

COMMENTARY

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Editorials

Southern outdoes UO with blood donation policy

How's this for out-doing the oh-so-liberal University of Oregon? Southern Oregon University students announced earlier this week that they will cancel this term's blood drive because the donor screening process discriminates against gay men.

The editorial board brought this issue up in November, when the University of Oregon and Oregon State University were engaged in a Civil War Blood Drive, set up to see which school could raise the most blood. At the time, we pointed out that the blood donation regulations were discriminatory — any male who has engaged in a homosexual sex act since 1977 is ineligible to give blood — because they unreasonably suggest that all gay men are diseased.

Some college students practice unsafe sex. Straight students do this just as much as gay students, but no one is prohibiting straight students from donating simply because they are straight.

What's interesting about this is that the SOU students cite their campus anti-discrimination policy as a reason for ending the institutional prejudice.

But hold on a minute: In November, the University of Oregon's Bias Response Team received a student complaint about the University's sponsorship of the Civil War Blood Drive. The BRT was supportive of the student's claims, but despite the University having a nearly identical anti-discrimination policy as SOU, the administration wasn't interested in the issue.

It's also interesting to note that members of the community recently criticized the Emerald for publishing an opinion piece that expressed disgust at homosexuality, but these same people allowed a discriminatory policy violation to occur without comment. What's the message: Speech hurts, but actions don't?

So what will it take for the University to stop sponsoring discrimination?

Legislators should fix Oregon's budget!

During the past 11 months, the editorial board has repeatedly expressed the need for state legislators to address Oregon's revenue problems. The current revenue model is neither stable nor balanced, and the most important task our elected officials have is to fix the budget. Frankly, so far this session, the work of Oregon senators and representatives has been unimpressive.

Instead of devising a variety of different budget plans and presenting them to the public and stakeholders for discussion and debate, the people haunting the halls of the capitol have been hard at work on a variety of issues that have nothing to do with the state's most pressing issue. Here's a sample:

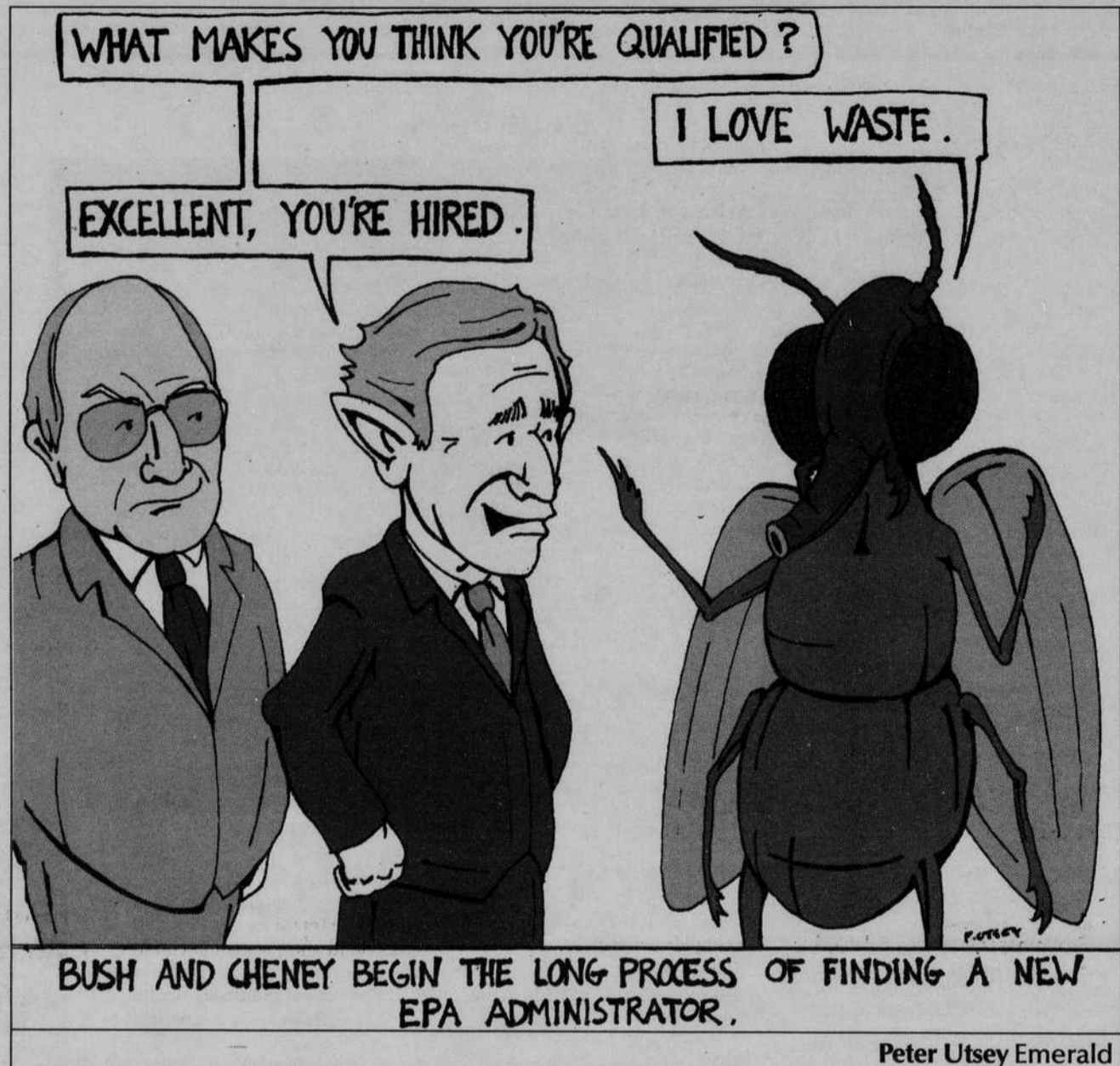
- The Legislature argued about funding a new baseball stadium for Portland
- In April, the House passed a bill allowing adult motorcycle riders to choose to ride without a helmet
- After much arguing, the House killed a bill to allow self-service pumps at gas stations
- On May 2, the Senate passed a bill that would define pro wrestling as entertainment, not sport
- Late last week, the House attacked the state's landmark bottle bill, passing a bill allowing glass to go into landfills if it proves too difficult for companies to recycle it

