

## Mudslinging stains both candidates

The race for governor, despite early assurances of a dirt-free campaign, has degenerated into a mudslinging bonanza of accusations and counter accusations — leaving voters in an informational quagmire that lacks substantive examination of the issues facing Oregon. Between the two major candidates, this is an election devoid of specifics on how to run government and how to close the fiscal shortfall threatening the state.

While both candidates offer elements that are appealing to a large cross-section of the electorate, neither presents the complete package necessary to run a corporation the size of Oregon. This dilemma caused a split vote among the *Oregon Daily Emerald's* seven-member editorial board. When the board voted to endorse a gubernatorial candidate, John Kitzhaber received four votes, Denny Smith two and Dan Vander Ploeg, the Libertarian candidate, one.

Kitzhaber edged out the other candidates for several reasons. The overwhelming argument for those voting for Kitzhaber was his record as a consensus builder while serving as the state Senate president and a gut feeling that Smith is not to be trusted. But for the most part, these responses reflected a confusion paralleling the entire campaign — no concrete stances by which to judge a candidate. Those voting against Kitzhaber conceded that his candor when meeting with the board at the *Emerald* office was exceptional.

Smith, on the other hand, refused to meet with the editorial board, despite requests made early in the campaign. Smith likewise declined a phone interview in which he would have been asked the same questions as Kitzhaber — this was with assurances that gay rights and abortion would not be among the questions.

It's obvious that Smith didn't come to the University because he felt he had nothing to win here. Being a reputed liberal campus, this is probably a fair, but incorrect, assessment. So the editorial board was left with a good sense of Kitzhaber and an incomplete dossier of Smith campaign literature.

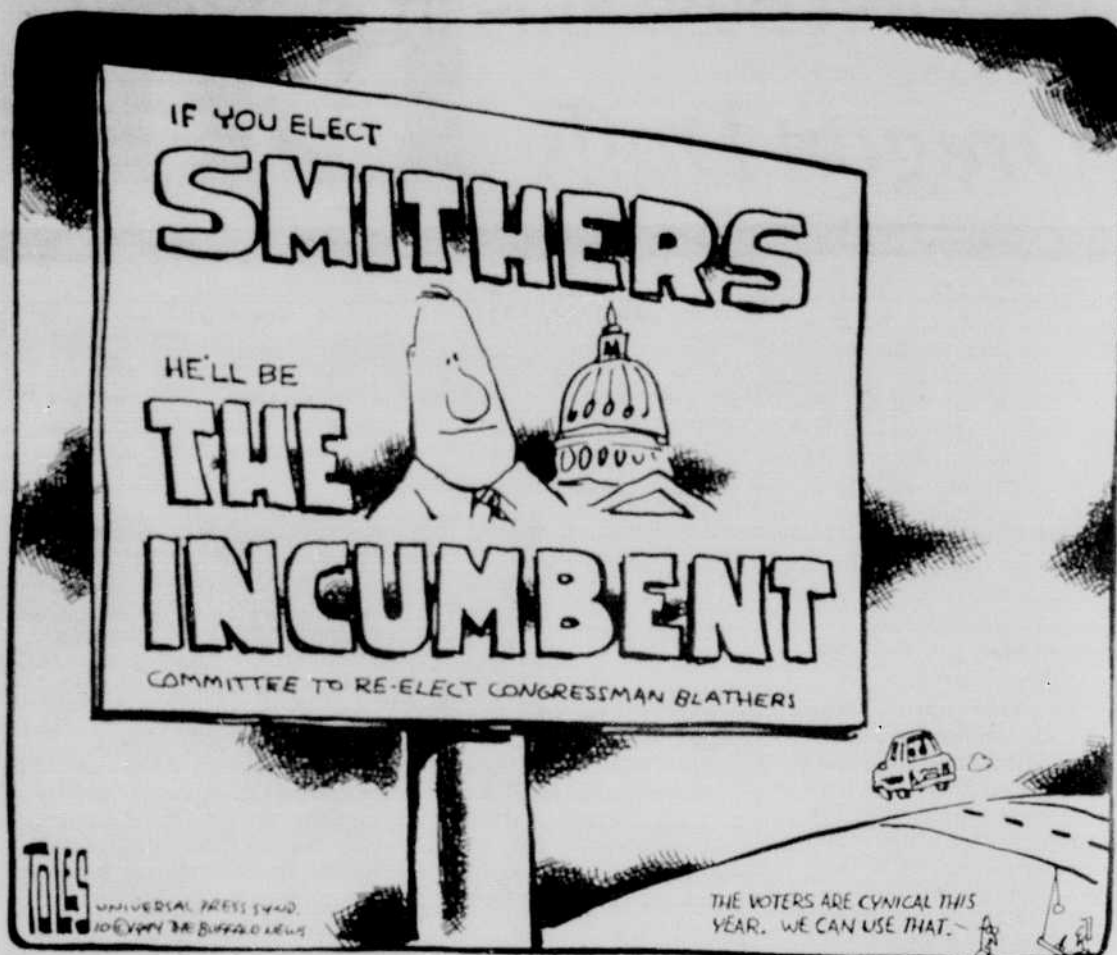
Did Smith's refusal hurt our feelings? No. Did the refusal for even a phone interview give us insight into the way Smith will conduct business as governor? Yes.

