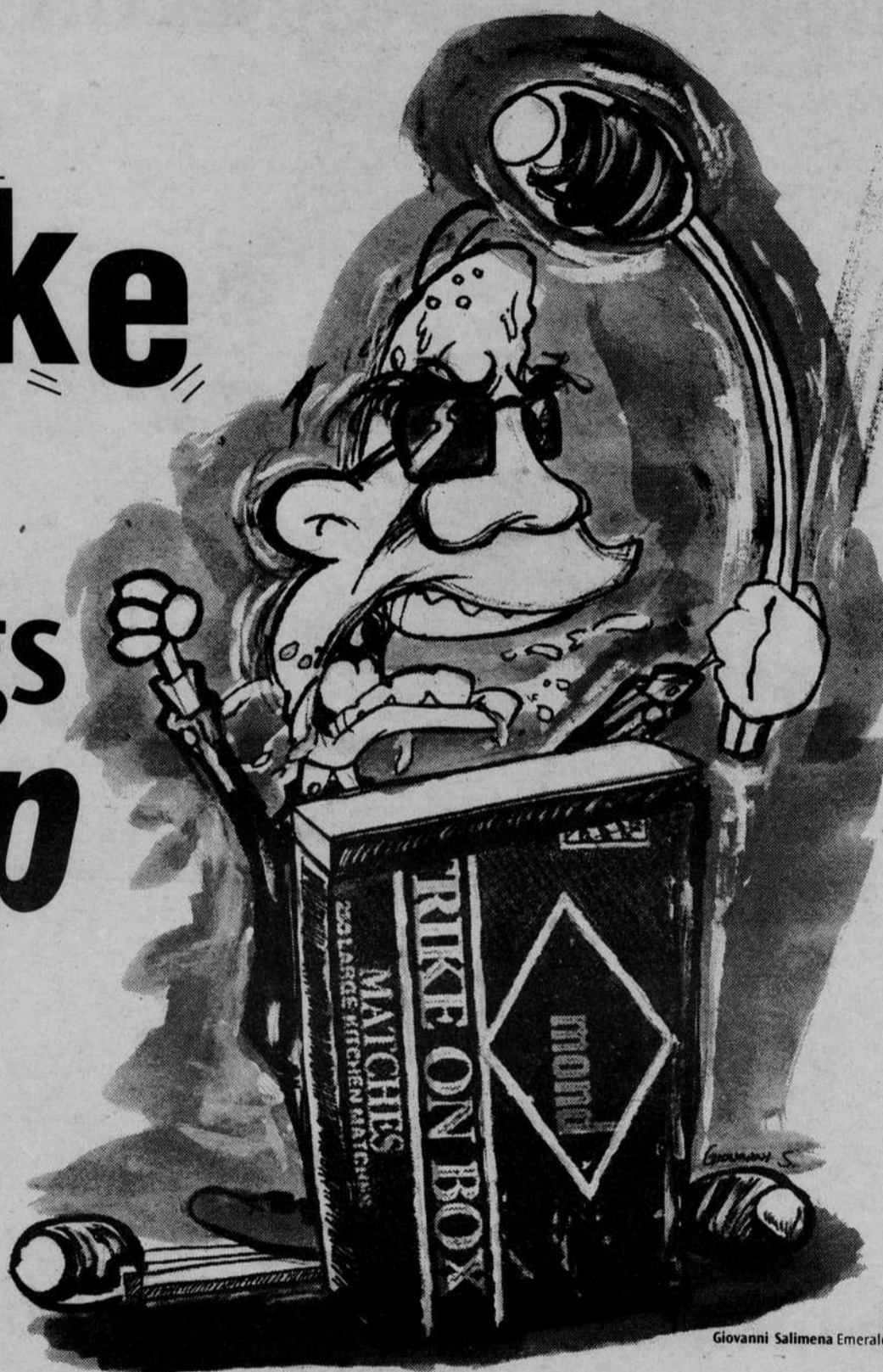


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Perspectives

Oregon Daily
Emerald

Shake things up



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Outsider candidates are by no means a promise of radical social change. Often they fizzle quickly and the two major parties can pay lip service to the issue to attract lazy voters' ballots. But attention should always be paid to outsiders, even if only to challenge the ideas that can stagnate and become stale.

