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■ In my opinion

Bright spots in the shadow of the election

The thorough slapping that Democrats received from the American electorate Nov. 2 has been much discussed and needs no rehashing. What we could use, however, is a look at the bright side — with one eye pointed toward the future and another looking back at the election.

1. Barack Obama: The Illinois senator-elect has a mix of charisma and gravitas that has national Democratic leaders peeing their pants. Obama is smart, funny and about as liberal as a national figure comes these days. Obama was an Illinois state senator and a University of Chicago Law professor before he embarrassed Maryland carpetbagger Alan Keyes on Nov. 2 by carrying 70 percent of the vote. To top it off, he's a family man, with a 14-year marriage and two young daughters, and he has a great life story. Liberal Democrats like his populism and his opposition to the war in Iraq. But the best thing about Obama is that he's only 43 years old and has a long time to gain experience in Washington, DC before his inevitable run for president. Let Hillary have 2008; the future beyond belongs to Obama.

2. Hillary Clinton: Next to the president, Clinton is perhaps the most polarizing figure in American politics. Democrats (especially women) love her; conservatives think she's the devil incarnate. But just as Obama represents the best chance for a black president in the near future, Clinton has a real shot of becoming America's first woman president.

Hillary's case: She brings to the table name recognition, connections and a vast pool of donors. She has fought and



CHUCK SLOTHOWER
TAKING ISSUE

beaten the "vast right-wing conspiracy," as she famously put it, and has a passion for health care. Perhaps most importantly, Clinton has worked since 2000 in support of reproductive rights, environmental protections and education as a rather prominent junior senator from the state of New York.

3. John Edwards: Like Obama, Edwards has a thin political résumé but has shot to the upper reaches of his party thanks to charisma. It sells Edwards short, however, to say he's a pretty face and nothing more. Edwards is one of few Democrats in recent years to have convincingly articulated a populist message, which is the only way Democrats can hope to win back the White House if the country's conservative mood on social issues persists. His "two Americas" speech caught fire on the campaign trail, catapulting Edwards from a curiosity to a serious contender during the Iowa caucuses. He is a real hope for 2008.

4. Peter DeFazio: As baseball manager Leo Durocher once said of Willie Mays, "If he could cook, I'd marry him." We're lucky to have DeFazio, and judging by his election returns over the last 18 years, we know it. He's a fighting Oregon liberal in the tradition of Wayne Morse and he does

everything he can for his district, from supporting dredging coastal ports to getting more than \$1 million out of federal coffers for the Eugene Airport. He's also famously responsive to his constituents. To top it off, he's a Duck alumnus. What's not to like?

5. Kitty Piercy and the Eugene City Council: Eugene voters bucked the national trend this year, voting Democrats and liberals in and Republicans and conservatives out. After eight years under Mayor Jim Torrey, Eugene finally has a chance to see what local liberals can accomplish with real power in their hands. Hopefully, this will mean more land conservation and less sprawl. While conservatives fretted that a liberal-leaning city government would lead to an economic downturn, Torrey's regime saw the Sony disc manufacturing plant close, and Lane County's unemployment rate is still above 6.5 percent, despite recent improvement. As the saying goes, "If you want to live like a Republican, vote Democrat."

6. Russ Feingold: We need more senators like the 51-year-old gentleman from Wisconsin who won re-election Nov. 2 to a third term in the U.S. Senate. He was the only senator to vote against the USA PATRIOT Act, courageously standing up to 96 yeas and abundant cowardice among his colleagues in the wake of President Bush's post-9/11 surge in popularity. Feingold also opposed the war in Iraq, has worked to pass some of the 9/11 commission's recommendations and co-authored the famous McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill.

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■ Editorial

Celebrate Consume Wisely Day year round

The day after Thanksgiving is Buy Nothing Day, a day, according to Adbusters, to "not participate in the doomsday economy, the marketing mind-games, and the frantic consumer-binge that's become our culture."

For those who choose to celebrate this holiday, we ask that you do so properly. At midnight on Nov. 26, you must leave your house or apartment, because shelter is a commodity and this is Buy Nothing Day. If you don't want to walk around naked we suggest that you make your own clothes out of materials found for free in nature like bark and leaves, but be careful not to remove these forcibly from the trees. You'll also want to fashion a few tools because you will be hunting for your food. For those living in the city, your best bet will be rats, pigeons, cats and small dogs.

