

# PERSPECTIVES

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## Send in the Clowns

*As elections approach and student interest wanes, it may be up to the not-so-serious candidates to save student government*

**B**e prepared. You are about to be visually assaulted by neon posters, T-shirts and balloons. As you walk to class, strangers will thrust buttons at you. The air around you will swell with the sound of lofty promises.

Ah, yes. It's election season at the University of Oregon.

This year's race for ASUO Executive promises to be particularly interesting. Of the 11 candidates, only a handful would fit the traditional definition of serious candidates. One person always runs as a goof, but this year there are several.

Some people are worried that these candidates are going to waste the student body's time, or worse yet, that they will make a joke of student government.

That might be a legitimate concern, but in the minds of many people student government has been a joke for a long time.

The number of joke candidates are a symptom of what is wrong with student government, namely that it has become a joke in the minds of many students.

We are told that the ASUO Executive is worthy of a certain degree of respect, yet this year's officers have done little, if anything, to prove themselves worthy. They have failed to reach out to the student body in a way that would foster even a little confidence in campus politics. How many students even know the names of the current ASUO president and

vice president?

The state of the ASUO and the incredibly invisible exec should annoy, if not outrage, every fee-paying student on this campus.

It should upset students, but the sad truth is that few people care enough to be outraged. Many of the students who have been around for a few years have grown jaded. And all that new students know of campus politics and the inner workings of the ASUO is what they've seen so far, which hasn't been much.

When students go to the polls later this term, they will do so believing that their vote is going to count for something. The large percentage that choose not to vote have already given up on that idea.

As the student government of one of the largest public universities in Oregon, the ASUO has the potential

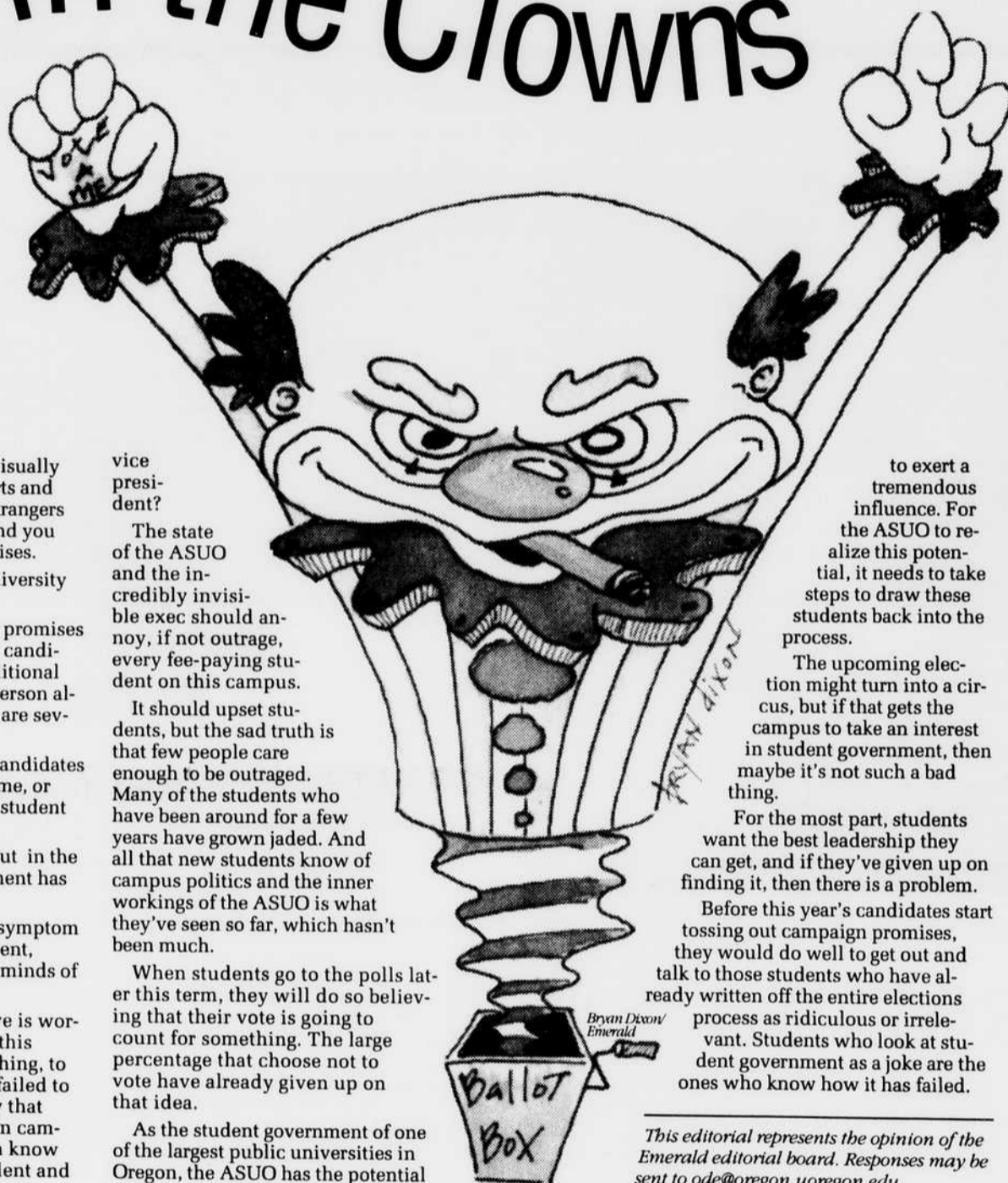
to exert a tremendous influence. For the ASUO to realize this potential, it needs to take steps to draw these students back into the process.

