

Monologue

Idle Hands

J. Dana Haynes
Editor In Chief

The year is inexorably drawing to a close and as I sat down before my pre-Columbian LC Smith and Corona typewriter I realized this would be my last Idle Hands.

Throughout the year, I have attempted to let this column live up to its name by being the devil's workshop . . . or advocate, if you prefer. And as is fitting for a last column, I had to decide whether to do this one looking back or looking forward.

We know what's behind us. This seems like a good time to look ahead. Scenes to coming attractions, as it were.

Sometime next year, probably during spring term, this College will have to go before the voters of the county and plead for passage of our triannual levy. Without the levy, there would be no money to run the school and the doors will close.

Unfortunately, very few levies have been passed for colleges in Oregon lately. Earlier this year, seven schools tried and four were turned down.

There is a fairly good chance that this College will also get the old heave-ho and if the administration doesn't want to see that come about they'd best give the voters a good reason to vote yea.

A recent presidential council on American education gave failing marks to this country's schools. In short, people are graduating from high schools without sufficient educations and the citizens are angry.

But revamping the high schools isn't the only answer. Education is a dinosaur in grades K through 12. If billions of dollars and years of work were poured into the system, it might possibly become passable. But more likely it is fated to live forever in the past, never quite fulfilling its purpose.

Likewise, colleges and universities cannot and should not change to meet the gap. It would be insanity to tell the universities they can either spend their financing on post-graduate programs or on reading, writin', and 'rithmetic.

That leaves the middle ground: The community, or junior colleges.

The world is changing and the two-year institutions are perfectly suited to that metamorphosis. The community colleges already serve a good and useful purpose, at least they do in Oregon. However, that usefulness can and should evolve.

One realistic change would be toward computers. In a few years, everyone will have to know how to use a keyboard and those who do not will be left behind. Mandatory computers classes would then be a logical function.

This begets the obvious questions: How to pay for the necessary equipment?

The equally obvious answer is local industry. The economy is improving and if most of the middle-or low-income types cannot feel it you may rest assured the large corporations do. These businesses include Tektronix and Precision Castparts, to name two of the largest local ones. Surely these companies would want to see a more "computer-friendly" community, as well as a generally better educated one. Last year, Tektronix made a large grant available to local schools for just such a project. If they did it once, they may do so again, given the proper incentive.

That is just one way to close the educational gap in our society, and to prove our worth to the voters. The community college system is important and underrated, and it is a safe bet no one else is going to blow our horn. That's left for us to do.

All right. Enough preaching.
Goodnight Mrs. Kallabash, wherever you are.



Church, state separation in danger of disappearing

Brett Bigham
Arts Editor

America Beware! You are in danger of having your basic rights taken away. This time it is not by the Communists or a corrupt government, but by religion. I am speaking of a growing religious movement in this country, a movement that is trying to stop your right of choice.

Religion has always played a large role in this country. From puritan times up until the early 1960's many of the laws in this country had biblical backgrounds. It was not until the mid-sixties that these laws were finally questioned for their Constitutionality. Many laws have since been subject to changes or done away with altogether. Laws concerning pornography, homosexuality, prostitution and many other social standards not acceptable to the church were among those altered. During this time religion lost much of its influence on society. Now, two decades later, the church is again trying to make itself a controlling part of our government.

In the past year there have been several attempts made in the judicial system to reinstate many of these laws that had been removed in the sixties. Several boards of education

have tried to gain control over the censorship of school libraries and their contents, and many have tried to discontinue sex education classes.

I'm not saying that this movement is a bad thing. This country probably needs a little religious help but in no way should it infringe on the lives of others.

This has all been tried before and it rarely works out. Look at prohibition for an example. The churches rallied to make alcohol illegal and won, even though the majority of the country was against the act. Prohibition turned out to be a miserable failure and was eventually repealed.

Our country is here to protect its people's rights. In many other places people do not have any rights. That is why it is important for us not to allow any group (not just religious) to gain control over any of the aspects of our lives. We must retain the freedom to choose for ourselves.

It will be very important in coming times for the average person to keep track of the social pressures that the churches are placing on our government. It will be up to us to keep religion and government two separate bodies. We all have a lot to lose if we don't. We can lose our right of choice, our right to freedom.

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