

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

PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Ryan Frank
EDITORIAL EDITORS
Kameron Cole
Stefanie Knowlton

Mr. Bill goes to Salem

Former Mayor of Springfield Bill Morrisette leaves a legacy behind that touched thousands of University students

You can see him coming from a mile away. It's not that his face is overly distinguishable from a distance ... It's those wonderfully colorful ties.

The significance of former Springfield Mayor Bill Morrisette is grander than many students may realize. The former mayor recently left office after being elected the District 42 representative in the Oregon Legislature. Today he begins the first day on the new job, in the process leaving behind a colorful legacy filled with highs and lows.

One of his most inspiring — and most tragic — moments came last May after the shooting at Thurston High School. On a day when police, doctors, students and state administrators were all struggling to keep their composure, Morrisette stepped up and led the traumatized City of Springfield down the right path.

The next day, the Oregon Daily Emerald even lifted one of his quotes as the banner headline to capture the story and its effect on the region: "We will heal together." His prophecy is proving true, evidenced by spontaneous outpourings of strength and love in the Thurston Healing Quilt and the colorful shrine that sprouted in front of the school and lasted for days after the incident.

The night of the shooting, Morrisette came to the University campus to speak at the annual Take Back the Night march. Speaking slowly and deliberately, Morrisette addressed hundreds

of somber students. "As terrible of a tragedy as it is," he said, "it would be even more terrible if we didn't do something about it."

It's easy to see why the 38-year Springfield resident was the first mayor of the city in 115 years to be elected to three terms in office.

In 1996, when the University was visited by Corazon Aquino, former president of the Republic of the Philippines, Morrisette was the one who suggested it plant a tree in her honor.

"I thought it would be good to set ties with the University and Mrs. Aquino and get her to come back," Morrisette told the Emerald at the time. "The tree is a lasting symbol to tie things together between Mrs. Aquino and the University."

She returned to the University the next year.

Morrisette also attended the speech of prominent AIDS activist Mary Fisher at McArthur Court that was broadcast live on television in 1995.

Constantly drawing media attention with his magnetic personality and infectious enthusiasm, the former mayor is a role model. He has fun where he can in life, he works hard on the issues (most recently youth violence) and can become a wrenchingly sober leader when a community is searching for just that.

Whether greeting President Clinton on his visit to Thurston, dealing with the Oregon Citizens Alliance or cracking a joke, Morrisette has proven himself to be the

people's person. He was a constant presence in Eugene and in the campus area, often working with Eugene mayors or student leaders for the right causes. He now leaves the helm of a city and region he so del-



icately steered through some of the toughest of times and moves up the state's political ladder.

There is no doubt that Morrisette will continue to pursue the changes he believes are necessary to improve the state. Two issues

he has already indicated he wants to work on are liquor license reform and arbitration for teacher negotiations.

May he lead the Oregon Legislature into the cooperative debate that he so skillfully did with Springfield. It may take a while to get the

attention of the other legislators, but a good tie rack can usually solve that problem.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

Thumbs



TO THE NEW OREGON LEGISLATURE: According to Kirk Bailey, director of the University Office of Legislative Relations, this session shows more promise than the last three or four sessions in terms of support for higher education.

TO LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE: Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith are scheduled to conduct a town hall meeting in Eugene tonight in order to discuss issues that will face the 106th Congress.



TO THE POOR GETTING POORER:

A recent article in The Register-Guard claims that overall incomes have increased during the past 30 years, however, the poor's share of national income is getting smaller. Therefore, the gap between the rich and the poor, when you consider the percentage of total earnings, is widening.

TO A SEASON THAT SHOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED: Selfishly missing the first three months of the season and then scrambling to fit 50 some games into the remaining months is ridiculous. The NBA should be required to forfeit the 98-99 season for their greed and lack of consideration for their fans. Sorry guys, but offering free tickets is not going to absolve you either.

Letters to the Editor

Vote by web

Year after year, we see the ASUO election process as convoluted and difficult. This year we have the opportunity to improve this process. The ASUO Executive, the Election Coordinator, Taylor Sturges, and the Chief Justice of the Constitution Court, Joel Corcoran, have been working hard to clean up the elections grievances process and increase voter turnout. This year we are going to have issues to vote on that will achieve these goals before the regular election. We want the students of the University of Oregon to have the opportunity to cast their ballots in the special election February 17 and 18.

An exciting element of this special election is that students are going to vote on a very important issue: vote by Duck Web. Taylor has spent the last three months working with the Com-

puting Center researching how we can make the voting process easier and more accessible.

The ASUO is looking forward to an action-packed winter term. If you have any questions about the special election or anything else, please contact us in Suite 4, EMU.

Geneva Wortman
ASUO President

An unreasonable choice

In Oregon, students who are parents are forced to make a choice; one that they should never have to face. A choice between staying in school by working two or three jobs in order to make ends meet, or dropping out of school to get any support from the state. We are faced with this choice because this state is sending a message to us that if we drop out of school and take a low-paying job, then they

will offer assistance. However, this forces parents into a cycle of dependency, from which it is extremely difficult to break free.

As a student parent, I am constantly stressed about how I am going to pay for child care costs in addition to everything else. At the same time that I am trying to maintain my grades, I am also fulfilling work obligations, not to mention actually spending time with my daughter. Last term I worked three jobs, and I still had difficulty paying my daughter's child care.

Unfortunately, my situation is not unique. I encounter student parents everyday who are engaged in the daily struggle to not only survive but also to complete their degrees. We take on this struggle because if we achieve our academic goals, we can better provide opportunities for our children. However, it is increasingly difficult to suc-

ceed in school as a parent. There are only so many 60-hour weeks you can pull before exhaustion hits and you are forced to make a decision between continuing to carry this load or dropping out.

Students are the most important link to the future of our state, and for parents to be ignored like this is a travesty. The Oregon Student Association has found a solution and when this legislative session arrives, I will be supporting them. We need to put money into the Student Block Grant in order to assist student parents like me. The state of Oregon should not make me choose between my education and my daughter.

Please join the ASUO in our fight to help student parents. Drop by the EMU, Suite 4 and get involved!

Khela Singer-Adams
ASUO Non-traditional Student Advocate