

DeFazio calls race quits; we should ask him back

OUR OPINION: Voters should rally behind DeFazio and work together to send him to the Senate

Just when you think it's entirely safe to make a political forecast, wham! The proverbial prognostication rug gets yanked out from under you.

And what a surprise this one turned out to be. Who would have thought Peter DeFazio would drop out of the race for Mark Hatfield's seat?

But then again, who would blame anyone for choosing not to put oneself through the financial and emotional gauntlet of running for office — let alone one as high-profile and costly as a position in the U.S. Senate.

DeFazio is faced with the personal ethic of not wanting to sell his representation to the highest special interest bidder, while fully realizing the only way he could raise enough money to win the election would be to sell out to them. It's catch-22 and all that.

This is a perfect example of everything that's wrong with American politics. Only the rich can afford to be political contenders and hold office, while others are left with their financially strapped campaigns and good intentions.

The average citizen's answer to America's money-driven political machine is grassroots involvement. Grassroots work has proven to be a successful tool in raising the necessary financial support, but it can also give candidates a power-base of volunteers.

It's the weapon of choice for many independent candidates, and voters disillusioned with the status quo.

Ross Perot, despite all his baffling quirks, could be the best example of a successful grassroots campaign that reached from coast to coast.

It appears DeFazio has a strong grassroots support base and following.

It is for this reason we want to do something slightly out of character.

We don't usually get on our knees or prostrate ourselves on the floor to beg for a change of mind, leniency or forgiveness from anyone.

And we aren't going to start now.

But we are going to go out on a limb and ask DeFazio to reconsider his decision.

We need people of your caliber Mr. DeFazio. We need politicians like you who are committed to the people, to their values and concerns.

We realize we are asking a lot. It takes courage, guts and buckets of money to be a viable candidate.

We encourage people to call DeFazio's office (485-1622) to pledge their support. Tell him you'll vote for him.

We should get together with the ASUO and other student groups to think up fundraising ideas. DeFazio would need to raise something like \$13,000 a day to have a chance at victory. We could at least try to make a dent in that price tag.

We should do what we can to send DeFazio to the Senate where he belongs.

He wouldn't be the only one to beat a Republican.



'Commentator' funding: the final word

Last night's decision by the Programs Finance Committee to fund the *Oregon Commentator* with incidental fees is as saddening as it is predictable. It seems that bogus freedom-of-speech arguments mislead the easily blinded. PFC Chairwoman Susan Anderson claimed that the journal's content could not affect the funding decision. Something tells me that if the *Commentator* began printing instructions on how to rape women or explanations on why Aryan blood is superior to all others, content would suddenly become a factor.

When funding any form of speech, one must consider whether lines have been crossed. Does promoting violence against women cross this line? Does the *Commentator's* "humorous" explanation of "why men should not be persecuted for acting upon their instincts" during "Take Back the Women Night" constitute rape-advocacy?

To me, the answers to these questions are clear. I could spend the remaining space explaining why. However, this would fuel the all-too-prevalent belief that this battle is between one columnist and one publication.

This issue is not about me or the personal mud that has been slung. This issue is about leaders who embrace the role of apologist and ignore the role of activist. This issue is about a knee-jerk reaction to the First Amendment that has numbed critical thinking. This issue is about the so-called silent majority that refuses to endorse a journal of violence or a student government of inaction.

Let those people respond to last week's litany of letters:

"Learn to take a joke," Thomas Schoelborn, *Oregon Commentator*.

"It is sad to see so many young, white boys not having the slightest idea about their own mentality," Francis Neo.

"It takes a man with the courage to stand up to women bashing to make the greatest impact. Thanks for pointing out that such behavior isn't appropriate, funny or cool," Holly Gryte.

"I'm shocked that you're being attacked for a lack of a sense of humor. I thought students on college campuses were in general more aware," Candace Palmerlee.

Most students are aware. It's the ones immersed in student politics who remain clueless.

"To attack women in a piece that claims to be promoting feminism is ludicrous," Jennifer Williamson, ASUO president.

No, of course you can't attack women and be a feminist. Women who fail to do their jobs should be immune from criticism. Besides, hugging Ron Wyden on newspaper covers and registering freshmen to vote are much more important tasks for a feminist president than

attacking pro-rape discourse on campus.

"I fear one day you may find yourself on the wrong side of the famous quote by Malcolm X: 'If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.'"

"We may not like the opinion of our papers, but we have to protect their right to publish," Edwina Welch, ASUO Women's Center Director.

Spoken like a true radical who demands systemic change. I can see why she quotes Malcolm X. Who's part of the problem?

"I appreciate your using the forum that is available to you in a very positive way and for speaking out for women and against bigotry. I think that [Welch] was wrong about your motives," Tricia De John.

Thanks. But I'm more concerned about her lack of motives.

"I also respect your valor as the *Commentator* will no-doubt address the issue in their next publication," Paul Klausenburger.

Do you think they'll call for an interview?

"As the editor-in-chief of the *Oregon Commentator*, I am amused by his anger... The number of women taking Saferide and the number enrolled as women's studies majors have not decreased because of our magazine," Farrah L. Bostic.

Not that a person who epitomizes Clarence Thomas tokenism would understand this, but the number of women enrolled in these programs has probably increased because of the *Commentator*.

"It is sad that there are people out there who lack the maturity and class to give females the respect they deserve," Diane Yasue.

Sometimes not even females give females the respect they deserve.

"As a woman, ... I hate not being able to walk on the street at night and feel safe, and the fact that the *Commentator* staff is so blind about this issue makes it even scarier. I am particularly disturbed that it was mainly women that attacked your article. I just wanted to tell you that there are women that do support you, and I for one really appreciate that there is a man out there who is not only intelligent but caring too," Jennifer Roberts.

I couldn't agree with you more. (And yes, I'll let it go now.)

Keith Cunningham, a senior majoring in English, is a columnist for the *Emerald*.

Editor's note: Responses to this column will be distributed to the author and the editor but will not be published because of the attention this issue has received in recent weeks.

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