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# COMMENTARY

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Thursday, October 31, 2002

## Editorial

### DeFazio shows commitment to students, trees

The Emerald heartily supports Peter DeFazio for the U.S. House of Representatives.

DeFazio has had copious experience as a representative supporting the interests of Eugene: For the past 16 years, DeFazio has been a member of the House of Representatives, and for four years before that, he was the chairman of the Lane County Board of Commissioners. He has averaged 94 percent participation in votes in the House.

DeFazio is a perfect match to represent the University area's interests.

He is a committed environmentalist, and tried numerous times to block any drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. He's gotten bills pushed through Congress to improve the quality of the Millraces and Amazon Creek, as well as one that would help regulate the temperature of the Willamette to protect endangered fish species.

DeFazio is a known friend of students. He has tried to increase Pell Grants and has said that he favors federal loans and scholarships over bank loans. He has even helped students out of his own pocket. Years ago, he refused a pay raise, saying that he could not accept it in good conscience while the budget wasn't balanced. Ever since, he has used that extra pay to fund nine scholarships annually. To date, he has paid out nearly \$182,000 in scholarships.

His opponent, on the other hand, can only suggest more logging to aid the tuition crunch.

It's simple: Re-elect Peter DeFazio.

### Lane measures offer services

There are six Lane County measures on the ballot, from park improvements to jail upgrading. We recommend passing almost all of them, as they provide much needed infrastructure support for the county.

We are voting no on only the parks measure, as it is the most expensive and mostly provides for adding RV sites and horse trails rather than expanding undeveloped areas.

If all six measures were adopted, property owners with a home worth \$125,000 would pay up to \$46.83 annually in higher property taxes.

Measure 20-59 would upgrade and expand the Jail Intake Center, improving the county's ability to process serious offenders. Vote yes.

Measure 20-60 would upgrade emergency communications equipment so officers in far-flung areas of the county can respond safely to emergencies. Vote yes.

Measure 20-61 would give the courthouse more complete disabled access and allow longer operating hours for records retrieval and handgun licensing.

Measure 20-62 is the parks measure. Vote no.

Measure 20-63 allows Public Health to replace their decades-old converted tavern and safely continue their much-needed public service work. Vote yes.

Measure 20-65 would build a new planetarium and offer kids science education that they can't get at our underfunded schools. Vote yes.

One caveat: We might have made different endorsements if more students owned property.

### Letters to the editor and guest commentaries policy

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.



Peter Utsey Emerald

## The living DEAD

I see dead people. Once they were flesh and bone, fiber and liquid. Now they rest between the School of Music and McArthur Court, in Pioneer Cemetery.

Established in 1872, the cemetery's 16 acres are dotted with old headstones and stately trees which none can fail to see, but many prefer to ignore. On this hallowed night, perhaps it is time to take another look at this historic, silent town.

When humans were still living as hunters and gatherers, they became aware of their own mortality. They began to bury their dead with ceremony and respect. As historian Lewis Mumford wrote, cities of the dead preceded cities of the living. Some of the famous monuments, from the Great Pyramids to the Taj Mahal, were built to honor the dead, and to ensure that the living remembered.

Cemeteries have inspired some remarkable poems. "Spoon River Anthology" by Edgar Lee Masters gave voice to the quiet lives of small-town Americans. My personal favorite is Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," one of the most quoted works in literature.

Recent times have witnessed a change in attitudes toward death and the dead. Modern cities saw cities of the dead as

obstacles to their progress. Useless bones were taking up valuable real estate! A century ago, San Francisco ordered the removal of thousands of remains south to Colma. No doubt this move caused many 49ers to roll over in their graves.

Eugene has not been immune to promoting development over dead bodies. In fact, University officials tried to condemn Pioneer Cemetery in 1956. In the 1960s, they attempted to build classrooms over the graveyard, with an open-air ground floor to keep the grave sites intact.

The contemporary treatment of cemeteries reflects our disdainful attitude toward death. Rather than accept death and honor those who died, we choose to ignore reminders of our own mortality. From Botox and Viagra, to the Ted Williams cryogenics saga, to the search for the Methuselah gene, we attempt to defy signs of our eventual fate.

Cemeteries also reflect how we lived. I used to visit Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, Calif., where wealthy families like the Crocker and Ghirardellis had erected large obelisks and mausoleums to mark their worldly status. In Colma, Italians, Jews and Japanese were laid to rest in separate grounds.

While neither vast nor famous like the great urban landmarks, Pioneer Cemetery has enduring virtues which reflect the lives of its early settlers. As Gray wrote:

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,

Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;

Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way."

Is it unseemly today to have a graveyard amidst the blissful bops of Beall Concert Hall, the graceful glissades of Gerlinger Annex and the monster jams of McArthur Court? Even more incongruous to be among youthful students solving proofs, debating the world or making love. Yet the invisible dead and visible headstones remind us that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave."

But where glory ends, legacy begins. This insight seized me on Tuesday, as I watched 20,000 people attend a memorial to the late Senator Paul Wellstone on C-SPAN. His two sons spoke not of past victories, but about his integrity, devotion to family and passion for social justice. Wellstone retained the virtues of a decent man while practicing big-time politics. Even in death, his exemplary life continues to inspire the people he served.

More than any obelisk, statute, or mausoleum, our character and service to others is what future generations may remember.

Today we are flesh and bone, fiber and liquid. What will we be a century from now? A fond memory? An example to others? Or just dust?

Happy Halloween.

Contact the columnist at philiphuang@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



Philip Huang  
A different light

### Letters to the Editor

#### Unborn is not un-human

I am responding to Salena De La Cruz's column ("Health care for ALL," ODE, Oct. 25).

I just wanted to thank you for speaking out for the unborn. Unborn does not mean un-human. This is how I feel. This issue is a bit personal to me because I live with the guilt of my ex-girlfriend's abortion. With that said, I am 100 percent opposed to abortion.

I feel this way: A doctor's number one priority is to ensure the life of his patient(s). That includes the unborn baby. The doctor needs to do whatever is necessary to make sure that mother and child both survive in the case of the pregnancy endangering the mother's life.

Whatever your view is on abortion, that should be an agreeable stance, right? If you don't agree, that's OK. I

won't judge you. It's just how I feel.

Phillip Watson  
Texas

#### Measure 23 hurts Oregon's economy

The editorial ("Yes on Measure 23 give health care basics to Oregon," ODE, Oct. 28) endorsing Measure 23 is poorly argued and reasoned. True, Measure 23 increases income tax by 8 percent, but the bill also grants power to adjust income taxes in the future in order to pay for the health care system to the Oregon Comprehensive Health Care Finance Board.

In addition to undermining the legislative power to tax, the 8 percent initial increase in income tax will have a large negative impact on the economy of Oregon. For someone making only \$12,500 a year, the new tax rate of 17 percent (the old rate plus 8 percent) will cost an additional \$1,000 per year. In many cases this is more than health care premiums from a private insurer.

Furthermore, some state representatives estimate that Measure 23 would cost \$20 billion to implement and, as stated in the voter's pamphlet, \$1.7 billion per year. This is a tremendous cost for a state already in serious financial trouble. Coupled with the lower disposable income of every resident because of increased taxation, and the anti-business 11.5 percent hike in payroll taxes, Measure 23 is the final blow to a moribund economy.

Passing this measure is one way to ensure that Oregon's economy never gets better. Basic macroeconomics principles demonstrate that increased taxation will only drive us further into recession and cause immeasurable difficulties for Oregonians in the future. A no vote on Measure 23 is the only fiscally responsible choice.

Tim Dreier  
junior, economics  
managing editor  
Oregon Commentator