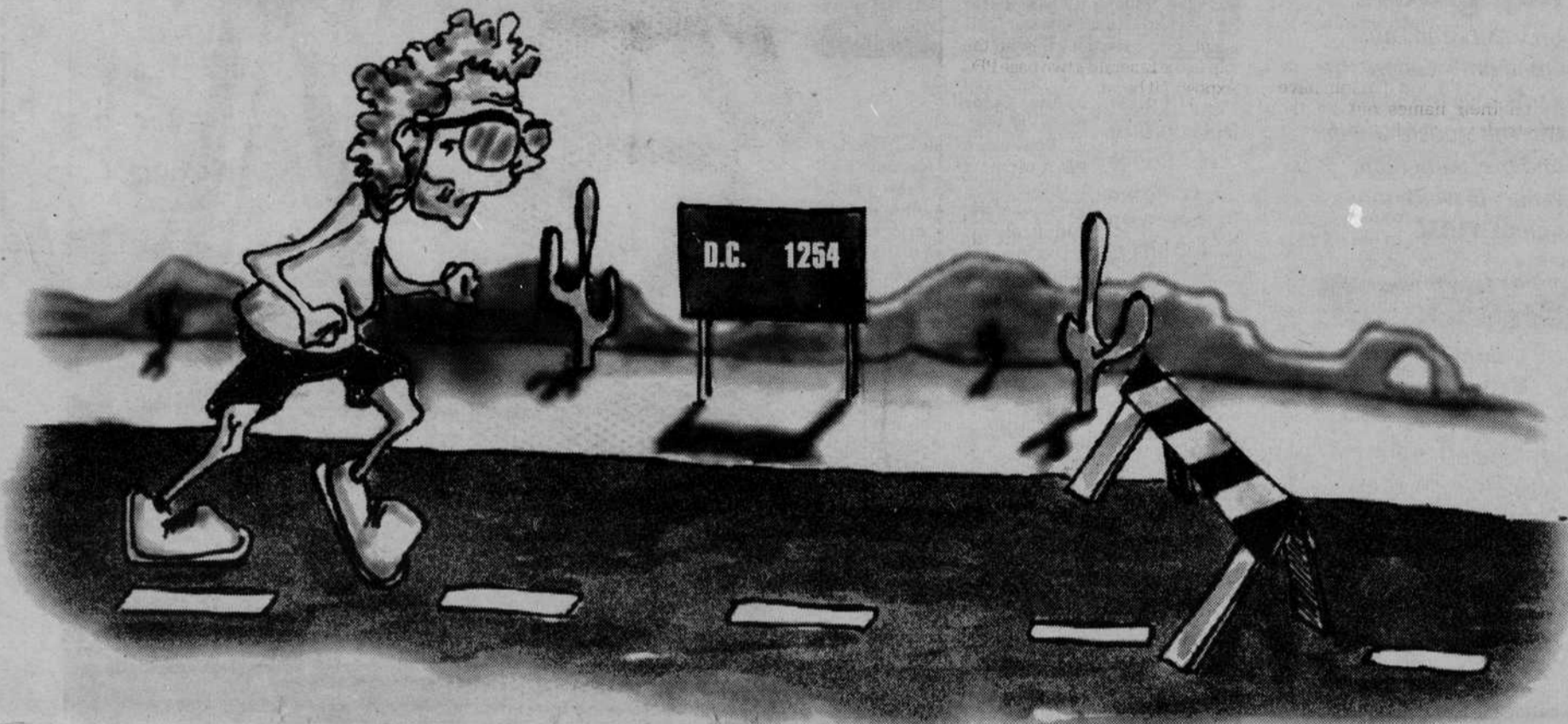


## Granny D Goes to Washington



Bryan Dixon Emerald



Bret  
Jacobson

If you ever need evidence on how important symbols are to Americans, just examine how everyone gets so impressed when a 90-year-old woman hikes a few — OK, 3,000 — miles across country to make her case for campaign finance reform. Campaign finance reform has become the preeminent symbol for the revival of political interest by today's college students, who would be hurt terribly by such reform.

Doris "Granny D" Haddock went to Congress to meet with a trio of national lawmakers who support campaign finance reform and lobby opponents of such plans. That's an awful long walk with an important message. "Wake up, America, recognize what is happening to your country and do something about it," she said, according to Foxnews.com.

