

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford
 Managing Editor: Jessica Blanchard
 Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

EDITORIAL EDITOR: MICHAEL J. KLECKNER opededitor@journalist.com

Taking the time to make the right decisions

SCRIBBLES OF SANITY

JAYNA BERGERSON

Confession: I haven't voted in four years. The last time I bothered to fill out a voter's ballot was for the presidential election in 1996.

Despite this, I have decided that this year I will open the ballot sitting on my desk. I will take the voter's pamphlet and read through it. And, with luck, I will get it filled out and sent in on time. But before I tell you why I have had this sudden change of heart, I should probably explain why I haven't bothered to vote in the past four years.

I must say that I have never allowed the belief that my vote didn't count to keep me from voting.

I once heard a student say, "My vote doesn't mean anything. I am just one person." She was right. And I admit that my vote, by itself, doesn't mean much. But votes are not individuals. They don't stand by themselves. Your vote and my vote are combined and so are the votes of hundreds of other people. So they

do make a difference when they all agree.

Apathy is not an issue either. All this talk about how apathetic our generation is toward voting and national issues never applied to me. I live in this state and I do care about what happens because it will affect everything around me.

No. The real problem is time, energy and priorities. In order to vote, I need to find the time and energy to research the issues and make the decisions that I feel are right and

necessary based on the given information. These are the appropriate actions of a responsible voter. If I am going to take the time to vote, I want to do it right.

But on my long list of stuff to do, voting never appeared to be very close to the top. I mean, I have been a little preoccupied the past four years. Most of my time and effort (and money — but that's another story) goes toward my education.

So now we have come to why I had this sudden change of heart. Well, it isn't because I have more time or energy, because I have realized that is just not going to happen as long as I am in college.

The voter's pamphlet is enough to scare anyone away from voting. I don't know many college students with the time to read through that monstrosity. Of course, I could just read the small tidbits of information provided by all the various special interest groups. They could even tell me how to vote, so I don't have to do any work at all. This option has always been unpalatable

to me. If I couldn't research the issues well enough to have an informed opinion in time to vote, I felt I shouldn't vote. The idea of voting the way some-

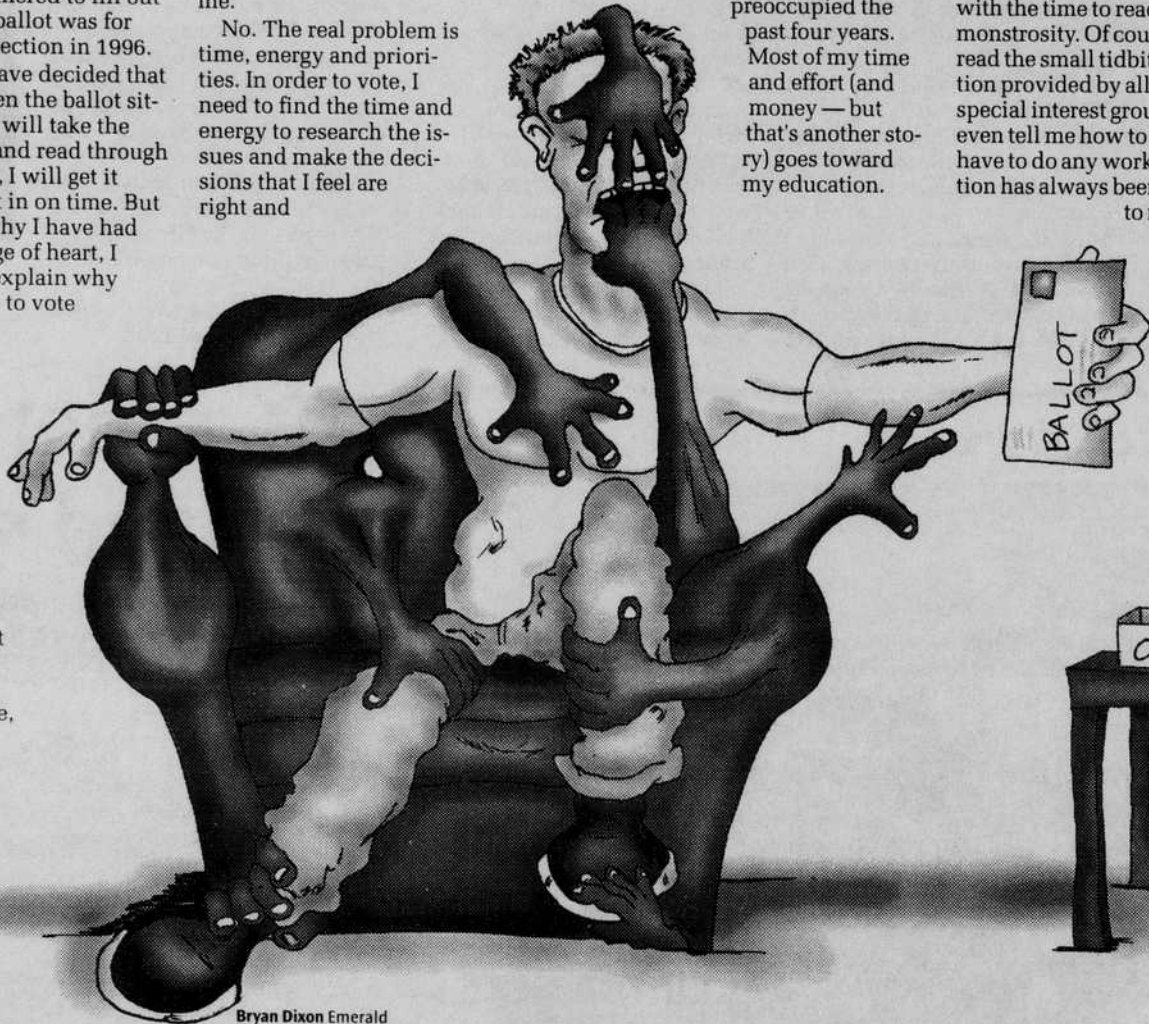
one else thinks I should would make me feel like a puppet. And I don't know about you, but I don't want anyone pulling my strings. Actually, one of the reasons I decided to vote in this election is because of a change in my priorities. I realized that if I don't vote, I can't complain. In the past I have caught myself complaining about the outcome of various measures and laws that were passed. Then I realized that I had no right to complain, because I didn't vote to stop those measures from passing.

