

OSPIRG

continued from page 4B

\$100,000 in fees, however, was all under one category.

"All that money disappeared in one bulk sum," Rounds said. "Any student group should be held accountable. Through purchase orders you can see if group X, Y, or Z spent \$100 to buy two kegs — you can prove this. Evidence of OSPIRG's operations didn't exist. OSPIRG takes a large sum of money and is completely unaccountable."

Voss countered that the group's money is accounted for through an ASUO budget process and also has a professional audit done every year.

"Being a unique, statewide student-directed group working to solve Oregon's biggest problems, we're accountable for students by going through the ballot and ASUO fee allocation process."

Rounds, who is now a writer in New York City, also learned that much of the funding went to finance professionals off-campus to lobby for state and national issues.

An example of acceptable lobbying by a student funded group such as the ASUO would be lobbying in Salem for issues such as lowering tuition, Rounds said. But students should not be forced to pay for plans that don't directly benefit campus, such as OSPIRG's Streamwalk Project, which includes efforts to clean rivers.

Rounds said this logic falls under

the same reasons young Republicans and Democrats cannot use student money to lobby for political issues in Washington, D.C.

"From the philosophical angle, I have the right not to have my money spent to further someone else's agenda — that's forced association," he said. "It's the most grotesque abuse of student fees on campus."

He added that other groups, such as the Survival Center, already work on some of the same issues as OSPIRG and do a better job of showing their efforts on campus.

Voss, who took her position at OSPIRG this fall, said local and national issues such as toxic waste and polluted water are pertinent to every person, and OSPIRG's campaigns benefit people not only as students but as citizens. Money does pay for staff working off-campus, she said, but this helps make OSPIRG campaigns effective.

"It's true that student fees go off of campus — that is part of what we do," she said. "It's also part of what makes us successful on the work we do and helps us continue to work as citizens of the state and whole country."

Success, a loss, success

Rounds mentioned that in 1995, a series of OSPIRG funding articles in the Commentator raised suspicion on campus. The ASUO Senate and budget committee even began questioning the group's spending, and OSPIRG's budget was denied at least once, according to Emerald archives.

The most successful attempt to deny OSPIRG incidental fees came in 1998, when students voted against the group in the ASUO election. Instead of having its budget approved by the Programs Finance Committee, OSPIRG goes on the ballot every two years and requires student approval to get funding. The loss defunded OSPIRG, and the group was not on campus the following year.

Former Commentator writer Jonathan Collegio spearheaded the Honesty Campaign that year, wanting to hold OSPIRG accountable for a line-item budget and demanding that student money stay on campus. The campaign encouraged students to vote "no" on OSPIRG.

"PIRGs, no matter what any of their spokespeople say, are archetypal political interest groups," Collegio said in 1999. "Students should not be required to fund organizations as such."

But with increased campaign efforts, OSPIRG went back on the ballot and quickly returned to campus within a year.

Meanwhile, Rounds' case was defeated in the lower courts, but the plaintiffs continued appealing, with judge after judge ruling against them. In 1999, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that OSPIRG's funding was legal, and Rounds dropped the case last year.

"We kept working, they kept appealing," Unger said. "It was a big turnaround for what students have the right to be doing on and off-

campus for issues that affect us as citizens as a whole. A whole set of groups would have been affected if we'd lost. It's an amazing victory."

Coincidentally, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1999, several students objected to using student fee money to fund groups with whose ideologies they disagreed — which they said trampled over their First Amendment rights. But the students lost in the case of Southworth v. Grebe, which ruled that student incidental fees were legal because they funded groups that made campuses diverse.

But Rounds said his case was specific to OSPIRG. If he had won, he said, it would not have stopped the funding of other groups, such as student unions, which would have been affected by the Southworth case. He added that none of the court rulings completely dismissed the OSPIRG debate.

"We had a specific concern on specific funding of a specific group," he said. "The Supreme Court left the door wide open for challenging the way OSPIRG is funded."

Honesty and the future

The Commentator's Honesty Campaign has continued working against OSPIRG's campaign in the last few years. Last year, when OSPIRG went on the ballot, it came out with a slim win. While 808 votes were in its favor, 752 votes rejected the group's funding.

Voss said this year's staff is com-

pletely new but excited to work on upcoming projects. She said she hopes to communicate OSPIRG's purpose and accomplishments better to students this year and bring more professionals at the state level to campus. The group has also made strides in showing where its budget goes.

Students with questions can also visit OSPIRG's Web site at <http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~osping/>. The site presents some general breakdowns of where expenses go, including funds that go outside Eugene. A graph on the site breaks down the student fee in categories such as recycling and the consumer watchdog program.

Much of the fee funding goes toward hiring a staff of professionals and operating costs such as printing renters' rights handbooks, according to OSPIRG. Also, less than 8 percent of fees from the University go toward administration and fundraising, according to the group.

Voss recognized that some people may continue to criticize the organization, but she said she will keep fighting for OSPIRG's funding and spreading its message to campus.

"Everything will be rebuilding," Voss said. "Hopefully we won't be bogged down by the past and can create a better message of what we do, where our money goes and what we're all about. Nothing will be hidden. It's definitely a future outlook."

Beata Mostafavi is the student activities editor. She can be reached at beatamostafavi@dailymerald.com.

*** SPACE STILL AVAILABLE IN THESE GREAT CLASSES ***

Masks from Molds Wednesday Oct 17 & 24 6:00-9:00pm \$33	Spinning Wednesday Oct 24-Nov 14 6:00-8:30pm \$40
Clay Picture Frames Wednesday Oct 17 & 24 6:30-9:30pm \$25	Lg. Format Photo Fri & Sat Varied Dates Varied Times \$52
Recycled Journals Saturday Oct 20 & 27 10:15-12:45pm \$22	Woodcuts Prints Saturday Oct 27-Nov 17 1:00-5:00pm \$52
Rope Dyed Shirts Sunday Oct 21 1:00-5:00pm \$25	Arashi Shibori Sunday Oct 28-Nov 4 12:30-4:30pm \$48
Footstools Sunday Oct 21 12:30-4:30pm \$36	Beadwork Thursday Oct 18-Nov 8 6:00-8:30pm \$40

Get Creative! **CRAFT CENTER** *Register Today!*

craftcenter.uoregon.edu for more information: 346-4361

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
CAREER CENTER

**Explore your options.
Find your direction.
Now is the time.**

The Career Development Internship Program (CDIP) provides a unique opportunity for undergraduates to explore their career options. Internships are available in a variety of areas. Now is the time to get started!

Interview sign-ups will take place at the upcoming orientation, and attendance is required in order to participate. Join us, and see where you can go with an internship!

**CDIP Orientation Session:
October 29, 2001 - 3:30-5pm
EMU Fir Room**

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This paper can be Recycled!

**Join Oregon Hillel
for
Israeli Dancing**

**Tuesday, October 30th, 2001
8pm
FREE**

OREGON HILLEL

**Agate Auditorium
18th and Agate**

All levels welcome, lessons to precede dancing!
Don't Forget Your Dancin' Shoes!!

Oregon Hillel: The foundation for Jewish life on campus

You Can Make A Difference!
Want to make an impact on the world around you?

"Tzedek" is Hebrew for justice

Join Tzedek Hillel as we lend helping hands around our community.

Tzedek Hillel meets weekly on Tuesdays at 11:30am at Oregon Hillel

Contact Stacey on Jocelyn at 343.8920
Oregon Hillel * 1059 Hilyard St. * Three blocks from the UO Campus!