A unique individual visited the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance members Tuesday setting an example of involved political activism.

At first glance, it may not seem like David McReynolds, a 70-year-old gay, pro-marijuana socialist candidate for president would be the average parents' ideal of what their child should aspire to become. And while we aren't endorsing him as president, just maybe he can provide a civic standard that the rest of us should consider.

There's no doubt that politics aren't at the forefront of most students' daily lives. The state and national voter turnout rate is ridiculously low, and on campus only roughly 1,800 out of 17,000 students participated in this year's ASUO elections. That people can't even find the time once a year to flex their political rights leads one to deduce that politics fits somewhere between shower fungus and the formula for Wendy's secret sauce

in importance to daily life for most.

Sitting quietly enveloped in study or engaging in boisterous celebration of college life can make for plenty of memories later on in life, but while these moments can capture the majority of one's attention, the politics of the day shouldn't be ignored. And sometimes the best way to keep one's mind politically active is to challenge dearly held ideas. That's where people like McReynolds step in.

By challenging the ideas that normally lay complacent, the passion and vigor for social and economic causes can be stirred. When one only hears voices of agreement the public arena becomes stagnant and boring. But every once in a while a seemingly oddball candidate injects themselves into the mix and the entire political scene is shaken up, causing the usually apathetic voter to turn into an informed citizen. And certainly the socialism and gay-activist nature of McReynolds will provide enough fodder for social discussion.

And indeed it's the effort that is most admirable. Change will never come from within established organisms such as the two dominant political parties if they can help it. So every now and then a brave person with a new message must step forward. Some ideas are accepted through the laborious efforts of those few visionaries, and some

times their ideas are rejected with a scoff.

The success such bold candidates find runs the gamut. For every Sen. John McCain, who captured the nation's attention earlier this year with his powerful messages of reform, there are dozens of Ralph Naders and Ross Perots. Either way, the effort should still be respected by all. But the interesting aspect of these unique figures is that their chances can't be accurately prognosticated before they run, making it important to give each their due attention.

As the bare minimum effort for being a good citizen and to keep the democratic process alive, listeners should at least give each candidate or party platform a good examination every election. The two-party system has been around for most of the country's history, but often leaves out important issues that don't fit neatly into the platforms of either party of the day. This can lead to a big gap in what voters want to discuss and what the major candidates are willing to deal with.

Thus an outsider candidate has a shot at appealing to a voter's sensibilities so long as the voter actually pays attention to the process and looks at all the candidates. And it is through this process that voters can decide for themselves whether to make a political change or to hang onto the beliefs they already hold.

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

THUMBS



To another voice in campus discourse

Just as it was appropriate for Johnson Hall protesters to speak publicly on their desire to join the Worker Rights Consortium, the sports marketing duo of Andy Koper and Caleb Smith sold T-shirts with the words "I agree with Phil."

To a crowned Duck

Defeating 17 other women, University graduate student Taryn Tarver-Thompson won the Mrs. Oregon pageant, which honors family values and the institution of marriage.



To a city in chaos

Miami, once known for its beautiful beaches and roaring nightlife, has more recently been a city in turmoil with the Elian Gonzalez mess. Now the city faces more controversy as the new police chief has been selected by the city manager, who himself is already on his way out after being fired by the mayor.

To hurting the weakest among us

The majority of children 14 and under who are killed in alcohol-related crashes are the passengers in vehicles with inebriated drivers who are usually old enough to be their parents or caregivers, according to study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CORRECTION

The story "Film documents student activism" (ODE May 4) gave an incorrect year in the date for the May 4, 1970, shootings of four students at Kent State University. The Emerald regrets the error.