

# COMMENTARY

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

## EDITORIAL

### Three cheers for OLCC's supermarket liquor sales

For the well-prepared partygoer, responsible or otherwise, buying alcoholic spirits might become a little easier this year.

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission is planning a pilot program aimed to test selling hard alcohol, previously the domain of liquor outlets, in grocery stores. And one of the first tryout sites might be in the Eugene-Gateway area.

And for Eugene-area imbibers, lushes, tipplers, boozers, sots and responsible drinkers, this is good news indeed.

The two-year plan calls for establishing small sections — 500 to 1500 square feet, various grocery store sources explained — in existing grocery stores dedicated to liquor.

There are plenty of good reasons to support the program, too: During last year \$111 million (41.6 percent) of the state's \$267 million in liquor sales went to public agencies. Planners expect each so-called pilot store to generate about \$1 million annually from sales. Just six pilot stores generating state funds at the same rate would add \$2.5 million for Oregon programs. Although it's worth noting that the actual increase will likely be less because much of the revenue corresponds to liquor purchases that would be made at liquor stores anyway, even an appreciable fraction would add some much-needed cash to nearly barren state coffers.

There are (rightfully) some concerns about these steps toward privatization: Some research suggests that privatization of alcohol sales can dramatically increase alcohol consumption (per capita), but other research is more skeptical of the causation. The figure that makes perhaps the most compelling case that steps toward privatization are socially safe is that at least 32 states already regulate alcohol less rigorously than Oregon does. The policies of the 18 so-called "control states" — Oregon included — are thus the exception, not the rule. Moreover, social scientists Traci Toomey and Alexander Wagenaar found that 18 states "have changed some part of their beer, wine, or distilled spirits distribution systems from state-owned wholesale or retail systems to privatized systems in the past 27 years."

If privatization posed any threats, they are at least ones we've already seen.

And, while the Associated Liquor Stores of Oregon has expressed some concerns about the pilot stores taking their business, the OLCC has at least partly planned around the issue: In picking sites, the commission sought "partner stores" that were at least 1.5 miles away from existing liquor stores.

At the worst, the usually draconian OLCC's plan to privatize liquor sales should prove an interesting social experiment, if not a boon for alcohol shoppers.

If in-negotiation contracts are finalized, students going home to Gresham, Bend or the Bethany area of Beaverton this summer can expect to find more outlets in their area.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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

## EDITORIAL BOARD

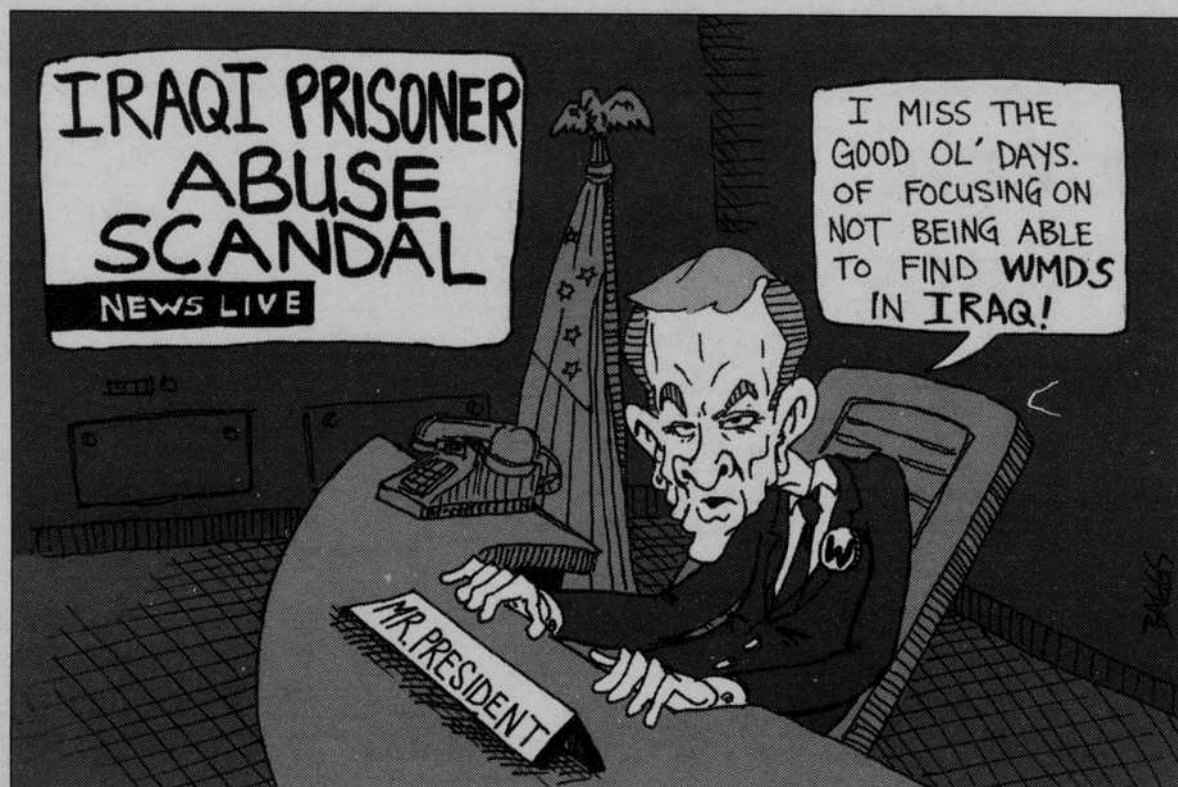
**Brad Schmidt**  
Editor in Chief

**Travis Willse**  
Editorial Editor

**Jan Tobias Montry**  
Managing Editor

**Jennifer Sudick**  
Freelance Editor

**Ayisha Yahya**  
News Editor



Steve Baggs Illustration

## What a wonderful world

"You've been given a great gift, George. A chance to see what the world would be like without you."

