

# Nader supporters want equal representation in media

Close to 100 local residents gathered Wednesday to voice their distaste for a two-party system that excludes others

By Eric Martin  
for the Emerald

A crowd of more than 90 Ralph Nader supporters gathered Wednesday evening at Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza in downtown Eugene and vehemently voiced concerns that the presidential debates are undemocratic because they exclude viable third-party candidates.

Chanting "Let Ralph Debate" and holding green picket signs that read "Gore and Bush Make Me Want to Ralph," the protesters listened to speeches by 10 different Nader supporters, while the second debate between presidential candidates Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore took place in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"We want a leader who'll be much greater," said Michael Glownia, a write-in candidate for Eugene mayor. "We want a leader like Ralph Nader. Rise above mediocrity, choose a leader with integrity."

Several speakers said corporations are silencing candidates such as Nader while supporting Bush and Gore — candidates representing corporate interests. They say these interests are destructive and wreak havoc on the environment in foreign countries, while cheating workers in foreign countries out of hard-earned pay.

Responding to protester complaints, Executive Director for the Oregon Republican Party Darryl Howard said in a phone interview Wednesday that any candidate who has the potential to run a national campaign should be allowed in the presidential debates.

"They should be open to all candidates," Howard said. "I don't have the pay grade to make these decisions, but if I did, there would always be a third-party candidate in there."

But Maria Smithson, vice chair for the Oregon Democratic Party, said allowing unproven third-party candidates like Nader to participate in national debates is unrealistic and not advantageous to the public.

"If we opened up these debates to every presidential candidate, there

could be up to 50 candidates," she said. Having a large candidate pool would put voters at a disadvantage because they wouldn't have time to be exposed in any depth to the platforms of so many candidates, she said.

"The fact is, no third-party candidate has any chance at the presidency this year," Smithson continued. "Ralph Nader is not qualified."

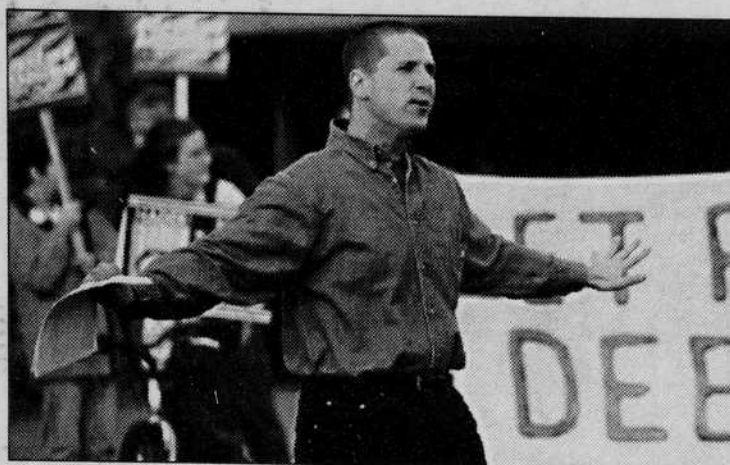
Nader protesters also criticized the media, which they said is corporate-owned and is guilty of not covering Nader consistently.

"It's unfair that the media is excluding information about Ralph Nader," said Kathy Jones, a member of Lane Victory 2000, Nader's local campaign organization. "All the people I talk to say, 'Yes, Ralph Nader should be allowed into the debates.' Is this democracy? We need to take it back."

Members of Lane Victory 2000, who organized Wednesday's rally, said they support Nader because he is anti-corporate control and stands for economic justice.

One Nader supporter even quoted President John F. Kennedy.

"The unity of freedom has never



Kevin Calame Emerald

Michael Glownia addresses a crowd of about 100 Nader supporters Wednesday evening at the Wayne Morse free speech plaza in downtown Eugene.

depended on the uniformity of opinion," said Richard Alevizos, a member of Lane Victory 2000.

Speakers also encouraged voters to cast their ballots for Nader because of a rising tide of Nader supporters who have turned out for rallies in Chicago, Seattle and Portland.

Two Nader supporters who spoke were considerably younger than their counterparts: 15-year-old

Churchill High School students Melissa Adkins and Sarah Coon.

Adkins said her parents tried to convince her that Gore was her best choice for president, but after doing some research on the Internet, she said if she could vote, Nader would be her choice.

"I feel empowered," Adkins said. "We're going to Xerox some fliers and hand them out at school."

## Coming Out

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ence of people meeting me and finding that I blow all the stereotypes."

Shasta Willson, a computer science graduate student who spoke at the event, said that Coming Out Day is a time to show students who haven't come out that there's nothing wrong with them and they're not alone.

"Coming out can be a scary thing, especially with all the stories about negative reactions and gay bash-

ing," she said. "But I've reached the point where I take all opportunities to come out because I've had positive experiences. This day helps give students on the other end of the process courage to come out."