You can't complain about the way things are when you don't do anything to try and change it. And I'm not talking about staging a coup or lobbying Congress. Nothing so grandiose. All that is needed is a vote. That's all.

By voting, you may discover the public is not as stupid as you thought, and they all voted the same as you. Hope is renewed in the possibility that justice can prevail. If not, then voting earns you enough clout to yell, scream, stomp and turn red in the face when the measure you voted "no" on is passed. Regardless of the outcome, your reaction will be justified.

Time to turn in that ballot.

Jayna Bergerson is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached at bjay@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



Ten reasons to make Nader president

GUEST COMMENTARY

Dan Headings

Here are the top 10 reasons I'm voting for Ralph Nader:

1) I want a candidate not owned by corporations. On campus, Gloria Steinem said that Nader supporters have unreasonable purity standards. I'm actually demanding only *one* thing: a candidate that doesn't answer exclusively to wealthy interests.

2) I want federal matching funds for the Green Party. Nader is great, but I would vote Green without Nader. I want the party that represents me to have more influence.

3) I'm thinking long-term, not short-term. Four years of George W. Bush doesn't frighten me like a lifetime of two-party politics. Two parties can't adequately represent nearly 275 million people. A vote for Nader is a vote for representation reform — eventually.

4) I'm not naïve enough to believe Gore. The Democrats want to lure the hard-left, so they conveniently forget that candidates' stump speeches don't always match their actions when elect-

ed. Gore speaks eloquently to the interests of every demographic he woos — even if he contradicts himself.

5) Nader represents feminism. If a middle-class, American woman's right to an abortion is the only feminist issue, then Al Gore qualifies. But some of us care about women in other countries, who have deeper concerns than just the right to choose. Gore worked to get China permanent normal trade relations. In China, female factory workers often have to show their menstrual pads as proof they aren't pregnant. What about their rights?

6) The Democrats have sold me out before. Bill Clinton worked for NAFTA, pushed through GATT, supported the WTO, is resurrecting Star Wars and sold out universal health care and gay rights. Could the Republicans have been much happier? Probably not. Am I voting for another Democrat? Definitely not.

7) My conscience tells me to. Democracy only works when people vote for what they believe in. Democracy is corrupt when we vote *against* a candidate. I will not vote for a Democrat and feel dirty afterward simply to keep Bush out of office.

8) No one will get to appoint extremists to the Supreme Court. That's why we have Senate confirmation — sena-

tors must be more moderate to get elected. And Republican appointees haven't been that horrible — 5 of the 7 justices voting for *Roe v. Wade* were appointed by Republicans. This Democratic fear tactic is a misnomer.

9) Votes for Nader are not votes for Bush. National polls don't show Nader taking votes away from Gore. The latest ABC News poll (Oct. 26-28) shows Nader with 4 percent and Gore trailing Bush by 1 percent. But the Christian Science Monitor poll (Oct. 26-29) shows Nader with only 3 percent and Gore trailing by 6 percent. Other polls confirm this; there's no correlation. Nader votes are Nader votes. Democrats should realize that not everyone voting for Nader would support Gore.

10) The Democrats are using sleazy politics. After ignoring the Green Party for almost a year, Gore is now very interested in Green voters. But Democratic supporters speaking on campus have treated us like childish, knee-jerk leftists who haven't thought through their arguments. Nice speech, Ms. Steinem, but I'm no child. I've thought about this for eight years. Gore's politics haven't changed my vote and attacks only turn me away.

Dan Headings is a volunteer with Lane Victory 2000.

Letters to the editor

Exposing Blatant Lies

I am consistently rewarded by attending campus programs imported by the Cultural Forum. I looked forward to last week's talk in the EMU Ballroom by Michael Parenti. But I sensed something wrong when it was announced that Parenti was brought to campus by a local middle-school teacher who is Oregon's leading apologist for the Serbian butchering of Bosnian and Kosovo Muslims.

Sure enough, Parenti set up his audience to accept blatant lies after he established some credibility by describing a reality: how U.S. imperialism discourages Third World democracies while widening the gulf between rich and poor at home. All of a sudden, he shifted into a tirade about how we are misled by the mass media parroting government misinformation about Serbian genocide "that did not exist."

The linkage between government lies and lazy media is an unfortunate truth. But there are exceptions, such as in Serbia, where the controversial NATO bombing finally ended the slaughter of Kosovars for humanitarian, not imperialistic reasons. Propagandists like Parenti fool some people by stating the obvious and then deviously linking it to a lie.

What he and his chortling host deserve is a chance to be rebutted by the truth about Serbia as expressed by a campus authority who knows it firsthand — professor Ronald Wixman.

George Beres
 retired
 former University sports information director