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■ In my opinion

A Progressive Movement wake-up call, part one

In Sen. John Kerry's concession speech on Wednesday, he mentioned the contribution of children to his campaign: six-year-old William Field, "who collected \$680, a quarter and a dollar at a time, selling bracelets during the summer," and 11-year-old Ilana Wexler, "who started Kids for Kerry all across our country."

That kind of youthful, almost laughable, idealism was out in full force during this year's election. And Kerry seemed visibly upset that his defeat might cause young supporters to grow cynical of politics. He devoted much of his speech to reassuring them that they had, in fact, made an impact, and that the seeds they planted this season would one day flower.

"A time will come when your ballots will change the world," he said. "America always moves forward."

That is bullshit, of course. Progressives might be naïve, but they aren't stupid. America hasn't moved forward for a long time now, and won't for a long time still. There is no mysterious inner force pushing America forward. And ballots alone never guarantee progress. What brings about progress is when citizens fight for it, every hour of every day.

But it appears as if the fight is gone. Usually progressive activists are able to muster an instantaneous rage after a loss like this one, but this time they are numb. Today, those who abandoned the progressive movement in order to support the Democrats are wandering around with a tragic glint in their eyes. They've discovered there's no Santa Claus, no Easter Bunny, only men in suits. They are now post-pubescent. They are growing up.

In January of this year, I wrote that progressives needed a second Bush presidency because they hadn't yet learned their lesson. Unfortunately, I was right. They sacrificed their principles, obliterated the movement and got nothing in return. This loss was particularly devastating because it lacks the element of injustice. And that is the most difficult part of the



DAVID JAGERNAUTH
CRITICAL MASS

defeat to swallow: The American people really want George W. Bush. It is no longer an illegitimate administration hurting the American people. Now it is the American people hurting themselves.

One of the enduring myths in the progressive movement is that we represent the values of the majority of the country. I hope now this bubble has burst for good. We do not represent a majority. We are the minority. It is well past time that we admit to ourselves a few difficult truths about this country that we love:

1. America is a highly religious country. American religiosity is not solely personal, but rather social. We have an evangelical spirit. The majority feels their beliefs should be the law for all. Thus, it isn't enough for them to be heterosexual; everyone must be heterosexual. Most Americans have no qualms about making their moral system the law for everyone. They don't understand or appreciate the separation of church and state, illustrated by the overwhelming opposition to gay marriage.

2. Americans are less educated than progressives often assume. Add religion to the mix and you get a populous that is easily manipulated and misinformed. Democrats seem to think that Americans base their values on facts and proof and reason. What the Bush Administration understands is that Americans base their values on faith. We already know that the majority of Bush supporters don't understand the most basic truths about the war in Iraq. They have faith in what they are told by President Bush because they

have faith in the man. They innocently take in the lies and rhetoric, while they ignore the reality all around them.

3. America is a country racked with fear. Most Americans would prefer a feeling of security over the maintenance of our freedoms and liberties. Americans tend to express our fears in ways that are deeply racist and jingoistic. When reports came out that as many as 100,000 innocent Iraqis may have been killed due to the war, the majority of Americans were unfazed. Even the Abu Gharib torture photos failed to evoke enough horror to cause the public to demand political accountability.

Add these together and you get the re-election of President Bush. The Democrats' strategy of pandering to the "heartland" by offering them all kinds of economic plans and promises would have worked if our imagined progressive majority really existed "out there" in America. The problem was, most people didn't understand Kerry's plans and they didn't have faith in his promises. Every time Kerry was nuanced about gun issues, gay marriage and the war, he failed to capture their faith or soothe their fears.

Kerry appealed to Americans' needs; Bush appealed to their fears. For the majority, fear will trump need every time. Wish will trump truth. Morality will trump humanity. It is why time and time again Americans will vote against their own self-interests.

At the end of the day, we must remember that politics is cyclical. Our parents had the inexplicable re-election of Reagan. Now we have the inexplicable re-election of Bush. The mistake that the progressive movement made was sacrificing our message for a brief shot at power. Now our message is completely mute. How do we bring the progressive movement back and begin to move forward once again? Next week I will explain how.