Gabrielle Hendel, co-director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Association said the oppression of gay students is more challenging to overcome because being gay is easier to hide and deny.

"Being gay isn't like other oppressions," she said. "You can't hide the color of your skin ... but you can

hide being gay."

Michael Dippel, a junior journalism major and vice president of Delta Lambda Phi, a national gay, bisexual and progressive fraternity, said that students who do come out become more content in their lives.

"Coming out makes you so much happier as a person," he said. "You're not living with a secret anymore and you're not hiding anything. It's a great feeling."

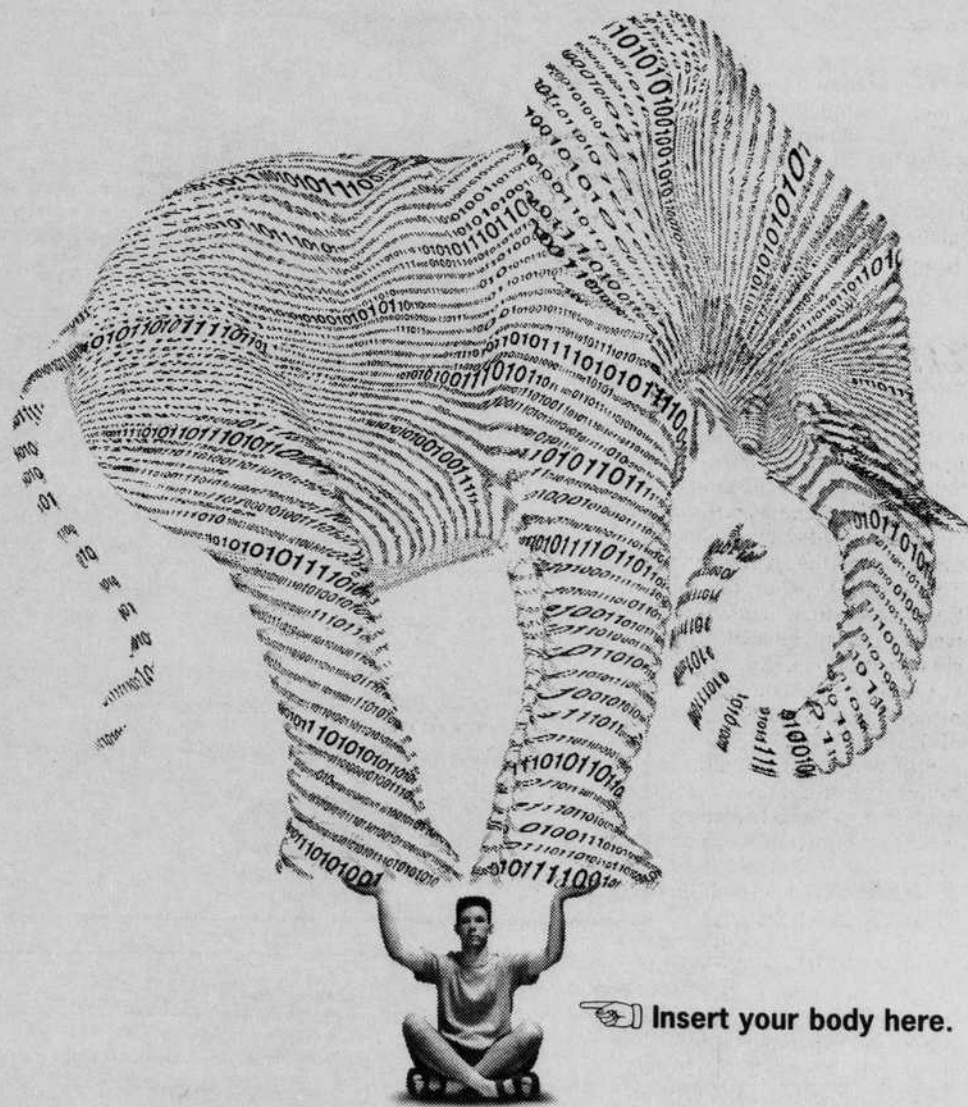
Elise Self and Sharon Walker, representatives from Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays,

also spoke about their experiences and how parents sometimes go in to the closet when their children come out. Dave Sanchez, junior political science major on the No on 9 campaign spoke on the dangers of the Student Protection Act. He said the passing of the measure would prevent teachers from helping openly gay students, creating the unwelcoming, hostile environment society should be trying to eliminate.

Other members of the community are also recognizing the LGBT community nationally. Radio talk

show host Dr. Laura gave the LGBT community a full apology during her show Wednesday and admitted she'd made an error by talking about homosexuality as deviant in the past. Gov. John Kitzhaber has also proclaimed October to be Lesbian and Gay History Month.

"National Coming Out Day proves that there doesn't have to be one way in this world," Juleah Willson said. "All kids should know that they have a place here ... and we can only have that kind of community if we demand that kind of community."



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