

Listen up: All votes, including student votes, count, so register!

Today, Nov. 14, is the last day to register to vote in the primary election for Oregon's new Senator.

I want to assure everyone that contrary to Larry Haftl's column yesterday (*ODE*, Nov. 13), registering to vote does make a difference and students do have a voice. Plus, when students register and vote, it is a powerful voice.

Yes, as Haftl states, voter registration is a "no-brainer." It is the voice that students have in the legislative process. When we register them, we are empowering them.

Some people die for the right to vote in other countries, and we often forget we have the right.

Unfortunately, Haftl's opinion piece is an example of a person speaking in ignorance.

First, he states that "[the] ASUO voter registration drive targets University students, the overwhelming majority of whom are not ethnic or racial minorities. Nor are they historically disenfranchised."

Yes, we target students. All students need to vote. And students are disenfranchised.

I do not know what circles Haftl travels in, but most of the students I know are upset at the government. Tell me that a student working full-time while going to school is not disenfranchised when financial aid checks no longer cover tuition bills.

Haftl also claims that the ASUO does not provide voter education. Again, he shows his lack of knowledge. The first step is to get people registered to vote. The second part is called Get Out the Vote.

Last Friday, ASUO sponsored a town hall meeting with Ron Wyden. Wyden was forced to cancel at the last minute and we are rescheduling. We have a forum planned for Nov. 21 at 3:30 p.m. in the EMU Maple Room with Norma Paulus. We are working on similar events for the other candidates. Students

COMMENTARY

Jennifer Williamson

will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates directly. Not many other voters in the state have that chance.

We are dedicated to educating students because students who know the issues are more likely to vote.

Haftl is partially right when he says that the only way to bring "change requires an ongoing dialogue with our elected representatives." Registering to vote is the first part of this dialogue.

ASUO has maintained close relationships with our representatives through Oregon Student Lobby and United States Student Association. Because of this, Oregon senators and representatives consistently "go to bat" for students.

Most recently, Sen. Hatfield's influence helped reduce the amount of financial aid cut from the Senate's version of the appropriation bill.

Hatfield's action proves that Haftl is wrong. Haftl said, "the net result is going to be very much the same."

When Sen. Hatfield helps save \$8 million in financial aid, it is difficult to argue that student voting does not make a difference. We have a large stake in what goes on in Washington, D.C., and we have a voice in the results.

Students have voted. Haftl does not even have his facts right when he says that 14 percent of students voted. Yes, 14 percent voted in ASUO elections. However, in the precincts surrounding campus, 51.7 percent of registered voters voted. That means that about 51.7 percent of 7,450 registered student voters. By saying that students do not turn out, Haftl has insulted 3852 people.

Finally, the opinion piece instructs ASUO to focus on "telephone circles." Haftl says,

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"

increasing tuition. All these are things that are decided by our government.

Unfortunately, Haftl has been blinded to reality that voter registration is part of a larger campaign. The only way to convince the government that students should be listened to is to prove that students care about what is happening.

Haftl states that "voter registration drives, as practiced on this campus, are worse than a farce, they are deceptions." The

farce was his opinion piece. The facts were wrong and the information misleading.

Students do have a voice. We have shown that in the past. We will do it again. Students do make a difference. We will collect your voter registration cards until 4 p.m. Register to vote today!

Jennifer Williamson, a political science major, is ASUO president.

Comp/Clucks



by Jane Martin
Arena Theatre
8:00 P.M.
November 8,
9, 10, 11, 16,
17, 18, 1995

A pair of southern comedies which poke outrageous fun at the changing face of race relations in today's South.

Produced with permission of Dramatists Play Service. University Theatre productions are partially funded by the ASUO.

Request for accommodations related to disabilities should be made to the University Theatre Development Office, 346-4190, at least one week before the performance.