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■ Editorial

Four more years means yet another five requests

At the end of the day, no amount of marching, chanting, sign-holding or paper-maché puppet-making can change the fact that Bush was re-elected. After a reasonable mourning period, it's time to look to the future. To Hillary/Osama 2008? No, not that far. Let's look ahead to the next four years. Here is a list of some things the Emerald wants from Bush this time around:

- Cabinet replacements. Senior aides are reporting that Attorney General John Ashcroft will "retire" before Bush's inauguration. Thank God! Former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has already said he is not interested in the job. Our pick: Former Oregon Attorney General and current University President Dave Frohnmayer.

- More tax cuts. But not for the rich this time, or even for the middle class. We want tax cuts for those between the ages of 18-25 who make minimum wage and consume a disproportionate amount of beer. Come on, Rove — it will appeal to the youth vote.

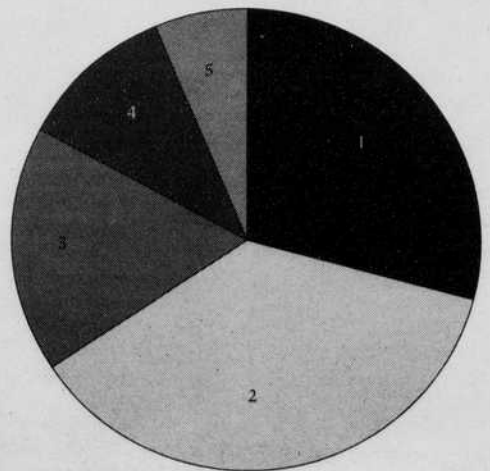
- Huge federal budget cuts. The Republicans are learning just how hard it is to control themselves when they are the ones in control of the federal money pit. Do they have the self-control to restore the image they once had as the party of fiscal sanity? We hope so.

- More Cabinet replacements. Bush fires Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, showing he is serious about cleansing his administration of the neocon element. We would also like him to cleanse the ex-con element from the White House and Congress, but we know he only has four years.

- Leave Oregon alone. With Ashcroft gone, we hope that the Republicans go back to being the state's-rights party. We don't want feds harassing our medicinal marijuana patients and our right-to-die patients. Leave us alone, Big Brother bastards!

ONLINE POLL

THIS WEEK'S RESULTS



How should ASUO members who behaved inappropriately at the October Sunriver retreat be punished for their misconduct?

1. They should relinquish their salaries to repay the misused student fees — 28.3%
2. They should resign from their positions at the ASUO — 37.0%
3. Each individual should present a public apology and admit to what illegal activities they each participated in — 17.4%
4. They shouldn't be punished; they were just being normal college students — 10.9%
5. What is the ASUO? — 6.5%

Total votes: 46

Look for next week's poll in Monday's issue.

■ Guest commentary

'Courteous' fans anything but

A few weeks ago, as I received my glorious e-mail from current University Athletic Director Bill Moos regarding just how courteous, affable and well-mannered Oregon Duck football fans have become, I chuckled. I thought to myself, "Bill, maybe you need to take a stroll through our now mystique-defunct stadium during each home game and in the parking lots after those games, so that you can see some of these well-mannered and courteous fans."

In the six-plus years that my family and I have been a part of section 36, never have we been subjected to the kind of violent attitudes and behaviors as we have been forced to endure through the first few home games of the 2004 season.

As a young boy in the early '90s, it was a great feeling to be able to sit in those stands and watch future gridiron

greats, Ducks or otherwise, and know that the people who adorned that then-half-empty stadium were there to do the same thing as we were; join as one, watch football and have a great time.

But within the opening quarter of the Indiana game, the Eugene Police Department had to make three separate appearances within the first five minutes of the game due to violent, belligerent and obnoxious individuals starting altercations with their own fellow Duck brethren. Where's the love?

To the arrogant, uneducated group of egotistical drunk University frat boys that chose to brand my stepfather as a nigger as he tried to walk back to his vehicle, if you were to stay awake in class more often you'd realize that because a man's skin color may be dark, that doesn't automatically make him an African-American. He's of Samoan-American heritage, and luckily he's

also a man of class, or you'd probably be finding yourself bedridden.

So Mr. Moos, look in that newly expanded section the next time the defense is calling for the crowd to stand and become rowdy. I bet you can count on two hands how many actually stand and cheer loudly.

My family and I will always be a few of the many loyal, well-mannered and courteous fans that will support the Ducks, win or lose, and I hope that when my family and I sit in our seats in the future, there will be more of the same faithful, well-mannered and courteous fans surrounding us that I was used to being surrounded by when this whole joyride began back in '94.

Justin Gast is a senior in the School of Journalism and Communication

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