Smith sent a strong message to students when he declined to speak to the *Emerald* and every other college newspaper in the state. He let students know they are on the bottom of his priority schedule, and the manner in which he is perceived by students doesn't matter.

Kitzhaber told the board to expect a four percent tuition increase if he is elected — something we didn't want to hear, yet admired because the statement was an honest assessment of where the state is headed. Through a fax, Smith said no to a tuition increase — a highly unlikely proposition.

We won't endorse either candidate because of the split vote, a split manipulated by Smith and punitive toward Kitzhaber. However, we will tell you for whom not to vote. On Tuesday, remember Kitzhaber tried to concentrate on issues while Smith was throwing mud and running from substance.

Vote no for Smith.



### ■ OPINION

## Voters forget short memories



Gayle Forman

They say that goldfish have an eight-second memory. So, if you were a goldfish, your day would consist of swimming around. Then you'd stop and think to yourself, "hey what was I doing?" Not being able to remember, you would swim merrily along, never getting bored because you are too stupid to remember what you have been doing for the last two years.

Citizens of these illustrious United States are starting to resemble those little fishies. When you take a look at Americans as a voting body, those similarities become downright eerie.

Our memories are longer than eight seconds, no doubt about that. But when it comes to elections, memory capacity peaks out after about two years. Take Tuesday's election for example: Ollie North and Marion Barry as serious contenders for political office. If you need a memory refresher, Barry was the former crack-smoking, prostitute patronizing mayor of Washington D.C., who went to prison after the FBI recorded his exploits. North was the Reaganophile military man, who was convicted for his part in the Iran-Contra affair. His conviction, however, was overturned on a technicality.

And further proof of our amnesia: the GOP's Contract With America. Senator Newt Gingrich spearheaded this little plan, in which members of the Republican Party promised the American people that if they are elected, they will turn this country around by returning to Reagan-style economic policies.

Excuse me, but aren't we finally coming out of a severe economic slump caused by that very economic system? I thought that it had become pretty clear that trickle down economics was all washed up. Nothing trickled down anyway.

I'm tempted to chuckle about these silly political antics. It would be quite funny if people weren't taking any of this seriously. But these are viable political options in today's political arena, and by even considering electing criminals or returning to a failed economic system, we the people are looking an awful lot like goldfish.

Our finned friends do differ from us somewhat. After all, it's not really their fault — the memory problem. If your brain was the size of a sand grain, how much stuff do you think you could store in there? But we humans have fist-sized brains, and it's not their capacity or our cerebral powers that are muddling our memories.