Okay, you get the point. Buy Nothing Day misses the boat for two reasons: First, its extreme goals are impossible to sustain for even a day, let alone a whole lifetime; second, it ignores good consumption. One couldn't buy a meal to give to a starving person on the street on Buy Nothing Day. People couldn't even buy books to inform themselves about environmental issues.

Don't get us wrong. The spirit of Buy Nothing Day is right on the mark. America is a consumption-obsessed culture. We worship the god of money and our religious ritual of choice is shopping. Our lifestyles are not even close to being sustainable. Rather than make an attempt to live in frugal, more environmentally friendly ways, Americans have gone in the opposite direction: Our cars are bigger and less fuel efficient than ever; our homes are using more electricity and we are eating so much food that obesity has reached epidemic proportions.

Creating a day to reflect on America's over-consumption is definitely a good thing. However, "buying nothing" is not the answer to the problem. Vilifying the act of consumption itself is not the answer. Those who participate in Buy Nothing Day admit that the importance of the day is largely symbolic; most of them will probably go right back to over-consuming on the 364 days until the next Buy Nothing Day. And nobody on the outside will be persuaded to consume differently because of their street-party antics.

Instead of participating in meaningless symbolism, the Emerald hopes our readers will participate in a new post-Thanksgiving holiday: Consume Wisely Day. As a family, sit down and brainstorm little things that you can do to consume less. To make up for Thanksgiving gluttony, eat a small vegetarian dinner on Friday. Seek out locally grown fruits and vegetables. Watch one hour less of television. Instead of going directly to the mall, shop at a few of the family-owned businesses in town. Instead of driving, take public transportation.

We need not become ascetics in order to free ourselves from consumerism's grip. There are hundreds of small ways we can alter our habits and make a difference for the planet. But we can't just talk about it — we must act. The day after Thanksgiving is the perfect day to begin. The trick is to continue it every day thereafter.

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INBOX

Student senators are the real flip-flopers

If you thought a certain presidential candidate was a "flip-flopper," just talk to one of your student senators. On Wednesday, during their benchmark hearing to determine proposed increases in your student fees, senators denied the proposed fee request by the Athletic Department Finance Committee. The Student Senate passed a lower increase, citing concern for saving students money. Not only will it accomplish this, but now there will likely be fewer football and basketball tickets.

Now for the flip-flopping: Once the Programs Finance Committee proposed its fee request, those fighting for saving students money were mysteriously quiet. In fact, the Senate overwhelmingly passed a motion for a proposed increase of over \$200,000 in growth for ASUO programs. What happened to saving students money?

Do we really want student leaders who say one thing and do another? First they want to save money and then they don't care. What will it be tomorrow? Student senators, get your message straight; stop pandering to ASUO programs and start representing all students.

Mike Sherman

Former Student Senator, 2002-2004

Voter fraud investigations launched in several states

Just when you thought the presidential election was over, accusations of voter fraud are all over the nation. It's not some nutty conspiracy theory; it's a non-partisan issue that conflicts with the central tenet of our democracy.

Did you know that recounts are happening in Ohio and New Hampshire? A fraud audit has been launched in Florida, where phony audit logs were put in place of real ones that were later found in the garbage. Early exit polls in Florida and Ohio matched votes in areas that used paper ballots, but not in areas that used video voting. In Broward County, Florida, electronic voting machines counted backwards: As more people voted, the official vote count went down. In one Columbus, Ohio, suburb, election officials have acknowledged that electronic voting machines credited Bush with winning 4,258 votes, even though only 638 people voted there. And senior members of the House Judiciary Committee have requested an immediate investigation of voting machine problems. I want to know that our president won honestly so we can get on with life. If he didn't, let's make sure justice is carried out.

Jason A. Kilgore
Junction City

University Psychology Clinic extends helping hand

The recent story and editorial on suicide prevention efforts on campus were excellent. We share the sentiment of the editorial ("Suicide surrounded by sad social stigmas," ODE, Nov. 18) that seeking help for mental health issues should be easy and non-stigmatizing. In this spirit, I would like the University community to be aware of an additional campus resource for mental health services: the University Psychology Clinic located in Straub Hall.

We offer assessment and psychotherapy to teens and adults in the Eugene and Springfield community. Our services include individual and group cognitive behavior therapy, a therapy approach that has been found to be most helpful to those with depression and various forms of anxiety including panic disorder and social phobia. Services also include medication evaluation and treatment for those receiving psychotherapy in the Clinic. Services are free to University students and are based on a sliding scale for non-students. We invite everyone to feel welcome to contact us for further information and/or services.

Anne D. Simons, Ph.D.
Director, University Psychology Clinic

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