Indeed, many are waking up to the idea of cleaning up American politics.

Arizona Sen. John McCain, whom you might also know from his meteoric rise as media darling in the presidential race, has encapsulated his entire message into the idea of getting the youth of America involved again in politics by cleaning up Washington through campaign finance re-

form.

The movement is genuine and well-intentioned to be sure. Just as McCain's target is the confidence and noble spirit of American youths around college campuses, the emotional response must be a positive one. There's no doubt that the man believes in his mission wholeheartedly, and there's no feasible way to doubt the sincerity of a 90-year-old who'll trek across America.

But there's a difference between inspirational symbols such as Granny D's jaunt or McCain's vault for position of leader of the free world and the actual machinations of a nation and the rights of free speech we must protect.

The symbolism of the campaign finance reform movement should only be recognized as a symbol for the ultimate goal of a less corrupt, more noble and more accountable government, and should definitely not be carried out in any practical sense.

The execution of this well-intended reform would cripple the free speech rights of about 250 million citizens. And while we'll not dare kid ourselves into believing even a majority of these are interested enough in the political workings of our nation to open

their wallets, the right to do so must be protected just as we protect other forms of free political speech.

Some may argue that the benefits would outweigh the risk of corroding the right for individuals to give to their political representatives. To that assertion I must disagree with the very marrow of my bones. There's no payoff worthy of a gamble regarding the United States Constitution and our Bill of Rights, and we do not yet exist in such a state in which the people are oppressed.

So where does this leave the college students McCain hopes to reinvigorate and reinspire? Right back where they were, whiny and apathetic until a real, legal solution comes along.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, so don't let yourself be walked there by a nice 90-year-old lady on the golden brick road of campaign finance reform.

Bret Jacobson is an editorial editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper. He can be reached via e-mail at bjacobso@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

### Letters to the editor

#### Emerald is too negative

I would like to thank all of you who have taken time out of your lives to dissect the C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson campaign. It's refreshing to see the bickering and bantering around another year of elections. Maybe I'm crazy, but rather than bash a campaign that has proven experience and the will to lead the ASUO, why not highlight the merits of the other candidates? From day one Gabbe and Larson acted as worthy candidates by reaching out to students to find the issues most pressing on our campus. They never lowered

themselves to negative campaigning but focused on the issues they would work on. Their reputations as upright individuals have been mutilated from an incident in which they sought input from a segment of the campus population underrepresented in campus politics. Damn them for reaching out to students.

On top of the bashing, I find your editorial, "Students in the Crossfire" (ODE, Mar. 1), extremely distasteful when you compare the Constitution Court's decision of allowing Gabbe and Larson to remain on the ballot to that of a rapist let off despite DNA evidence. I think victims of sexual assault also find this comparison in-

poor taste.

I ask you, the students of this institution, to seek out fact from fiction. After clearing off the layer of muck, you will find that Gabbe and Larson would lead a successful ASUO in protecting your interests. Don't let propaganda sway you. Vote for the right reasons, VOTE FOR C.J. AND PETER.

Brian Tanner  
political science

#### Gabbe, Larson irresponsible

I realize that campaigns are essential to student government, but dirty politics has no place on the University campus. I am tired of seeing environmentally damaging yellow signs that support unethical

candidates. It is ridiculous that C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson slip by on a technicality. I am personally insulted that Gabbe and Larson have not made an effort to be accountable for their "mistake." If it was an honest mistake, why did they not apologize and own up to it? The election rules are clearly presented to all the candidates and there is NO reason why any literate, semi-intelligent person should not understand the content of the rules. The "lefty" candidate understood, and he probably read it while sitting in a right-handed desk. If Gabbe and Larson don't understand the election rules, how would they be able to read and understand the Green Tape

Notebook? Why should we trust our student fees to irresponsible people?

Jay Breslow and Holly Magner, you have my vote because you have run a positive, non-slandorous, honest, ethical campaign, stressing issues that relate to me as a student. Hey, Gabbe and Larson ... do you guys just Nixon? Check him out: He's just your style, and I heard he was "not a crook." Boys, I don't even want to give you the chance to say something even close to that. Vote Breslow and Magner. They don't like Nixon, and neither should you.

Ruth McDevitt  
biology