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Perspectives

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Listen to un-Conventional ideas



In the coming weeks, there will be four political conventions happening in America.

That's right, four. You'll see two on television — two well-scripted production numbers spouting Demoblican propaganda. The TV spectacles for Bore and Gush will make the Oscars look like a poorly-planned frat party. These conventions will feature carefully-coiffed candidates offering nothing but simplistic platitudes.

The Republicans have nothing to present except the usual tax cuts for the wealthy, corporate handouts and protection of power for the rich and conforming. They'll package it to look like an inclusive, multicolored platform of compassion, but the legislation behind it only hurts the average American.

The Democrats only seem to believe in staying in power. They haven't had a new idea in years, their candidates are nothing more than Republicans who like taxes and they will desperately appeal to the "mushy middle" voters, regardless of who they have to sell out in the process. They, too, will pretend to embrace causes that they'll never back up with legislation.

Unfortunately for democracy and voter participation, the only coverage of the other two conventions — the conventions actually engaging in spirited discussion of issues that affect the average American — that you'll see will be police officers in the streets of Philadelphia and Los Angeles "cracking down" on the "Eugene anarchists" and "protesters."

That's right, mass counter-conventions will be happening during the major party galas. In fact, they'll be happening right outside the door. These

people wouldn't have to "protest" if they were actually represented by our so-called political system.

Many of us disaffected by the endless corporate politics will agree with much of what the People's Convention and Direct Action Network are espousing. Check out both counter-conventions' Web sites at www.directactionnetwork.org and peoplesconvention.com. Progressives will find the ideas of these "protesters" commonplace. Not-so-progressives may find that they make sense.

Destroying property to get attention is not the point of these conventions. Discussing social justice, environmental protection, health care, education and global capitalism is. But like the WTO protests, having TV cameras filming something, filming any part of these ideas holds the possibility of Americans seeing and thinking about them. Media outlets won't discuss these issues.

The media barrage instead will be histrionic: Must cover empty sound bites and superficial photo-ops! No time for covering issues during the busy election cycle! Hillary said bad words! Bush snorted coke!

Many progressives and hard-left liberals will complain about the tactics of some of the "protesters," saying that vandalism is violence, saying that we can't create fear if our ideas are to be accepted. Maybe. But the corporate politics of Bore and Gush give me fear. The notion of a two-party political system dominated by big lies and no ideas gives me fear.

The possibility that the rich will keep getting richer, the poor will keep getting poorer and the mainstream American voters will keep getting

suckered and fleeced by politicians with pretty things to say really, really gives me fear.

Has anyone (especially the progressive naysayers of anarchists' tactics) stopped to think that maybe we're running out of options? I condemn violence; don't get me wrong. But I neither condone nor condemn corporate vandalism. I think that's a personal choice. No matter how many people say otherwise, the strength of the message and the vandalism in Seattle made the powers that be take notice. And when you're left out of the political process, ignored and pushed aside as if your concerns and ideas aren't as important as big corporate donors and nicely worded slogans, what should you do?

Perhaps if the media and the politicians spent some time addressing the issues and concerns of the working class in America, there would be no need for news outlets to cover broken windows and marches in the streets, and no need for politicians to decry the lawlessness of "fringe groups."

If the media and the government would engage in a dialogue with the disaffected masses about our society, instead of using sleight-of-hand ad campaigns to sell something vaguely representing politics, we wouldn't have such unrest.

More and more of us aren't represented by the two-party system. We're taxed, but not represented. More and more of us are represented by "fringe groups." Those groups are finally joining forces to try to rally disaffected voters and represent a growing ideology in American politics. Some appropriate media attention is required — now.

Michael Kleckner is the Emerald's editorial editor for the 2000-01 school year, and is currently in Salt Lake City, working as an intern for the Deseret News. He can be reached at sioenroux@playful.com

COMMENTARY
Michael Kleckner

QUOTED

"I feel good I rode him. [But] I hope I never have to get on him again."
 — Bullrider Rocky McDonald after riding Blue Grass — an infamous Bull who had injured other riders — and marking the first time he had been ridden for eight seconds in competition. McDonald, a Texas resident, placed fifth at the 2000 Eugene Pro Rodeo. The Register-Guard, July 31.

"It's a cat and mouse game. It's going to be all week."
 — Commissioner John Timoney of the Philadelphia police said in response to several tense confrontations between the thousands of activists crowded throughout the streets and police. The Register-Guard, July 31.

"My energy and enthusiasm have waned, and you need that energy to come at the monster every day."
 — Assistant Commandant Bonnie Jo Houchen upon resigning from her position at the Citadel. Houchen was the Citadel's first female officer, hired in 1997 to assimilate women into the corps of cadets. The Register-Guard, July 31.

Letters to the editor

Prediction could come true

Some months ago, immediately following the University's rather reluctant decision to join the Worker Rights Consortium, I predicted that it would not be long before Johnson Hall used the one-year trial period "get-out-of-jail-free card" as a way to back out of what many administrators perceived as a slap in the face of the University's most famous sugar daddy.

Recent news articles regarding President [Dave] Frohnmayer's "concerns" with the consortium's slowness in getting on line and potential effective-

ness overall, suggest that that augury may indeed have been right on the money. I take no pleasure in being right this time.

Bill Smees
 University staff

Smoking ban a healthy choice

I am an exchange student from Puebla, Mexico here at the University. I have been reading the Oregon Daily Emerald frequently since I first got here.

I came across [Rebecca Newell's] article about "Lifting the smoke screen from businesses." (ODE, July 25) I must say that it was very interesting. Especially your concern about people exposed to second-hand smoke. I must say that cigarettes stink

and make me sick.

Hopefully the Eugene ban will be put into effect.
 Amado Correa
 Student

CORRECTION

A photo accompanying the story "Music innovator uses all he has" (ODE, July 27) carried the wrong cutline. It should have identified the musician as Ela Lambin.

Needless to say, Santa Claus did not leap to his death from the roof of Gateway Mall.

The Emerald regrets the error.

Word On the Street.

Should the University stick to its original one-year commitment with the Worker Rights Consortium or should it pull out sooner?



Stick With It

"I think [President] Dave [Frohnmayer] made a decision that cost the University \$30 million and I think he should stick to it."

— Senior Gabrielle Hendel, psychology and women's studies



Pull Out Early

"I think they should pull out. I think the WRC was a joke to begin with and it's a joke now. P.S: Thank you, Phil."

— Sophomore Seth Revoal, undeclared



Stick With It

"I think they should stick to it. They're still hashing it out. If it doesn't work out, we tried. We gave it a shot. We're giving the message universities want a say in what's going on."

— Senior Michael Medlock, general and political science



Pull Out Early

"If [Frohnmayer] has concerns, he should pull out now before waiting for it to get worse."

— Junior Christina Huber, chemistry



Stick With It

"They should stick it out a year and reassess after that because they made a commitment."

— Junior Ryan Anderson, exercise and movement science