Some of these issues may be useful and important, but none of them matter if the state has to continue slashing services that cost people their lives. The state's tax system has been unstable for too long, the tax burden has been unfair for too long, and it's destroying Oregon.

Legislators need to introduce a graduated sales tax and shift the overall tax burden back to an equal split between businesses and individuals. And they need to stop quibbling over pro wrestling and do it now.

Editorial policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com.



Letters to the editor

Club team provides baseball outlet

After reading Hank Hager's column ("Oregon provides no outlet for love of the game," ODE, May 16), I found myself shaking my head.

Any true baseball fan would make the effort to find out if there was really no baseball at the University. The truth is the University provides an excellent outlet through the Club baseball program. The University Club team offers a taste of all there is to love about baseball. It has power pitchers, junk pitchers, homerun hitters, contact guys; there is even a foreign (Japanese) athlete who is the star of the team — everything a fan could ask for.

And if that wasn't enough, the team is very competitive, with a smallball style of play that has helped team members finish second in their league and led them to the regional tournament in Bellingham, Wash. Though the University doesn't offer a sanctioned Pac-10 team, there is a place for baseball fans at the University.

Although the season will be over for the Ducks Club team this week, I look forward to seeing more of the Emerald's readers (and Hank Hager, if he is the baseball fan he professes to be) at more games next year. Go Ducks!

Gabriel Judah
 graduate
 English

Ex-gays deserve respect, freedom from harassment

Your editorial ("Rick Santorum goes beyond gay slurs," ODE, April 29) did not mention that the same groups that berate others for discriminating against

gays themselves actively discriminate — against ex-gays.

Each year, thousands of men and women with same-sex attractions make the personal decision to leave homosexuality. However, some refuse to respect that choice. As a result, ex-gays are subject to an increasingly hostile environment where we are reviled simply because we dare to exist.

For example, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educational Network widely distributed a school booklet labeling ex-gay participation in public schools as "harassment." The gay Human Rights Campaign publicly demanded that a contributor (AOL's Mrs. Steve Case) reconsider her sizable donation to a children's school merely because it had indirect ties to an ex-gay ministry.

The list is endless because every day brings new hostile acts against the ex-gay community. The harassment of ex-gays by gays themselves is a sad end to the long struggle for tolerance by the gay community. That ex-gays are now oppressed by the same people who until recently were victimized themselves demonstrates how far the gay rights movement has come. We now need to face the other side of sexual orientation — intolerance of ex-gays.

Please remember that former homosexuals are also worthy of respect.

Regina Griggs
 executive director
 Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays

People have right to express unpopular views

Although I do not agree with Vincent Martorano ("Homosexual men should hide their disgusting acts" ODE, May 9), I believe he has a right to express his opinion on paper.

We want to make our world accept minorities and give them more voice,

but we must not exclude anyone during the process. The "Homosexuality isn't the illness — bigotry is" (ODE, May 14) guest commentary brings up a good point that "hate, not homosexuality, is an illness." The author, Daisy Perkins, also told us "Homosexuals have as much of a right to this planet and this country" as does Martorano. What about Martorano?

Does Perkins think that Martorano has too much of the majority privilege to even express his opinions — his freedom of speech? If you accept one view, you must accept the other. Life does not always have to be unfair.

Another guest commentary ("Martorano's opinions don't represent true conservatism," ODE, May 14), written by Oregon Commentator managing editor Timothy Dreier, denies that the views of Martorano represent conservative values. Dreier states that Martorano "manages to call himself a conservative while completely ignoring what are truly conservative principles."

Dreier then corrects our views on the conservative way of life, while also stating that he would not "begrudge" Martorano because he is entitled to his rights. I would like it if even a few of us would follow his example. Of course, who am I to talk? I'm only a minority.

Jennifer Tran
 junior
 Chinese and Asian studies

CORRECTION

In Thursday's story "Smoker fights good fight for YMCA," Sophanna Kuch should have been listed as winner of the match against James Kim.

The Emerald regrets the error.