

Monologue

State seat belt law violates one's rights

By D. Dietrich
Arts Editor

This year may be the one in which a mandatory seat belt law will finally be passed in the Oregon Legislature. At least that's the optimistic view of state Sen. Rod Monroe, D-Portland, who has tried unsuccessfully to have such a bill enacted for the last two years.

The arguments in favor of such legislation are indeed strong ones. If passed, proponents of the measure claim it would not only save lives but also millions of dollars spent by the state each year for workers compensation to those affected by traffic accidents. The bill is asking that Oregonians be required to wear seat belts under penalty of a Class D traffic infraction. If found guilty the fine would require a \$31 bail under current standards.

Because it is preventive in nature, such legislation would save lives and money just as annual medical check-ups would. However, there is a fine line between the invasion of privacy and the pursuit of law enforcement here, and I believe this bill would sneak over to the side of invasion.

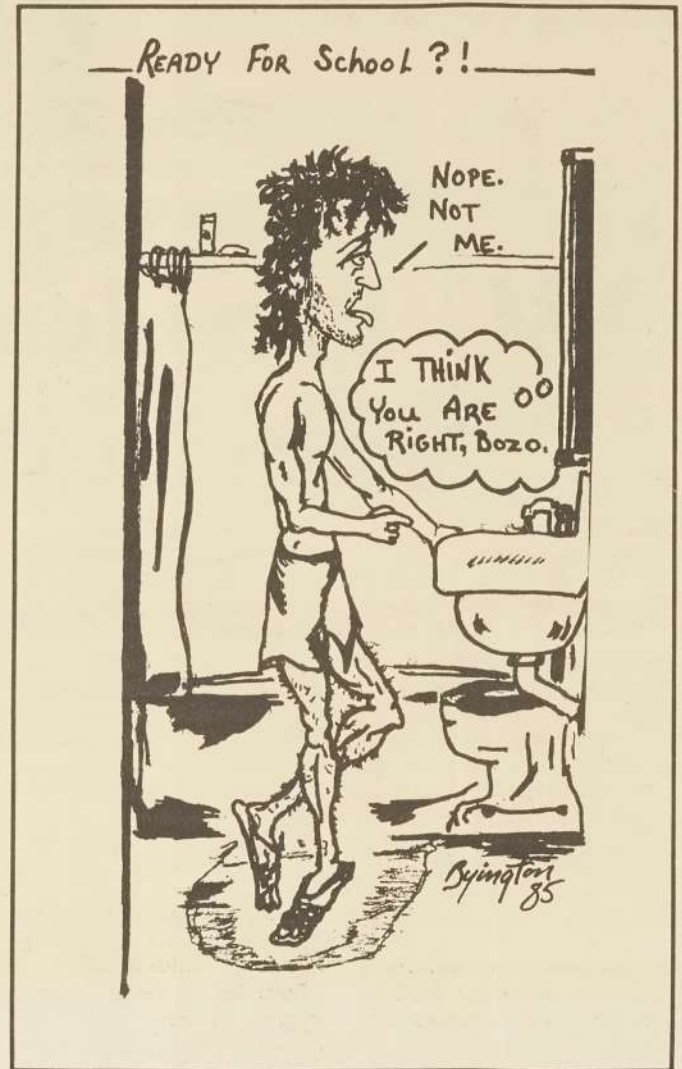
There are many reasons why people may chose not to buckle up. Most of them are cosmetic. A strap across one's body is certainly not a glamorous sight and we all know what kind of unsightly wrinkles it would engage in a taffeta dress. There is also a variety of medical reasons precluding a seat belt from action. An

avid buckler I know refrained from wearing the restraining device while in the last two months of her pregnancy. There are more personal matters also, not all of which must be listed in print, let alone explained to a stranger in a blue suit.

Without being a bad idea, a mandatory seat belt law is not a practical one. I'm not sure I could resist the temptation to fasten up after being stopped by a police officer and waiting for him to arrive at my car door after which he may have me ticketed for unlawful ventilation (wearing seat belts in the summertime is a sticky business.) It doesn't make sense that a citizen is allowed to ride on two small wheels at 55 m.p.h. without any protection on the head and the delicate contents therein, while those surrounded by metal must latch themselves to their cars.

Because the bill is of defensible substance, the compromise of passing an amendment, thereby making it required for children under the age of, say, 11 is allowable. Besides, the Oregon Legislature would end up arguing the age factor for another five years as they have done with any given clause in the last 20 bills that were given for consideration.

A mandatory seat belt bill finds similarities with the idea that it is illegal to commit suicide. Breaking either law would mean a definite lack of good judgement but both are geared to punishing the criminal as well as the victim.



Subway vigilante Goetz's support misguided

By Shelley Ball
Editor In Chief

Yorker who skyrocketed to fame over Christmas vacation by shooting four black youths he said attempted to rob him while riding the subway.

The subway vigilante is receiving enormous support from the general

public, who believe Goetz's actions to be self-defensive in nature and are therefore justifiable. For example, it's been reported that nationwide contributions for bail and legal fees for Goetz have been pouring in, and a Bernhard Goetz Defense Fund has been set up by some of Goetz's business associates in the electronics field.

Starting next week...
**Fritz Wenzel's
"Community Corner"**
Fritz takes a look at the people and events around the College community.

THE PRINT, a member of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, aims to be a fair and impartial journalistic medium covering the campus community as thoroughly as possible. Opinions expressed in THE PRINT do not necessarily reflect those of the College administration, faculty, Associated Student Government or other members of THE PRINT. THE PRINT is a weekly publication distributed each Wednesday except for finals week. Clackamas Community College, 19600 S. Molalla Avenue, Oregon City, Oregon 97045.

Page 2

The basis for this wave of sympathy for Goetz has become suspect, however. While the original story indicated that Goetz acted in self-defense, evidence being gathered about the shooting indicates that Goetz may be no more than a trigger-happy pistol packer.

I'm not saying that protecting oneself from criminal attacks is wrong, and it's easy for those of us who've never experienced an attack of any kind to sit back and say Goetz acted in a wrongful manner.

There's also nothing wrong with supporting someone who acted in self-defense, but there is something wrong with supporting Goetz, who can't prove he was menaced enough to resort to gunfire, at least at this point in the investigation.

Not all the details have been worked out in this case, but the current report is that the four teenagers approached Goetz and asked for the time, a match and \$5. Goetz reportedly said, "Yes, I have \$5 for each of you," then stood up and fired his gun at the youths until he ran out of ammunition.

The youths were found to be carrying crude weapons (screwdrivers with sharpened points) during the confrontation, but the indications at this point are they were not used in a threatening manner against Goetz and were not displayed for him to see. Therefore, Goetz does not appear to have been in a situation where firing a gun to kill for his own protection was warranted.

In supporting Goetz, the public is supporting the need for justice. The problem is the public thinks it sees justice being carried out by Goetz, and in thinking so they are misguided. At a time when the rights of criminals appear to be taking precedence over the rights of victims, the public has been hungry to rally around a figure who symbolizes justice for the victims. In Bernhard Goetz they have temporarily found that figure.

Clackamas Community College

