

EDITORIAL

Alternative tickets enliven the ballot

Paul Demean Wells submitted his name as a Democratic candidate for governor in the May primary elections.

However, Wells is not a Democrat. He didn't expect to win the race against highly favored John Kitzhaber. In fact, he even told voters, "John Kitzhaber's a candidate for governor. I am not."

So why did he even bother running?

Wells threw his name into the gubernatorial hat to protest the inequalities faced by independent candidates seeking public office. Although only a few careful voters actually took the time to read the opinions of such an unfamiliar candidate, Wells' stand against the American political process needs to be recognized.

Independent candidates like Wells shouldn't have to pretend to affiliate with major parties just to get their views acknowledged. They shouldn't be penalized by choosing not to be a Democrat or a Republican.

In Bend last month, independent gubernatorial candidates were excluded from a debate. Only Kitzhaber and Denny Smith were allowed to participate. Excluding candidates from expressing their views at a public forum is an embarrassing step backward for a nation that's supposed to be based on democracy.

Third-party candidates should be encouraged to run for any public office. What harm can be caused by ensuring the representation of alternative views through independent candidates?

Candidates who stray from the worn-out Democratic and Republican arguments introduce fresh ideas and pressing issues to American voters. And regardless of whether they win or lose, their opinions can bring a new dimension to the issues at hand. Sometimes a fresh voice is all that's needed to work past some of the nation's most difficult problems.

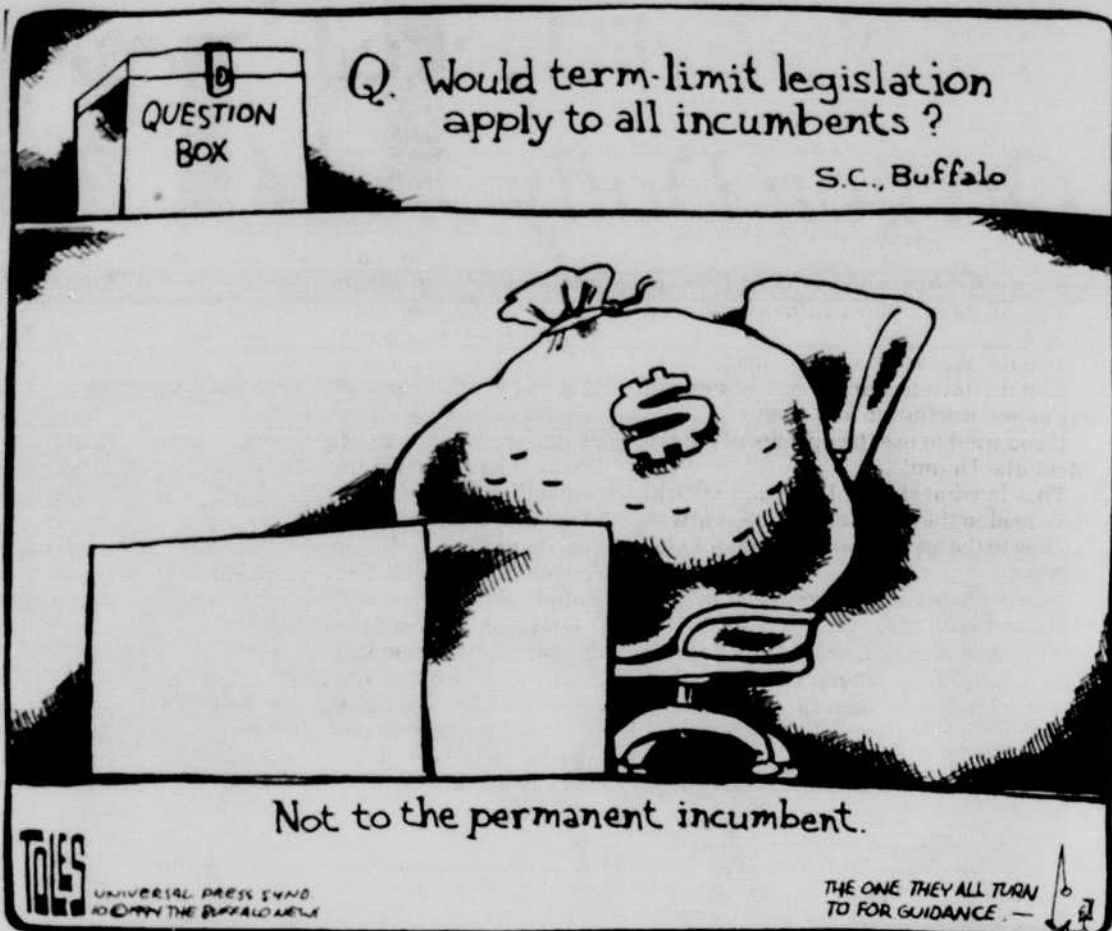
Ross Perot's candidacy in the 1992 presidential election is a familiar example of how independent candidates influence the election process. Perot made people think. Although he lost the election, many of his concerns became the concerns of running mates Bill Clinton and George Bush. Perot forced Clinton and Bush to put aside the rhetoric and face up to substantive issues, the deficit in particular.

And Perot still has a following that continues to work on political problems. United We Stand America, the organization Perot founded, was the most vocal opponent of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Many people disagree with Perot's motives, but at least he opens debate. And that's the first step in working to solve national problems.

Third-party candidates like Perot and Wells overcome many obstacles just to be in the running. They don't receive the backing of a national party and must work harder to get their names recognized by voters. It seems absurd to punish them even more by excluding these candidates from debates or other candidate forums.

Independent candidates should be considered assets to American politics. Don't make them compromise their beliefs just to win an election.



