

Vote, vote, vote for your sake and everyone else's

By this time next week, students will have received their ballots in the mail. Make sure to vote! Could this point be made any more clearly to students, or by any more groups or organizations? Probably not. Readers may have noticed the Emerald's election coverage, both on the editorial page and in the rest of the newspaper. We will continue this into next week, offering information and analysis about what's at stake in this presidential and state election season.

A few state ballot measures to be decided could severely affect University funding. Other ballot measures could affect the way elections are run, the way the state raises money, the way laws are made and the way campaign dollars are raised. These are big questions that will determine the makeup of our society. Students need to make their voices heard.

No one has done a better job of raising student awareness about the election than the ASUO. Congratulations are due for a job well done. Thanks to the hard work of campus student government, more than 5,500 new student voters were registered, making the University first in the nation in new student registration. The registration drive started before the first day of classes and continued through Tuesday, the final day new voters were allowed to sign up.

The effort doesn't stop there, however. Now that the campus population is registered, the ASUO



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will spend the next three weeks educating students about the issues. Yes, there are 26 measures on the ballot. No, that isn't a student phone directory in your mailbox, it's the Voters' Guide. Student government members will be offering detailed information about the

measures that affect the University. Don't be scared by the quantity of issues into ignoring the important ones.

Thanks to the ASUO, the University is first in sort of an odd way, as well: The world's largest ballot box has been built and will be erected

on campus shortly. It may seem like a campy, over-the-top idea, and it is. But it's also a good, visible symbol of the power and importance of student votes.

Older folks in our society get a lot of courting by candidates and a lot of attention from legislators all

over the country. This isn't just out of respect for one's elders: Older people get out and vote, so lawmakers pay attention to their issues. College students, with a recent history of low voter turnout, are generally ignored.

College students are the next generation of leaders, however. In order to change this country (or in order to keep it exactly the same, if that's what you're about), students need to vote and get their concerns heard. When the older adults see that students take their role in the world seriously, they will pay attention. College-age people are often regarded as nothing more than an easy demographic. They buy stuff, sure. But don't students have more important things to say than what brand of jeans they like best? For the sake of the future, we hope so.

So when your ballot comes next week, don't put it on a pile in your living room and forget about it. Take your Voters' Guide out from under that stack of pizza boxes. Then, when you see the world's largest ballot box, remember what's at stake — and vote.

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

Letters to the editor

WRC ignores economic causes

This is in response to Friday's sweatshop article ("Sweatshop debate seen in new light," ODE, Oct. 13). The WRC and those interviewed have valid points. However, they are looking at the symptoms rather than the cause. Of course, many of "third-world" citizens choose to work in factories — they have no alternative. Why is this the case? The answer is globalization and our economic system.

Due to globalization, many indigenous societies aren't allowed their sustainable ways of life. They are forced off their lands or their lands are destroyed. Once they are unable to live off the land, they must join the Western way of life. Without a Western education, though, their only choice is to work in factories.

For proof, one just needs to learn about the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other Western-world projects in developing countries. Millions of Chinese are being "translocated" from their homelands for the Three Gorges Dam project. Also, the Ogoni people of Nigeria live on some of the most oil-rich land in the world, but the proceeds from the oil go to the militaristic Nigerian government and the oil companies that support it. Closer to home, the Dineh Indians of Arizona are being forced off their land because it sits on a large source of coal.

The true goal of Western "development" is not to solve poverty, but to extract re-

sources and colonize people into the Western way of life. Until this addressed, human rights problems will continue.

John W. Herberg
 environmental studies

Sweatshop workers deserve better

I am horrified by the defense of appalling labor practices that appeared in the Emerald ("Sweatshop debate seen in new light," ODE, Oct. 13). I wonder, of those students who made those arguments, how many of them have family on the streets or in the sweatshops, or have lived there themselves?

Am I supposed to be impressed because the sweatshop laborers are offered horrible conditions as an alternative to starvation when the goods they make are sold at such prices that good conditions could easily be assured?

This is not "new light," as the article's headline promises. This is very old light. Listen:

"The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially, & physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing, is necessary for their instruction as a race." — Robert E. Lee, letter to his wife, 1856

"Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? ... There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him." — Frederick Douglass, July 4, 1852.

Randolph Fritz
 graduate architecture student

Minority hiring story slanted

Kudos to the Emerald for another challenging piece of experimental journalism ("Minority hirings are a step in the right direction," ODE, Oct. 12). Taking the notion that "there's no true objectivity" to its logical extreme, you have bravely shot down yet another stale newspaper convention.

What am I talking about? Nothing less than the first-ever op-ed piece to run above the fold on the front page of a newspaper.

Aww, don't get all modest and try to claim that's just a news story. From the headline on down, that's pure op-ed. C'mon, with phrases such as "an important goal," "making strides toward true diversity," and judgments such as "concerned with intolerance and racism" and "a sexist comment" tossed about by the writer with no attribution to any source whatsoever?

No, don't get modest! You're tearing down the walls of the ivory tower, making way for a kinder, more personal journalism, and one that's much easier to write. Thanks to this breakthrough, we will no longer have to go out and get people to say what we want to quote them saying. We can just say it ourselves! Kudos, Emerald, and thank you.

Dan Atkinson
 senior
 journalism and history

Mothers against underage drinking

This is in response to your drinking article ("Some drinking guidelines for the under-21 sect," ODE, Sept. 18).

First, there is no reason for drinking guidelines for people under 21 — underage drinking is illegal in Oregon and throughout the United States. Research clearly shows that the longer a person's use of alcohol is delayed, the likelihood of them becoming a lifetime problem drinker (and drunk driver) is significantly lessened.

On a positive note, the reporter states there is absolutely no excuse to drink and drive. But if people under 21 are going to drink, which is illegal, why would they choose to obey the law and not drink and drive? Drinking and driving kills and injures innocent victims every day. Drunk driving is the nation's most frequently committed violent crime, and approximately three in five Americans will be affected by an alcohol-related crash during their lives.

In the article, Ilona Koleszar, an attorney with ASUO Legal Services, says "it is a non-criminal violation. ... Drinking can become a very dangerous criminal offense. Drinking and driving killed 15,786 people in the United States in 1999. Alcohol poisoning from binge drinking can kill, and many criminal offenses can occur when someone is intoxicated. About 10 million drinkers were under 21 in 1995. Of those, 4.4 million were binge drinkers, including 1.7 million heavy drinkers.

The mission of Mothers Against Drunk Driving is to stop drunk driving, assist victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking.

Danita Derr
 president
 Mothers Against Drunk Driving