

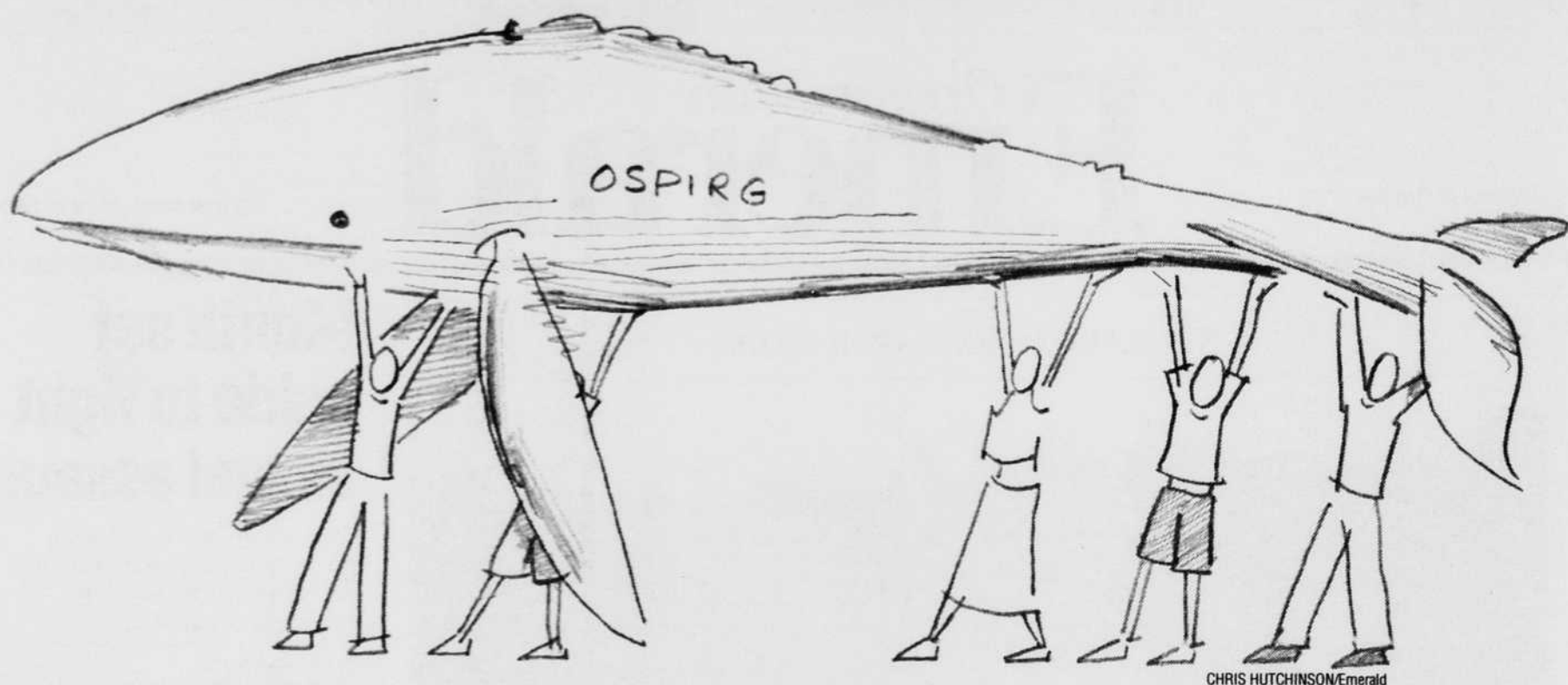
CONTACTING US

NEWSROOM:
(541) 346-5511
E-MAIL:
ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
ONLINE EDITION: www.uoregon.edu/~ode

ADDRESS:
Oregon Daily Emerald
P.O. BOX 3159
Eugene, Oregon 97403

PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Sarah Kickler
EDITORIAL EDITOR
Mike Schmierbach
NIGHT EDITOR
Nicole Krueger



Individual students can carry OSPIRG's burden

The statewide structure of OSPIRG isn't needed for people to work on worthwhile causes

OPINION



Jonas Allen

"Dolphins, Eskimos, who cares? It's all a bunch of tree-hugging hippie crap." So says Cartman, the overweight, fire-farting bigot from South Park Elementary. The grade-schooler is a mainstay on Comedy Central's "South Park" cartoon, a weekly show about everything our dark sides would love to joke about but never seem to find the courage to actually say.