Americans are trying their damndest to forget. We don't want to remember. The mood of this country is desperate; voters are in a frenzy to dump the incumbent. It's time to clean house up there on Capitol Hill, say the grumblings. In this mad dash, any political outsider seems more attractive than fat-assed, lazy incumbents. Even criminals, liars, thieves and junkies.

When Ollie North declared his war on Washington, promising to take back the capitol from the Democrats — who I suppose kidnapped it from the way he went on — he struck a chord in Virginians. He painted himself as the antithesis of the political status quo. People bought it. Hooray for Ollie, the hero, the savior, the folksy dude. There's that memory lapse thing again. Aside from his legal skirmishes, Ollie once resided in the bosom of the system he now rejects.

Marion Barry's supporters

seem to like the fact that he once was a criminal. It humanizes him, brings him down to the people's level. Below most people's level in fact. That's his appeal. Washington D.C. is becoming an increasingly violent and horrible place to live, and Barry is in the thick of it. The new political ideal is: if you're going to have a criminal in office — and all politicians are criminals — at least have a convict in office. Then you know where you stand.

This memory lapse, this goldfishiness, it's a symptom of the nation's cynicism. That seems to be the consensus on the reason for this year's strange assortment of political hopefuls and agendas. I don't buy it. This forgetfulness is about laziness. Cynicism need not be a bad word; it can be quite productive. If people are fed up with the political process, then they can do plenty aside from blindly dumping the incumbent. They can drum up support for third party candidates and break the stalemate of the two-party system. They can keep an eagle eye on elected officials throughout their terms, not just before elections. They can stop sitting back and passively watching the process. If politicians are lazy and corrupt, it's partly because we have let them become that way...because we keep forgetting to remember all the corrupt things they do.

It will be interesting to see the outcome of Tuesday's election. Will we take a step back on the evolutionary ladder, a step toward fishdom? We'll see. And Oregonians will have a chance to test their own goldfish quotient in four years, when a certain Senator Packwood will be up for reelection. I'm not entirely sure, but I seem to remember something about a couple dozen sexual harassment suits. But then again, I don't quite remember.

Gayle Forman 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.

<b>Managing Editor</b>	David Thorn	<b>News Editor</b>	Rebecca Merrill
<b>Editorial Editor</b>	Joe Harwood	<b>Sports Editor</b>	Chris Metz
<b>Graphics Editor</b>	Jeff Paslay	<b>Photo Editor</b>	Michael Shindler
<b>Freelance Editor</b>	Alaina Baum	<b>Supplements Editor</b>	Trista Noel
<b>In-Depth Editor</b>	Ed Klopfenstein	<b>Night Editor</b>	Amy Columbo

**Associate Editors:** Friederich 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-Kornfeldt, Sherry Rainey, Robbie Reeves, Lia Saliciccia, Paul Van Sickle, Kim Weiss, Daniel West, Brian Wornack

**General Manager:** Judy Riedl  
**Production Manager:** Michele Ross

**Advertising Director:** Mark Walter  
**Advertising:** Marco Ching, Tony Fox, Erin Hershner, Nicole Herzmark, Jeremy Mason, Michael Millette, Sarah Mitchell, Tom Mittelstaedt, Kelsey Wexell

**Classified:** Becky Merchant, Manager, Joli Selton, Jodi Wall

**Distribution:** John Long, Ferenc Rakoczi, Regina Zaupnik

**Business:** Kathy Carbone, Supervisor, Judy Connolly

**Production:** Dehelia McCobb, Production Coordinator, Shawna Abele, Greg Desmond, Tara Gaultney, Brad Joss, Jennifer Roland, Nat Thangvijit, Clayton Yee

**Newsroom:** 346-5511 **Display Advertising:** 346-3712

**Business Office:** 346-5512 **Classified Advertising:** 346-4343