

# More candidates than usual are running unopposed

Experts are searching for reasons to explain the lack of interest in running for office

By Tricia Duryee  
Community Reporter

With five uncontested races in the Oregon Legislature, candidates and political experts are trying to figure out why so many people are uninterested in running for a multitude of seats for the 1998 primary election.

Lee Beyer, Susan Castillo, Bill Morrisette, Floyd Prozanski and Kitty Piercy are all running for different state Legislative seats with no opposition for the May 18 primary election.

Lane County is not the only place seeing a lack of interest. Statewide, 15 candidates for the House of Representatives and four Senate candidates may be well on their way to Salem without any opposition.

"It could be a statistical anomaly," said Priscilla Southwell, an associate professor of political science at the University who studies Oregon politics.

But there are a number of factors that could have an influence on whether a person is willing to enter the race.

Some of the possible reasons why people are discouraged to run include legislative term limits, campaign financing issues and the prospect of facing a pop-

ular incumbent.

As a result of an initiative ballot measure passed by Oregon voters in November 1992, the state Constitution was amended to limit terms for legislative offices.

Oregon term limits are six years in the House and eight years in the Senate. Legislators can serve a total of 12 years between the two offices. Before the amendment, representatives and senators could run an unlimited number of times.

Rick Hanson, executive assistant to the secretary of state, said term limits could have an influence on whether people run.

"There is one race in Portland for House District 11, where a Democrat is challenged in the primary," Hanson said. "People are saying to him, 'Just wait another term because then that representative will be termed out.'"

Southwell said she thought term limits just caused a shuffling of seats but didn't necessarily discourage people from running for the state Legislature.

Southwell said that because legislators haven't been able to run again, they have actually been "stepping down" to a lesser political office. This process has caused more uncontested positions in the city and county levels of government.

"Here they have a decided advantage," she said. "What we have here in effect is really a

scaring off [of candidates]."

The increased cost of running a competitive campaign also seems to be playing a role in discouraging people from running for office.

"There's no silver bullet fix," Hanson said. "A number of steps might change things, including a comprehensible campaign finance reform. Candidates don't want to spend more of their time on the phone fund raising than talking to the voters."

According to Southwell, a few measures have tried to limit spending; however, the last one was thrown out in 1994 as unconstitutional.

"Campaigns, in general, are more expensive," Southwell said. "It precludes lots of people, and it is just getting worse."

Southwell also said she believes if a candidate is running against a well-known candidate or incumbent, it is even harder for other candidates to raise funds.

A marked advantage for a candidate is to be either the incumbent or have name familiarity. Rep. Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat from Eugene, is running uncontested for his current seat in the upcoming election. He said he thought finance and name familiarity contributed to the number of uncontested elections.

"The concern is that the two major parties be as efficient with their resources as they can,"

Prozanski said. "There are five individuals in Lane County who are running unopposed. The short answer is that in this day in time, both parties have to be efficient and effective with their resources when looking at the elections."

Prozanski said in a city like Eugene, which he considers to have a liberal voting population, it probably wouldn't be in the conservatives' best interests to pump money into an election that wasn't a sure thing.

But Southwell didn't consider this the case.

"Republicans typically have had more money, but a lot of groups have money, and they are not reluctant to spend it," she said. "The business community here has a big presence and there may be liberal representation, but there is a strong conservative element."

As for the single most pertinent reason why so many candidates are facing no opposition, Hanson said he didn't have just one.

"It could be a whole host of reasons," Hanson said. He added that the prospect of running a large and expensive campaign for a job that comes with a lot of public scrutiny sometimes does not pay off in monetary compensation.

"It is an era of less tolerance in the media," Hanson said. "It is not an attractive proposition."

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## Pennies: Collection jars on campus

Continued from Page 1

According to national statistics, one out of every three girls will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18; about one out of six boys will experience a form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.

"The earlier we can get to them, the better," McCravy said.

Linda Hoover, survivor advocate for the Office of Student Life, supports the prevention of sexual abuse at an earlier age. It is important to inform children early about sexual violence and help

them develop healthy communication styles, Hoover said.

At the college level, Hoover helps survivors of sexual assault or abuse find counseling, academic assistance, hospital appointments and legal options.

The Office of Public Safety had one official report of unwanted sexual behavior for the 1996-97 academic year. But Hoover has 17 unofficial incident reports for the same year.

Unwanted sexual assaults can be reported on forms found out-

side the Women's Center, in residence hall laundry rooms, the Office of Greek Life, and restrooms in Willamette and Lawrence halls. Forms will also be available soon in Gerlinger and Esslinger halls. Reports can be submitted anonymously or students can later be contacted by the Office of Public Safety or the Office of Student Life.

"We are here for the victim to talk to them," Hoover said. "We want to let victims know that there is someone on campus concerned about them."

## NASA criticized by animal rights group

More than half the baby rats aboard space shuttle Columbia have died

By Pauline Arrillaga  
The Associated Press

SPACE CENTER, Houston — More baby rats have died aboard space shuttle Columbia, prompting protests Tuesday from an animal rights group that accused NASA of having an "appalling record" in animal research.

NASA's chief veterinarian, Joseph Bielitzki, said 50 rats had died aboard Columbia because of maternal neglect, an increase from the 45 deaths reported Monday. Their surrogate mother rats weren't

drinking enough water, and either shunned the young animals or simply did not produce enough milk for nursing, Bielitzki said.

The deaths account for more than half of the 96 baby rats that were launched aboard Columbia one and a half weeks ago. Bielitzki said scientists had expected only a 10 percent to 12 percent mortality rate.

The deaths drew harsh criticism from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

"NASA has an appalling record. It can't keep animals alive on the ground or in space," said Mary Beth Sweetland, director of PETA's research, investigations and rescue department.

Bielitzki, however, said crew members were doing everything possible to prevent more deaths.

"The crew has really done yeoman's work in this case," he said. "Anybody that has tried to rear an orphaned animal ... understands the number of hours and the effort that has to go into saving a single animal, let alone 45 or 50 of them."

Richard Linnehan, the veterinarian aboard Columbia, said Tuesday that several sick rats had improved after being fed a Gatorade and water mixture by hand.

"They all seemed to perk up quite a bit," Linnehan said. "We feel we're over the hump."

**Oregon Daily Emerald**

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