

Journal's backing unfair advantage

With ASUO election season moving into high gear, candidates are looking for press and publicity in a myriad of ways. Unfortunately, the *Oregon Commentator* is already promoting two candidates who also happen to be staff members of the publication.

The two, Justin Good and Thomas Schoenborn, are running for president and vice president of ASUO. They also received a substantial amount of publicity in the April 10 issue of the *Commentator*.

The *Commentator* has obviously taken it upon itself to promote the Good/Schoenborn campaign — even before the publication has officially "endorsed" anyone.

Consider:

- An article, written by Good, appears on page 10 of the issue. Below it is an ad for Good/Schoenborn, ostensibly paid for by the "Dominant Paradigm Committee," advising readers to "prepare ... for the revolution."

- Good and Schoenborn were mentioned as being in the race for the ASUO Executive in the "What Rules & What Drools" section, while no other campaigns were noted.

- Items from the Good/Schoenborn platform were mentioned at the top of the list in a profile of the five candidates. While that isn't incriminating, it is questionable that the first item listed, an optional incidental fee system, resulted in a two-page article on the same subject, in the same issue.

As a journal of opinion whose workers are unpaid, the *Commentator* should not be expected to adhere as strictly to the rules of fairness and equal-time as other publications.

However, just as it would be inappropriate for the president of some student club to use that club's treasury to finance his candidacy, it's also inappropriate for the editors of a well-read, student-financed publication to use the pages of that publication to promote their own electoral ambitions.

It isn't unusual for a publication to endorse a particular candidate, and in fact, it's a newspaper's cherished First Amendment privilege to do so. But there are two important differences between a fair endorsement and the kind performed by the *Commentator*.

First, the candidate usually isn't a high-level editor at the publication doing the endorsement, with the unique privilege of having his or her name distributed to thousands of readers, at no cost to him — because the paper picks up the tab.

And second, the endorsement is usually the result of an interview and research process in which all candidates are compared against one another. The endorsement then appears in a single issue, in a single place. It doesn't need to be throughout the edition, a whole campaign on a half-dozen pages.

In the interest of fairness, Good and Schoenborn should refrain from contributing to the *Commentator* until the end of the brief election season. In the meantime, they should seriously look at other ways to promote their campaign.



OPINION

Rich don't deserve cheap shots



BRIAN WOMACK

In an unprecedented nationally-televised speech to the nation Friday night, Newt Gingrich spelled out the successes and failures of the first 100 days of the 104th Congress.

One of the biggest claims of success he could boast of was the tax-reduction bill passing the House — finishing up the *Contract with America* before the 100 days were even completed.

The cuts include reducing capital gains taxes, expanding the tax credit for children to \$500 for those making up to \$200,000 and slicing taxes for businesses.

Obviously, not everybody is happy with these cuts.

As sure as rain in Eugene and stress in Info Hell, the Democrats get out their favorite drums. Those drums beat the beats of class envy.

Pounding away at our heads until we long for decapitation, the Democratic side of the aisles in Congress bastardize those wealthy individuals as the great Satans of America.

This, of course, is the party of the Kennedys and the Rockefeller.

But the drums persist. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) said in a story in the Saturday edition of *The Oregonian* that Republicans "have shown their true loyalties: to the forces of privilege and power who need no help and deserve no special favors." Bang, bang, bang.

"The speaker's rhetoric cannot conceal the reality: Franklin Roosevelt's hundred days were for the people. These hundred days are for the privileged," said the Minority Leader of the House, Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.). Thump, thump, thump.

We Americans are repeatedly

told that the evil people in this nation are the rich.

Why? Because they have more money than most of the rest of us.

It seems that we often forget the rich don't always get rich because of some big inheritance check they got by way of their birth.

A lot of it just came from good, old-fashioned, hard work. Names like Bill Gates, Henry Ford and Sam Walton prove just that.

There are also many small-business owners who have laid their life's savings just to start a business. Though they may not be bringing home millions every week, they often have become successful enough to employ 20 employees and own a nice boat.

Yet they are the exception to the rule. At least nine in 10 small businesses fail. They are among that small percentage that actually had success.

Obviously these people weren't just lucky or born with rich. They earned it.

I'm not saying all these positive things about the rich because I am one of them.

I come from a blue collar, single-income household. Money was always scarce.

Yet, I did know that an entrepreneur who had laid his money on the line was employing my dad. This business owner had a huge house on a large piece of real estate with all the trimmings.

But this person was taking the risks with his money at every job he did. My dad, as with any other employee, simply had to work at the job only with the threat of job security but not every cent he owned.

As in this case, and most others, the rich signed the paychecks.

But even if some of the rich did inherit their wealth, why should we envy what they have? Why should they have to have someone else tell them what to do with their own money? Why should some government have the right to redistribute their wealth?

Nevertheless, it seems many

Americans believe rich people are a bottomless pit of money that could run the country with their combined earnings.

Much of our tax structure caters to just such an attitude, and some of the rich in this country are getting tired of it.

A Nov. 21, 1994 article in *Forbes* explained how some of the rich are actually revoking their citizenship just to escape these burdensome taxes.

It explains, "Rich Americans — anyone with an estate worth \$3 million or more — pay 55 percent. A fairly stiff 37-percent marginal rate kicks in for Americans leaving as little as \$600,000 to their children. The marginal rate...ranges upward from there to 60 percent."

Although I wouldn't revoke my citizenship, I can still see their point. Why should people who make more have to necessarily pay more?

Why should hard work be rewarded with higher taxes?

One of the ways the rich are supposedly being favored in the tax-reduction package is with the capital-gains tax cuts. Gephardt said Friday that the average tax cut for the wealthy would be much higher than for some middle class income earners.

So what? Capital-gains taxes are one of the stupidest taxes I know of because they punish people who make money taking risks in the stock and bond markets among other areas. If the rich are the ones who can afford to take the risk, more power to them. Much of their investment spurs the economy, anyway, which gets back to most of us.

But the Democrats would rather bang the drums of class envy because the rich have more money than the rest of us. Therefore, they should be punished with higher taxes.

America isn't about envy. It's about individuality. It's about seeing what one wants and going after it.

It's not about playing those drums instead.

Brian Womack is a columnist for the *Emerald*.

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