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Perspectives

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Emerald



Bryan Dixon Emerald

The taste of the NEW milkshakes

We made it through the technocrat propaganda prophecy of Y2K Armageddon. All appeared safe and tranquil on the horizon. Yet, in the first third of the new year, we find ourselves at the dawn of a new barrage of political hype and harrowing hypocrisy. Brace yourselves, the ASUO elections are less than a week away.

Harbored in a cut-and-paste world of grievances, campaign promises, baby-kissing and international house coffee-breaks are six candidates for this year's ASUO Executive. Unless you belong to the microcosm of small world squabbles known as the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, you probably don't care.

At the national level, elections are also underway. Even at the national level, you are probably far

from enthralled. One of the major candidates is attempting to overcome the political failures of his father. The other is simultaneously attempting to break away from the scandal of his boss and shine in the light of his prosperity. Lurking in the shadows are a few mavericks vying for center stage in the world's seediest arena.

If presidential elections are the Montage restaurant, ASUO elections are the Hammy's special. Swipe your student ID card, and see how far five points will take you.

This year, you need not leave the confines of your own comfortable home to participate. Voting will take place entirely on-line, via the Duck-Web voting system. You can point and click for the next representative who will allocate your student dollars and fill vacancies left by departing student senators. Perhaps this revolution of unprecedented accessibility will push voter turnout through the roof to a dreamy level of say, 15 percent. Dare we dream?

On a brighter note, this year's ballot brings us a real choice in candidates, instead of the usual collage of rich kids and snot-nosed, wannabe

OPINION
Eric Pfeiffer

political demagogues.

First, I'll look at the two tickets who are actually running full-scale campaigns. Those with crazy additions like a vice-presidential candidate. You have Jay Breslow and his running mate Holly Magner, against Autumn DePoe and her companion Caitlin Upshaw. Both tickets bring a level of credibility and dedication that is often lacking in student government. DePoe has long been known as a rebel and reformer within the ASUO playhouse, often times being the sole voice of discontent against a concrete wall of slated power players. Breslow seems committed to diversity and effective communication within the ASUO, another trait that would serve students well.

All said and done, it's a Coke vs. Pepsi dilemma. Do you want the sharp-but-sweet classic DePoe Coke or the smooth and soothing choice-of-a-new-generation Breslow? Either way, the age of accountability and actually doing your job, established by this year's executives, Wylie Chen and Mitra Anoushiravani, should continue.

Of course, if you're not a fan of soft drinks, you could always go for

the Antifreeze flavor of recently removed candidates or the madness-inducing mercury of Scott Austin. Then, we would need only to elect an aspiring Alice to accompany his Mad Hatter.

For yet another perspective, you could compare our ASUO candidates to some national figures. DePoe has been branded as the John McCain of the ASUO. She hasn't spent a dime and wants to eliminate the pork from student government. Not a bad idea, since the U.S. Supreme Court is likely to run our fee system through the grinder in the next few months. Someone needs to protect student programs. Breslow might be a Bill Bradley of sorts. He seems to have a genuine interest in improving campus diversity, and he has the savvy to work within the system.

Even if you hate politics. Even if you'd rather snuggle up to a bed of nails than get involved in the system. Even if you just don't care. Take a moment to examine this year's candidates both at the local and national level. Take a Coke or a Pepsi out of the fridge and make yourself comfortable. Next year's leaders are only a click away.

Eric Pfeiffer is the freelance editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at epfeiffe@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the editor

Gabbe, Larson campaign reaches out

So what exactly is going on here? The elections board has removed C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson from the ballot for serving coffee to 20 people — I'm not quite seeing the reason for removal. Gabbe and Larson were trying to reach out to a group of students who tend to be overlooked. Why is this a bad thing? Isn't that what democracy is all about — advertising your self and your issues? Gabbe and Larson were the first of the candidates to reach out to the International Students Association; they found a platform to speak about their campaigns — and then they get

punished. The inexperience of the elections board has led them to make this unjust decision. Gabbe and Larson are the best candidates for the job. Let's put them back on the ballot and allow the students to choose.

Courtney Hight
environmental studies

Friends don't make friends drink

As a "drier than a forsaken desert" student, I wish to thank you for the insightful article about the debate regarding a campus "beer garden" (ODE, Feb. 7). Although I am strictly against alcohol consumption, I would not force my beliefs on others by petitioning for a law against alcohol consumption. However, I beg the same respect from those who do

drink. I don't want a part in it, however small. I will not be forced into supporting that which I believe to be wrong. I am now looking forward to better acquainting myself with our student government and regret that it has taken an attack on my personal values to get me involved. Thank you for providing my motivation.

Sara Vogelsberg
pre-major, journalism

PFC explains reasoning

Many questions have been brought up concerning decisions Programs Finance Committee has made. We'd like to take a few moments to explain PFC's reasoning.

The PFC was given a 0-percent benchmark for student groups, which was approved not only by

the PFC itself, but also by the ASUO Executive and the ASUO Student Senate.

The Emerald reported that Designated Driver Shuttle was granted \$50,876, a negative 30 percent. This was true as of Jan. 27, but as of Feb. 8, DDS was granted almost \$13,000 more, giving them a total budget of \$63,157, a negative 12 percent. The Emerald failed to mention DDS appealed to PFC and part of their appeal, for wages, was granted.

The Student Bar Association did ask for a budget increase, which was hard for PFC to grant, considering that last year, the group didn't use \$3,739 of their \$11,000 budget.

And many conferences were not granted an increase this year, simply because last year confer-

ences received increases of up to 66 percent.

The order in which groups appear before PFC doesn't matter. The numbers speak for themselves. Whether the group goes first or last, their numbers don't change. Furthermore, groups are responsible for scheduling the date of their hearing.

We encourage students to become active in the PFC process. Come to office hours and look at ledger sheets and post-closes, which indicate individual groups' spending. Decide for yourself whether or not you believe a group efficiently and effectively spends your incidental fee dollars.

Shantell Rice
ASUO PFC Chair
Emily Owens Sedgwick
ASUO PFC Vice-Chair