OPINION

Resource fee plunders pockets



PAUL VAN SICKLE

It may have happened something like this: You got home from work one summer afternoon, slammed the front door behind you and left your bag slumped against it. You started poking through the day's mail.

"A bill from the University!" you might have exclaimed, and with boundless delight, you tore open the envelope. Your joy faded when you found scanned below the words "Future Due Items" and supported by "Undergraduate Resident Tuition" a mystical \$50 figure with a strangely ominous description next to it.

If your reaction was anything like mine, you exclaimed verbally, and with considerable volume, "What the hell is a 'Volume Resource Fee?'"

As it turns out, this nebulous description is supposedly your key to the world of computing on campus. It brings you free access to the computer lab and thus the Internet and all of its domain. The EMU Computer Lab already bought us an entire room full of brand-new Macintosh computers and intends to increase phone line-access by purchasing several new modems.

A little quick math will reveal that this fee gives the University \$850,000 a term, or \$2,550,000 a year. That is, in layman's terms, a lot of money.

I don't doubt this money is going to good use. We do need new computers in the EMU, and free Internet accounts could only benefit our education by increasing the amount of information we have access to. What I do doubt is whether a fee so

high is necessary, or whether paying the fee should be mandatory for all students.

Before the fee, each student had the opportunity to use campus computers, with Internet access and E-mail for a tiny fee. And it was voluntary. You paid if you wanted to use the service; it wasn't forced down your throat.

Let's face it. Even with free network access and shiny new computers with which to use it, not every student will want to use the University's computer facilities. Suppose you were a student attending for only one or two terms? Is the computer use you might incur during those months worth the extra \$100? To use the lab for two terms last year would have cost you only \$20.

The planners of this fee seem to have been influenced by a dangerous and extremely pervasive problem affecting our culture, something I like to term Instant Gratification. That is, the uncontrollable compulsion to obtain what one desires as soon as one is able.

To apply this term, substitute the phrase "The University" for the word "one," add "even if this means an excessive fee to be paid by all students" to the end and this term might start to sound familiar.

When using this term to describe the efforts of the University planners, it should be considered that a request for increased access to technology isn't unreasonable. But do we need it all right now, this year? As with all things potentially addictive, moderation is necessary.

Buying a few Performas one year, more modems the next year, increasing access to library databases (Nexus, Psych Lit) the following year, etc., might work. The Instant Gratification doctrine has us purchasing everything now. The \$50 fee just gave this term some really sharp teeth, right into students' pocketbooks.

We can whine about not getting any money from the state, and we can worry about whether we can continue to compete technologically. On the other hand, the school could have put it up for vote. The technology pushers probably knew the student body wouldn't have had \$850,000 sitting around, though. Still, there may yet be solutions.

A smaller fee is a good start, (\$15 or \$25 is more reasonable) followed by voluntary payment (of course access would be linked with whether a student paid the fee) and utilization of a more moderate schedule for updating the campus computers could make a student-affordable plan possible.

It's not that I am against progression of technology, or even that I am afraid of it. I use, and have used the campus computer system. However, I do believe we should approach technology rationally and carefully. It is a thing to be respected, particularly when we don't know what future technologies will bring. Macintosh's new Power PC chip has already rendered the EMU computer lab's brand-new Performas obsolete.

Remember when your elementary school bought rooms full of Apple IIs and Commodore 64s? Those same computers are now collecting dust in the district storerooms because newer technology rendered them useless. They are useless for exactly the same reason.

The University is pushing for so much money for the new computers that it's obvious that it couldn't wait to jump on the electronic bandwagon and is willing to risk thousands of dollars to do it. I don't want to see hundreds of Macintoshes join those Commodores alongside education's ghostly reminders of previous plunges into the trenches of electronic instant gratification.

Paul Van Sickle is a columnist for the Emerald.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: Kaly Soto
Managing Editor: David Thorn
Editorial Editor: Joe Harwood
Graphics Editor: Jeff Paslay
Freelance Editor: Alaina Baum
In-Depth Editor: Ed Klopfenstein
News Editor: Rebecca Merritt
Sports Editor: Chris Metz
Photo Editor: Michael Shindler
Supplements Editor: Trista Noel
Night Editor: Trista Noel

Associate Editors: Friedrich von Carp, Student Government/Activities; Marcelene Edwards, Community; Tiffany Smith, Higher Education/Administration

News Staff: Lori Bettineski, Wilson Chan, Amy Columbo, Tasha Eichenseher, Abe Estimada, Primo Fontana, Gayle Forman, Christopher Fox, Matt Garton, Gary Grass, Sarah Henderson, Kris Henry, Trevor Kearney, Adam Kincher, Mark McTyre, Ben Moebius, Anne Moser-Kornfeld, Sherry Rainey, Robbie Reeves, Lia Saliciccia, Paul Van Sickle, Kim Weiss, Daniel West, Brian Womack

General Manager: Judy Riedl

Advertising Director: Mark Walter
Production Manager: Michele Ross

Advertising: Marco Ching, Tony Fox, Erin Hersther, Nicole Herzmark, Jeremy Mason, Michael Milette, Sarah Mitchell, Tam Mittelstaedt, Kelsey Welkoff

Classified: Becky Merchant, Manager: Sim Tze Teck

Distribution: John Long, Ferenc Rakoczi, Regina Zsupnik

Business: Kathy Carbone, Supervisor: Judy Connolly

Production: Debra McCobb, Production Coordinator: Shawna Abele, Greg Desmond, Tara Gaultney, Brad Joss, Jennifer Roland, Nait Thangvijit, Clayton Yee

Newsroom: 346-5511
Display Advertising: 346-3712
Business Office: 346-5512
Classified Advertising: 346-4343