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■ In my opinion

Voting for inner peace

"Increase in campus bike theft leads to squirrels ... er, squirrels proven to be leading cause in black-mail, cheating, wait, no..."

I don't want to write another column about what I'm going to do to your firstborn if you don't vote yes on the newest state measure to end self-inflicted handgun fatalities among quails. Save the quails, or I'll shoot you in the face! My roommates and their squirrel plagiarism ring are not much help.

Political issues are surely abounding in this time of immense political hubbub, but I cannot get excited about another round of attacks between supporters of this white guy vs. this white guy. Everyone is saying the same thing, especially the candidates themselves: Vote this way or die. The presidential election has instilled an unfortunate sense of dread in voters, trying to sway them with a doctrine of fear. Bush has summed up his campaign by "saying he was the best man to keep the nation safe from terrorists," according to a recent Associated Press article.

Perhaps it's idealistic, but I expect that guarding the lives of Americans



AILEE SLATER
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

should be an essential undertone in political decisions, rather than the one, overarching plan of government. I can pretty much assume that John Kerry isn't going to hand this country over to extremist terrorists on a silver platter either. Yet, it is these blanket statements that propel U.S. citizens to vote out of fear rather than because of political and social beliefs.

It is moments like these that truly make me remember the importance of my ideals and political actions — where I stop being a concerned American citizen or an ardent feminist, a student with too much homework or running late on my column. Here, I am just a person, sitting back and enjoying the breaths I inhale and the taste of water in my mouth. I don't worry about death, I worry about life, and it is here

that I think we all find a superb level of happiness, and more importantly a sublime satisfaction.

I do not want to vote out of fear for my own life; I want to vote out of realization that some people do not have the opportunity to find this peace that I am lucky enough to hold onto, if even for a split second. I am a woman who is socially allowed to explore herself in every way, already a step up from most of my gender throughout the world; I am part of a minority religion allowed to live in peace; I am a young person allowed the opportunity of education. It is these freedoms that I am slowly coming to realize I cherish more than the idea of simply staying alive.

So, take a few deep breaths when the final candidate is announced. Maybe it's not your first choice, second, or even third. Remember: World change comes from within. It's time for everyone to take a break from living so strongly for the idea of tomorrow and ending today with fear of what is to come rather than exuberance in the moment.

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INBOX

Reconstruction bill right to be defeated

I'm getting tired of Bush supporters constantly pointing out the votes Kerry and Edwards cast against the \$87 billion bill to reconstruct and re-supply American troops in Iraq as an indication of their poor judgment and refusal to "support the troops." These people seem to knowingly overlook the fact that it was the president, not Kerry or Edwards, whose terribly poor judgment sent our troops into Iraq despite not being fully equipped with the

proper armor and equipment.

These people also tend to knowingly overlook the un-American clauses in this bill that gave out "no bid" contracts to Halliburton, a company under investigation by the securities and exchange committee for illegal accounting practices, not to mention the vice president's ties to the company as its former CEO. And finally, these people always seem to knowingly overlook the fact that Kerry proposed the exact same bill that would have made Halliburton compete for the rebuilding contracts as opposed to

having them suspiciously bestowed upon them by the administration.

The bottom line is that the \$87 billion bill the administration proposed could have and should have been drastically improved, and the votes that Kerry and Edwards cast against it are an indication of that. It's too bad that people will immediately seize upon this vote as some sort of indication of poor judgment without taking the time to delve a little deeper in order to figure out why they voted the way they did.

Nathan O'Donnell
Eugene

■ Editorial

ASUO's bad behavior is too much for us to swallow

Recently, ASUO representatives said members of the student government drank alcohol and smoked marijuana on their retreat in Sunriver.

The ASUO has repeatedly dismissed requests for the names of the student officials and representatives who broke the law. Currently, the ASUO is sticking to a group punishment policy, claiming the organization is accepting responsibility as a whole and no names will be released.

It is nice to see the groups that make up the ASUO acting as a cohesive whole and working as a group — we've been asking for such action — but we were hoping to see this cooperation under different circumstances.

The self-imposed group secrecy is a poorly veiled attempt to spin some illegal events and protect the ASUO officials who shirked their responsibilities. When elections roll around this spring and ASUO members decide to run for re-election, how will the public make an informed decision?

The students of the University have every right to know who broke the law.

As elected officials, these individuals should be held accountable for their actions. The public needs to be aware of which officials violated the Student Conduct Code and should be actively involved in the process of deciding the fate of these students.

We commend the ASUO for taking steps toward making students sign sobriety agreements on future retreats, but in this case it's too little, too late. While ASUO President Adam Petkun has been forthcoming, he has essentially allowed a string of illegally private "debriefing meetings" about the retreat to take place under his nose.

This isn't all about the \$3,200 of incidental funds used on the retreat. Although, it is difficult to understand why the ASUO would need to stay in "cultivated, executive-quality homes and condominiums," but that's another topic. The more serious issue is how disrespectful the ASUO has been. The disdain shown in the note (published in Friday's ODE) left in Sunriver by a retreat participant is inexcusable, and the lack of concern for the incidental funds used is horrifically clear-cut: Students, your money is ours to do with as we please, and there is nothing you can do about it.

The next piece this mystery author should write is a letter of resignation.

And honestly, we want to take the self-described "cocky, smooth" ASUO members seriously — once they start giving students a reason to trust them with money.

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ONLINE POLL

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

How should ASUO members who behaved inappropriately at the October Sunriver retreat be punished for their misconduct? Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote.

- They should relinquish their salaries to repay the misused student funds.
- They should resign from their positions at the ASUO.
- Each individual should present a public apology and admit to what illegal activities they each participated in.
- They shouldn't be punished; they were just being normal college students.
- What is the ASUO?

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