— Clarence the Angel, "It's a Wonderful Life"

No Americans died in Iraq this year.

No Iraqi prisoners were beaten or tortured. Those pictures in The Washington Post were never there. Donald Rumsfeld? He and George W. Bush spent the last four years fishing in Texas.

Al Gore is president.

You remember. In November 2000, Florida was hit by a tsunami that wiped out the lower half of the state. They didn't count Florida's electoral votes in the election, and Gore took the popular vote and the electoral vote in an Everest-sized landslide.

So American soldiers never invaded Iraq. Sure, after Sept. 11 we sent a fleet of Marines to Afghanistan's hills for Osama bin Laden. And we thought about sending soldiers into Iraq when a top White House official thought there might be weapons of mass destruction there.

But our president, exercising a wonderful quality called patience, waited for a United Nations inspection team to conclude its search in Iraq. "No WMDs, no invasion," Gore famously declared in his Memorial Day speech in 2003.



**Peter Hockaday**  
Today is Hockaday

Of course, under Gore, our environment is more Mother Earth than Father Oil.

Instead of plundering America's resources like a pirate, Gore introduced forward-thinking initiatives so we could be independent of other countries' oil resources. Gore drove to many functions in an electric-powered limousine and introduced an alternative-fuel bill to congress. By 2025, every new car will have to be a gas-electric hybrid or all electric.

Yes, Gore is still boring. He uses big words and his delivery is about as bland as an unsalted cracker.

But, somehow, he commands the respect of our allies across the world. He favors diplomacy over force. He listens to other leaders before making decisions. He

doesn't flash American machismo around the world like a calling card.

I say it's better to be boring than stupid.

Al Gore didn't cut taxes for country-club cuties. He believes in maintaining our surplus, rather than creating a trillion-buck deficit with the lethal combination of tax cuts and military spending.

Gore spent money on education and the economy. He believed that schools should spend less money on national bubble-filled Scantrons and more money on art and extracurriculars.

Here in Oregon, we felt the effects of Gore's emphasis on higher education. We built a new basketball arena with extra funds. We created more scholarships and built a new campus in Bend. In Eugene, the school board opened two new elementary schools instead of closing them.

Sure, the grass is always greener on the other side of the voting booth, but I think we made the right choice electing Al Gore.

Re-elect Gore in '04.

It's a wonderful life, yes?

Contact the columnist at [peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com](mailto:peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com). His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Kerry would choose Cabinet well

Things aren't well in Oregon. Things aren't well in the United States, and things aren't well in the world. Whether we're speaking about the environment, civil rights, the economy, overpopulation or war, things are deteriorating at a rapid pace.

Not everything that's wrong in the world is the fault of George Bush, his advisers and the Republican-controlled Congress, but their style of leadership (spitting in our friends' and enemies' eyes, "Bring it On," not signing the international land mine treaty) and the direction they've chosen for the country do have local as well as international impacts.

When I think of who I'll vote for this fall, I focus on the 1,000 people who the president appoints to his or her cabinet and executive departments. I believe John Kerry's picks would be more creative, objective, compassionate and expert in ways

that Bush's picks have been partisan, mean-spirited and fanatical. This change alone is enough of a reason for me to back John Kerry's campaign for president with every fiber in my body.

**Albert Kaufman**  
Portland

### Vote for environmental protection

An important clue for evaluating candidates is how they have voted in the past years as elected officials. There is a definite relationship between a healthy environment and a healthy economy, and Bonnie Bettman and Betty Taylor have usually 100 percent voting records for the environment and have shown great fiscal responsibility. Nancy Nathanson and Scott Meisner have lower ratings, according to the votes recorded in the April 8 issue of Eugene Weekly. Votes that are frowned upon are a road through our West Eugene Wetlands, support for a developer slush fund in the Riverfront Urban Renewal Park,

elimination of funding for Toxic Right to Know measure and reduced protection for streams and trees. What kind of environment do you want 20 years from now?

**Ruth Duemler**  
Eugene

### Willamette Industries destroys forests

I grew up in Jefferson, Oregon, only a few miles from the Willamette Industries paper mill in Albany, Oregon. The smells emitted made drivers plug noses, and the way it looked took away from the scenery.

Now I realize that that paper mill did more than obscure community members from fresh air; it was, and still is, destroying forests. I urge you to call on Oregon Gov. Kulongoski to enforce the Roadless Conservation Rule, which protects forests from logging, road building, and other harmful activities.

**Laura Church**  
sophomore  
sociology