willing to try says a lot about the forgiving nature of the people.

Dan Quayle, former U.S. vice president under George Bush, hasn't formally announced his candidacy for the president in 1996, although his book-signing tour has been widely regarded as a *de facto* campaign tour. Quayle's tenure as vice president was punctuated with such brilliance as the misspelling of "potato" and the statement that he needed to brush up on his Latin in preparation for a trip to Latin America. No one has been more mocked in recent memory than Dan Quayle. But apparently he thinks the public was just kidding when it made fun of him.

Oliver North, a prominent figure in the Iran-Contra scandal during the Reagan administration, shows even more gall in running for one of Virginia's Senate seats. Unlike Quayle, who was mainly an embarrassment to his constituents, North was actually harmful. His participation in the Iran-Contra cover-up, which culminated in his lying to Congress, makes one wonder how much a person can screw up and still expect to have a good chance of getting elected.

Filling in that category is Marion Barry, former mayor of Washington, D.C., who was convicted of cocaine possession in 1990 after a highly publicized FBI sting operation. He is running for mayor again, hoping to unseat Sharon Pratt Kelly, his successor. Barry's campaign is centered around his accomplishments during 12 years as mayor — an asset, to be sure — but Barry goes a step too far when he compares himself to Nelson Mandela, president-elect of South Africa, who spent 27 years in jail for political opposition to South Africa's apartheid government.

Barry was not thrown in jail for political reasons. He was in jail because he smoked cocaine in a motel room with a prostitute, and the FBI got it all on tape.

The public does forgive; the praise-filled eulogies for Richard Nixon attest to that. Personal failings will be weighed against political successes, as they should be. But voters should be prepared to think long and hard before they cast their ballots for any of these three.



LETTERS

Defending track

Dave Charbonneau, in his article about the Twilight track meet (*ODE*, May 16), states that he has "... a respect and a knowledge of track and field that I definitely would never have acquired if it weren't for coming here." He then proceeds to trash the Twilight meet, track and field in general, and its athletes. Some respect!

What he obviously does not understand is that track and field is not a war sport like football, but a competition combining effort and personal accomplishment. Charbonneau must have been deprived of crayons and paper as a child. To quote Bobby Knight, "We learn to write in the third grade. Most of us move on to other things."

When Charbonneau trashed Gordon Johnson for wishing he had broken the four-minute mark in the mile, even if it meant finishing fourth, it showed how little knowledge of the sport the "writer" really has. It is the dream of every middle distance runner to break the four-minute barrier in the mile. Gordon and several other "middle-distance" Ducks are great, and will get better.

Track and field athletes are the "best." They do not carry inflated egos like most of the University's football and men's basketball players do.

Track and field is a class act at this University and its coaches are proven winners. Both programs have produced national titles, team and individual.

Dave, please leave track and field alone and return to your color crayons. Use them for something unimportant — like writing about the University's football and men's basketball programs.

Jerry Carson
History

Rights

Let's not pretend to be ignorant of government and history, as did Oregon Citizens Alliance Communications Director Loretta Neet in her summons for signatures to place on a statewide ballot the "Son of 9" initiative. It wasn't the ACLU nor homosexual lobbies that persuaded

Judge Rodney Miller to rule this measure unconstitutional. The intent of this measure, as was the case with the 1992 measure, is to legalize state-supported discrimination and Neet and other OCA leaders know this as well as Judge Miller.

As Miller indicated, this "Son of 9" measure also seeks to revise the Oregon Constitution. As every nationalized U.S. citizen, as myself, knows, our governments in the United States and Oregon consist of three equal branches. It's the specific task of the judiciary to protect the fundamental rights of every U.S. citizen or resident. Those rights cannot be amended by a majority vote of citizens nor by a majority of people who voted. That would obliterate the constitutional divisions of power. That's one reason why Judge Miller ruled as he did. And other courts will uphold that decision.

Instead of wasting time promoting or fighting unconstitutional referenda, let's together make a positive difference for children and families. Let's vote to establish adequate funding of the instructional portions of budgets of our public educational institutions. Let's assure children and families quality education for everyone in Oregon. Let's not pretend to be ignorant of government nor our history.

Jacob Veldhuisen
Eugene

Media bias

Unlike many students, I don't believe the *Emerald* has a significant political bias in its news coverage. Unfortunately, *Emerald* reporters repeatedly rely on one or two sources, especially student government sources, for the entire story.

Friday's article (May 20) about recent Constitution Court cases is a prime example. Instead of interviewing all the parties involved, the reporter chose to get only ASUO President Eric Bowen's side of the story.

This is a bad habit that the *Emerald* has been unable or unwilling to break. Staff members don't seem to take the time to obtain opposing viewpoints, and in this case, the opposing

viewpoints would have been easy to get. I would have gladly spoken to the *Emerald* as I assume Martin Fisher and Todd Barnhart would have. Any one of us could have disputed Bowen's claim that the cases "weren't a big deal" and all of us would presumably have preferred to personally explain our respective positions, rather than have Bowen do that for us.

If the media are going to err, they should err on the side of being too skeptical of government and government officials, rather than too gullible. When the *Emerald* doesn't take the time to interview sources outside student government, the paper becomes a *de facto* mouthpiece of the ASUO. The ASUO Exec might be content with that, but the *Emerald* shouldn't be.

Ed Carson
Economics

Mail request

I am a prisoner at the Arizona State Prison and am writing this to ask if you will run this letter in your campus newspaper for correspondence. You have probably received this request many times from many prisoners and I hope that they have not burned you out. I am here doing life and have no family and the few friends that wrote to me for awhile when I first got here have kind of just ... trickled away. I am not really looking for any type or particular correspondent and will answer any letters that I might get. I just want to get some mail and to maybe make some new friends to talk with through the mail. Prison is probably one of the most boring experiences on the planet and you have to actually think up ways to break the monotony once in a while or you will go nuts. I will be happy to answer any questions that anyone may have about prison life, my court experiences and/or criminal activity. Or we can just talk about anything anyone might want to talk about.

I very much appreciate any help you can give me in this matter and if anyone is interested, write to:

Tim Lipps, #47321
Ariz. State Prison
P.O. Box 8200
Florence, Ariz.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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