



## Stopping the wrecking ball

**OUR OPINION:** Three measures on this month's mail-in ballot try to put their own spin on Measure 47 and should be treated accordingly

By passing Measure 47 in the November election, the voters created a state of disarray and difficulty among lawmakers almost unparalleled in its magnitude. On the state level, representatives and senators scrambled to interpret the confusing measure and produce a streamlined version for the voters. On the local level, Eugene city councilors and Lane County officials worked around the clock to prioritize local services under 47 and help bring two "adjustment" measures to the May 20 ballot.

After all this work, it's time for the voters to decide. They narrowly accepted Measure 47, opting for lower property taxes and screwing schools and local government in the process. Now they need to choose what kind of changes, if any, they want to make to adjust to their boldness.

For us at the *Emerald*, our decisions were easy. Each was ultimately guided by an extreme hatred for Measure 47 and all its sneaky side effects. So here they are:

First and foremost on the docket is Measure 50, the state legislature's brainchild. Basically Measure 47's prettier but deadlier younger sibling, it attempts to solve many of the inconsistencies and

confusion behind the original measure. Among the minor changes is a decrease in overall property tax reduction, from \$1 billion under 47 to \$800 million, and exemptions for rural hospitals and a Portland public safety levy.

But in the end, it's the same thing. Measure 50 stills limits future property tax increases by 3 percent and still hurts schools and local government. We didn't like Measure 47, and we don't like Measure 50.

The new measure limits the overall tax cut but is actually more damaging. Because its language is much clearer and was referred to the voters by the legislature, Measure 50 is virtually impenetrable to legal challenges. Measure 47, on the other hand, is currently the subject of a lawsuit by the League of Oregon Cities for being unconstitutional.

Herein lies the reason Bill Sizemore and other tax cut advocates support Measure 50. They know Measure 47 has serious problems and could very well be abolished. Measure 50 solves all that.

We would rather see Measure 47 be played out in the courts for a few years (and not go into effect in the process) than pass a foolproof version of the measure now. It's a gamble, but one we're willing to take. Measure 47 is too problematic to come out of the legal battle unscathed.

The adjusting, meanwhile, hasn't been isolated to the capitol. City and county officials recently put two measures on the ballot to help save Eugene from the havoc of Measure 47. Measure 20-83 re-

stores \$32 million of the estimated \$36 million the measure would cut from the city budget. And Measure 20-84 would allocate \$2.5 million to the Lane County jail and other services set to be reduced as part of 47. We support both measures, despite the fact that they each raise local property taxes.

The city council has worked hard since 47's passage to prioritize local services under the new measure. We agree with most of their decisions, including setting the community center and Hult Center as priorities. Under 20-83, these and many other programs would be saved. It is, in a sense, Eugene's way of defying the state's decision. And for good reason. Eugene citizens voted 2-1 against Measure 47.

As for 20-84, we believe public safety is not something we can compromise on. The measure adds 48 beds to the county prison and restores other vital safety programs. And it restores voter will by protecting services that citizens approved in a levy last spring, pre-47.

We look at the era before Measure 47 fondly. Most people in this area do. Measures 20-83 and 20-84 give us back a bit of the glorious past. And Measure 50, well, it's just stupid. But they all came about as part of Measure 47. And now we must deal with them, in whichever way we see fit. Vote smart.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*

### All thumbs



**Pete Peterson**  
After being held prisoner in Hanoi for close to seven years during the Vietnam War, the former Air Force captain returned to the country he once fought, this time as a U.S. Ambassador. His arrival marks the first time full diplomatic relations have been established between the one-time enemy countries.

**Female politicians**  
Decades of working for political equality between men and women may finally be paying off with concrete results. Nationwide, the gender gap in politics is closing. In the Washington State Senate, 22 out of the 49 members are women. So how long until we have a female president?



### 50 percent voting rule

In accordance with the results of the fall election, if half the registered voters fail to vote on a given measure this month it will automatically fail. That means failing to show up at election time is the same as voting no.

### Beijing

A recent report has shown that the air quality in the Chinese capital is five times worse than that of Los Angeles. Breathing the air in Beijing for a day is reported to be the equivalent of smoking three packs of unfiltered cigarettes. While China is struggling to industrialize for the future, this level of pollution is plain unacceptable.

### Letters policy

Letters to the editor must be typed, double spaced and include the author's name, signature, and phone number. The identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

Letters must be limited to 250 words or less. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar or style.

### LETTERS

#### Bad paper

I am very concerned about the number of fliers and newspaper inserts I have seen that are on heavily dyed, goldenrod and neon papers. These colored papers hinder the recycling process and contain toxic dyes.

Dyes used in paper production are toxic and have negative impacts on our ecosystem and the recycling process. All paper, except unbleached or chlorine-free paper, are first bleached with industrial chlorine, which produces dioxin, one of the most toxic chemicals known.

Then it is dyed to make colored paper. Neon and goldenrod papers are heavily dyed to make colored paper. Neon and goldenrod papers are heavily dyed, beyond lighter colored or white paper.

When choosing your papers, please consider using creative graphics with lush colored soy based inks and less toxic paper choices.

**Karyn Kaplan**  
Campus Recycling

#### Understand oppression

I was disturbed to read the criticism of the Women's Studies Reading Group 405. The idea that one cannot learn by reading the perspectives of others is to deny one of the central values of reading. Reading is one way to learn to walk in another's shoes and should not be denigrated by the putative representatives of the very cultures these women are trying to understand.

Americans of European descent are (often justly) criticized for not knowing and appreciating the cultures of non-European Americans. But let someone make a serious attempt at bridging this gap in perspective, and there is concern that, unless one is raised as a member of that group, insight is impossible.

This is a barbaric notion. Reading and discussing sensitive, articulate accounts of struggle can only add to an understanding of the trials experienced by their authors. If you think you can learn only from first-

hand experience, you are leaving a lot out of your education.

Through my reading of James Baldwin, Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, I have gained insight into the conditions of African-Americans in this country. Would my insights have been modified if I had someone of color personally guiding me through my readings? Possibly.

But what I did have was my own critical abilities, and my own awareness of oppression suffered by my forebears (Irish and German). Most importantly, I had my own sense of humanity, which enables me to identify with anyone, African American, Jewish, Native American or whoever is oppressed.

I do not need to be African American to recognize oppression. I, and you, only need to be human.

**Joseph Renaud**  
Germanic Languages/Literature