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Perspectives



Small state, no stance

Giovanni Salimena Emerald

THUMBS



To a big Mother's Day march

The Million Mom March took to Capitol Hill Sunday to send Congress a "Mother's Day" message that more mainstream Americans are ready to fight the gun lobby in an effort to make the country safer.

To some good ol' boys never meanin' no harm

The Dukes of Hazard, that wonderfully whimsical TV show of the 1980s, is hitting Tinseltown with CBS's "Dukes of Hazard: Hazzard in Hollywood" to air May 19.



To a little stumble

The Portland Trail Blazers hit a little roadblock Sunday when they lost to the Utah Jazz for the first time in the best-of-seven series they previously led three games to none. No team has ever won a series after digging themselves a three-zero deficit.

To poisoned funding

Since 1978, nearly 600 poison-control centers have been forced to close, mainly because of funding problems. Now, there are only a total of 71 such centers to advise the two million annual callers urgently seeking help.

Christian Kaylor
Campaign Manager
Kitty Piercy for
County Commissioner

Oregon has only seven electoral votes to offer in a presidential election, and it shows by the way candidates rarely visit. Vice President Al Gore, who came to the state Friday, didn't even talk about issues important to the state when he was here but instead focused on a Social Security discussion to a crowd at Portland Community College. To recognize the importance of Oregon voters, Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush should show up and talk about the issues Oregonians care about.

Gore continued to beat his dull drum by talking to an invitation-only, supportive audience about the need for a safe retirement program. While that's a perfectly valid political stance, and one hopes presidential wanna-bes have clear visions for such important social issues, it would seem obvious that there are other, more pertinent topics for state voters and college students. Gore should have the integrity to speak honestly to the needs of the audience he faces. Though he touched on the topic of higher education and the need for better funding, the main topic of his argument was the need to shore up the retirement program.

Oregon has its fair share of hot topics that de-

serve comment by presidential candidates, and it is rather disrespectful for Gore to speak to a national script instead of talk to the needs of state voters. On Oregonians minds are issues such as assisted suicide, environmental concerns and medicinal marijuana. Bush and others have criticized Gore for not taking a stance on environmental issues such as dam breaching, claiming that the vice president is politically waffling. To ignore such local concerns is to take the state for granted or, worse yet, to not care at all about the state's voters because the seven electoral votes are often inconsequential. And for Gore to give his nationally scripted speech to a supportive group who deserve to hear more about the vice president's stance on state concerns betrays the trust between politicians and the citizens they represent.

While some leadership on the national agenda should be demonstrated by presidential candidates, there is no acceptable reason to skip over important local issues. Obviously candidates don't want to jeopardize nationwide voters on stances they may take here, but that is a political dodge and not an acceptable out for those who want such an important duty. The original point

of political debates was to let voters choose candidates based on their views of the world, as opposed to the modern trend of candidates choosing voters and forming their opinions based on that polling data.

All this discussion about Gore's insensitive vote is not to let Bush off the hook. The Republican hopeful hasn't even come to the state yet, and his plans to arrive have only been loosely set for May 16, the deadline for state primary ballots. Candidates should take the state seriously enough to give firm plans whenever possible, giving voters the opportunity to perform their civic duty to make an informed vote.

We all must live within the reality that Oregon is, and will be, a small state with few electoral votes. But that doesn't excuse politicians from coming to our state and discussing the important issues that voters care deeply about. Nor does it excuse them avoiding positions on those issues in the name of political expediency.

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

Letters to the editor

Olsen is what Bettman wants

Bonny Bettman's platform calls for locally owned, sustainable small businesses located in downtown. Specifically, she says that "economic development should foster local small businesses."

Who is already doing this? Tracy Olsen — a native Eugenie and owner of a successful small downtown business.

Bettman wants more people like Olsen in Eugene, so do I. That's why I am voting for Olsen for Eugene city council, Ward 3.

David Haushalter
Eugene resident

Tracy Olsen doesn't even vote

If you go down to the Lane County Elections office you can find out who is registered to vote and how often they have voted. I decided to do this for Olsen, one of the candidates for the Ward 3 City Council Seat. Guess what? He hasn't voted since 1997. That means that he didn't even bother to vote in the gubernatorial race in 1998 and has ignored the smaller elections since then. If he can't manage to take a few minutes to vote once or twice a year, then do we want to elect him to a position where he

may be required to work up to 40 hours a week? I don't think so.

Bonny Bettman is the clear choice for Ward 3 Councilor. She has experience with local transportation, livability and community issues and has worked with a number of citizen groups. Friends of Eugene named her "Activist of the Year." The Sierra Club has endorsed her. The Lane County Democrats has endorsed her. A number of local elected officials including David Kelly, Betty Taylor and Peter Sorenson have endorsed her. She has solid community support.

I urge you to vote for Bettman.

Chris O'Connor
Eugene resident

Piercy has credentials, too

Monday, the Oregon Daily Emerald endorsed, among others, Bobby Green Sr. in his race for the Board of Lane County Commissioners. At no time did your editorial board attempt to contact his opponent, Kitty Piercy for an interview relating to this endorsement.

Here is some information that you overlooked in making your endorsement. Kitty has:

- Advocated for improved child care for students
- Fought to keep students covered by the Oregon Health Plan.

• Stood shoulder to shoulder with students over the right to vote for how student dollars are spent.

She has a relationship with the University stretching back more than a quarter century. Currently, three of her staff members are graduates of the University.

It is the height of arrogance for your editorial board to believe that it can assess the relative qualifications of candidates for office without taking the time to learn about them. When a newspaper makes assumptions about political candidates without taking the time to study the relative merits of each, it loses credibility.

As a second generation University alumnus I am shocked that your newspaper would make political endorsements without having an impartial decision process in place. In the future, I hope that the Emerald Editorial Board will take its journalistic responsibility seriously enough to warrant an actual interview of the candidates. Otherwise, the Editorial Board could best serve the public interest by not commenting on public policy issues that it knows little or nothing about.