The upcoming election might turn into a circus, but if that gets the campus to take an interest in student government, then maybe it's not such a bad thing.

For the most part, students want the best leadership they can get, and if they've given up on finding it, then there is a problem.

Before this year's candidates start tossing out campaign promises, they would do well to get out and talk to those students who have already written off the entire elections process as ridiculous or irrelevant. Students who look at student government as a joke are the ones who know how it has failed.

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



## SAID & DONE

"Peace in Kosovo without the population of Kosovo would be a hollow mockery. NATO's campaign will continue until the refugees can return to their homes under international protection."  
—British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on the Kosovo crisis.

"I would hope out of the whole experience Wyoming can emerge as a more caring community."  
—Stephen M.

Johnson, a Wyoming minister on the conclusion of Russel Henderson's trial for the murder of Matthew Shepard. The trial ended Monday when Henderson pleaded guilty to robbing and pistol-whipping Shepard in October.

"Come on, it's politics. She presents us with an opportunity and we take advantage of it and then that's not fair? I mean, is it fair that she comes to New York and raises lots of money?"

—New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, when asked if his recent criticisms of potential Senate opponent Hillary Clinton are fair. The mayor's campaign committee recently unveiled its "HillaryNo.com" web site.

"Earth to Gore. Stop trying to reinvent reality."  
—Republican Leadership Council television commercial that disputes Vice President Al Gore's claim that he was instrumental in creating the Internet.

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## Letters to the Editor

### KWVA an alternative

Regarding the article written on KWVA (ODE, March 10), I would like to clarify several issues. First, KWVA functions much like any other professional office. Just as a writer could not walk into the Emerald office and demand that his story be printed, a DJ cannot walk into a radio and demand a show. There is a waiting list of qualified DJs. Specialty shows are granted only to those DJs who have proved their metal. A good DJ is someone who is dedicated, reliable, consistent, willing to wake up at 2 a.m. for his or her show, doesn't miss meetings and sticks around for more than just a few terms. A Grateful Dead/Phish show qualifies as a specialty show.

The second point that needs to be addressed is our mission statement. KWVA provides a "clear alternative" on the radio dial. In a world that continues to be annexed by corporations, pacified by beer, homogenized by style and dwarfed by consumerism, KWVA is untouched by the mainstream. We are classified as an educational radio station, supported by the University. The spirit of our mission statement was to give a voice to the fringe of society, to the art of underrepresented music and the DJs taste. Our mission statement was approved by the FCC to obtain our license. Should we ever wish to change the mission statement, we would have to reapply to the FCC when our license expires in six years.

In closing, I would like to say that beyond the structure of our mission statement, we not only should not compete with other radio stations, we don't want to. We provide a variety of music from underrepresented artists. The sound of the station is the culmination of DJs, programming directors, music directors, etc. If we don't play the Grateful Dead and Phish it's because no one here wants to do it. We don't have to please the masses. The masses have plenty of radio stations to tune in to. If you don't like KWVA, you can apply for a staff or DJ position, volunteer, or just change the dial.

Emily Walter  
General Manager, KWVA

### Y2K worries

I'm concerned about the Y2K article you ran in the March 12 issue. Your article gives a false sense of security to people about the status of their computers. Saying "For computers made before about 1995, there might be a possibility of a problem," and "students were not too concerned about having problems with their PCs," may give people a sense of relief that might cause them to put off checking out their systems.

Just because you bought a brand new computer in 1999 doesn't mean the computer is going to be 100 percent Y2K compliant. My company just purchased four brand name computers and every one

of them failed the compliance tests.

Just because a company claims their BIOS chips are compliant doesn't mean the BIOS in your brand new machine is compliant. BIOS manufacturers aren't just going to throw away the old BIOS chips even though they aren't making two digit BIOS chips anymore. Instead, they are changing over to the four-digit year codes but continue to sell off their old stock. So you could have a brand spanking new computer with an outdated BIOS chip in it.

There are several testing programs you can download off of the Web, but your best bet is to check with the computer manufacturer to see if your system has any compliance issues. Most of the big name computer companies have BIOS upgrades available on their Web sites.

Windows 95 and some versions of Windows 98 are not compliant and require an upgrade patch that can be found at Microsoft's Web site. Also, even after you've installed this patch on your computer, you need to change the short date in your regional control panel to reflect a four-digit year date.

Of course, if the power companies aren't compliant and you lose power on New Year's Day 2000, your brand spanking new computer makes a wonderful paperweight.