That dark side has been given many different names over the years, ranging from the simple "Dark Side" of Star Wars fame to the abstract "Id" of Sigmund Freud. So while "South Park" is a relatively new cartoon, the idea of tapping into our deepest impulses is not exactly state-of-the-art.

In last week's campus elections, the student body tapped into its collective inner-self (at least those who cared to vote) and sent a Cartman-esque message to the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group: Screw you guys!

True, the final results are on hiatus until the Constitution Court can decide whether OSPIRG opponents broke election rules. But the almost-

official results are no laughing matter, according to OSPIRG officials.

"There's definitely some confusion about what's going on now that the elections are over," said Glenda Marshall, state board chair of OSPIRG. "It's not about us having a drop in funding or not getting funding; OSPIRG will cease to exist on the University of Oregon campus."

Even more interesting is that there isn't any hope for University OSPIRG members starting their own group next year.

"OSPIRG is part of a statewide organization," Marshall said. "In order for us to be a part of the larger statewide organization, we need to pay dues. You can't just start up some little club" and use the OSPIRG name.

Well, my name is Jonas. My roommate's name is Matt. We recycle, we don't litter and we even avoid dumping chemical waste down the sink. All this, and without the "OSPIRG" title tacked onto our names. The point is that to take care of the environment and each other, you don't necessarily need to have an organization named "OSPIRG" around.

OSPIRG has always been about volunteers. The group excels at organizing environmental campaigns and is great at gathering volunteers for a common cause. But that group is made up of individuals, and there's no reason those same individuals won't be able to get together next year and clean up streams. The campus vote never said people couldn't go out individually and raise awareness about pesticides and homelessness.

The major obstacle to people who want to do those things will be how to promote and fund the activities. Of course, that's also why OSPIRG won't be around next year. But Marshall says that's not the main problem.

"The elections weren't about whether we'd get funding; they were about whether students wanted OSPIRG on campus," she said. "But we're still really looking for some sort of presence on campus next year."

Regardless of funding, there will inevitably be a presence on campus next year. That presence may not be an office in the EMU. It may not be \$147,000 in funding for the program. It may not even be publicized envi-

ronmental cleanups. But without a doubt there will be people out there who care about the same issues OSPIRG chapters around the state will be fighting for or against.

It is difficult to believe that voters refused to support helping the homeless, and it's even harder to believe that University students voted down caring for the environment. But without actually asking everyone who voted against OSPIRG why they did so, there's no way to know for sure. Because that's not necessarily the most ethical or legal thing to do, students will just have to watch what happens now that the votes have been counted.

"I think that there's a lot of hope for students to see OSPIRG on campus if the Constitution Court decides to allow students to vote again," Marshall said.

With or without OSPIRG, however, there will still be students who care about Cartman's "hippie crap."

Jonas Allen is a columnist for the Emerald. His work appears on alternate Fridays. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

READERS' VOICES

Do you think the EMU Amphitheater was worth the money?



"I think so. I'm sort of biased though, I like the music. I certainly see more people down there than I did before."

Holly Ferguson
Graduate student



"I think so. The outside area was looking pretty old and ragged."

Jacob Armstrong
Environmental Studies



"It's too early to judge whether the amphitheater was worth the money, but the outdoor festivities that the students have been dealt the last week have definitely proven its importance to the community."

Mike Zibelman
Music



"Yes, it's a nicer design. I'm an architecture student — it's a lot nicer layout. It looks like it has a lot more flexibility for different activities."

Steve Rainey
Architecture



"It's hard to tell so far because I haven't seen anything happen there really, except for bands playing there for a few hours during the daytime."

Crystal Broch
Humanities



"No, I don't even remember what was there before because it's been so long in the workings. What's it been used for so far? Nothing — people sit in the sun. They could have done that on a piece of grass."

Geoff Schott
Graduate student

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Return survey

As a fellow student and manager of the West University survey project, I cannot stress how important it is to respond to the questionnaire if you received a copy. We have the attention of people at the city who sincerely wish to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. The more responses that are turned in, the more weight your voices carry. This is not just a numbers game. If we can generate over 400 returned surveys, the reliability factor will be very high and give the city much more reason to pay attention what we have to say.

If you receive a survey, take a few moments, fill it out and mail it back to the city. It is your chance to be heard and have it make a difference.

Ron Funke
Planning, Public Policy and Management