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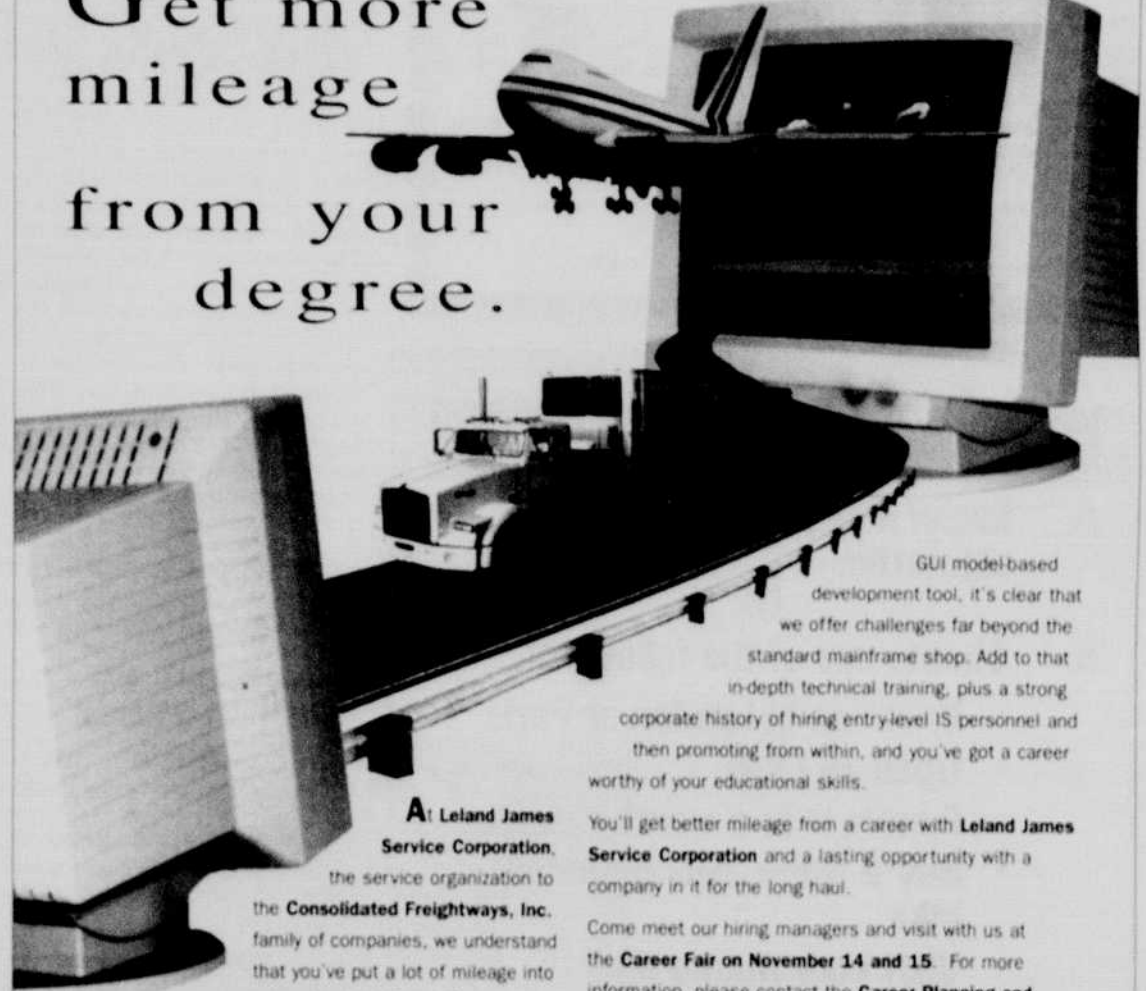
Job Fair Special at the Fishbowl, 11/14-15.

Purchase a large coffee or any size fountain soda and receive: 1/2 off any pastry, muffin, bagel, donut or cookie.



*Offer good November 14-15, 1995 at the EMU Fishbowl only.

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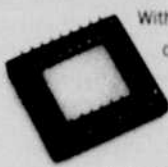


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**Come to the Student Forum
Tues., Nov. 14
2-6 pm
EMU Oak Room**

Let the ASUO Student Senate know exactly what you think of how your student incidental fees are spent.