



It is the dawn of yet another year for students and voters alike. It is ironic, then, that Associated Student Government has sponsored another annual campus incursion of Rock The Vote, driving nails into the respective coffins of both the institutions of scholarship and citizenship.

I believe that Rock the Vote, far from occupying the pedestal of heroic Champion of the Democratic Process that it claims, is detrimental to the sacred trust placed in the voting public.

This belief was rather unfortunately confirmed in last week's festivities, in which propaganda mated with ignorance to produce an offspring of oppression.

Why do I consider Rock the Vote harmful? After all, it raises political awareness among young citizens and encourages them to vote and thus take part in the political process through voting, right? I say thee nay—political awareness is the one thing Rock the Vote does not encourage.

An ASG officer may have told the *Oregonian* in the Wed. Oct. 7 issue that "we are trying to educate [students] so they are voting intelligently," but the only "educational" material I found during the three days of vote rocking were campaign pamphlets either arguing for candidates' individual sainthood or demonizing their opponents. There was nothing available that could not be gained through viewing a TV soundbite.

The various speakers were no better, their presentations consisting of little more than the usual I-feel-your-pain snowjob. When Bill Sizemore spoke in the Gregory Forum on Tuesday, he didn't ask us what our concerns were; he as much as told us what they were. He controlled the discussion.

Mr. Sizemore may indeed be the better candidate. How would I know? The information disseminated was more surface than substance. "I think taxes are too high," insists Sizemore. Big deal. Anyone can say that; we all recognize the disease. It is the cure which gives cause for debate.

In 1910, G. K. Chesterton wrote

in his book, *What's Wrong with the World*, that "We forget that, while we agree on the abuses of things, we should differ very much about the uses of them. Mr. Cadbury and I

## The Altar of an Unkown God

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would agree about the bad public-house. It would be precisely in front of the good public-house that our painful personal *fracas* would occur."

In other words, we all agree (to some extent) what the problems are. It is because we disagree on solutions that a political debate exists at all.

And by and large, very few solutions were discussed last week. The skills of politicians are persuasive rather than informative. They may be able to convince you that black is white, but that doesn't leave you better educated.

The architects of this great experiment to reconcile Liberty with Law established not a democratic, but republican system of government, since they believed that the common man given true democratic control would surrender his liberty to the ones with the biggest pockets and most honeyed tongues.

The solution of Madison and Jefferson (Hamilton was far less charitable) was education—*teach* them to be citizens, and they will rise to the occasion. Political education is the true calling of our First-Amendment-protected television and print media, and of the public education system.

Rock the Vote is countereducational because it focuses on a single instant in the political process—the ballot box—and ignores the years in between where actual governing takes place.

Furthermore, it treats lightly a prize gained by the blood and tears of Americans throughout history. A new voter and Clackamas student,

interviewed by the *Oregonian*, sadly sums up this attitude well: "I always wanted to vote. I thought it would be fun. It's like an adult thing to do."

I hardly think that the patriots whose blood "refreshed the Tree of Liberty" made their sacrifice so that Mr. Hembrick could feel like a grown-up. Something so easily gained is too easily taken for granted.

I do not claim expert knowledge in these matters. My study of political science has left me with more questions than answers. But as a Christian and an American, I believe it is my responsibility to both participate intelligently in the self-governing process and to act if necessary as a conscience for my country.

We, the few, the proud, the 18-and-over, *are* the government. That great shepherd king, David, ruler of Israel, declared at the end of his life, "He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the sunrise on a cloudless day."

Government in the interest of the people will only be enacted by interested people. *I show you a more excellent way.*

Coursing below our familiar autumn rituals here at Clackamas and other community colleges, runs a controversy that will change education at this level forever.

In several sessions on this campus, there have been some spirited debates on distance learning, a computer based learning program. This debate involves instructors and administrators of this and other colleges, as well the governments of several western states, whose governors a few years back piled a bunch of taxpayers' money into promoting the distance learning programs.

For the most part, the students have not taken much part in this debate, one way or the other. That is because they aren't where the fear is: students will seek out the education where they can get it no matter whether it is traditional lecture/classroom or distance learning. No, the fear is with the instructors—fear of a change that is taking place with no real guarantee that they will not soon be replaced by a keyboard, a screen and a humongous network server run by computer gremlins.

The past is familiar ground, it can be traversed in safety and comfort. The future on the other hand is a murky path that may end up where you didn't want to go.

In the past, the "delivery system," as Dr. John Keyser put it recently at one such debate, was and still is based on teenagers coming out of high school and continuing to learn in the traditional classroom/lecture experience. This is a rite-of-passage experience that produces a type of citizen much like ourselves. Sort of a cloning process.

At Clackamas there is also the non-traditional student. Looking at the demographics of the college, in fact, the average age of a Clackamas student is 35 to 37 years old: old enough to remember what it was like before computers.

These non-traditional students are also the ones to benefit most from distance learning, not the teenagers who have had computers strapped to their face since discovering Game Boy.

The traditional student still needs

the environment provided by the campus community: instructor mentors in the flesh, and a progression leading from a comfortable home to the Sodom and Gomorrah of the university. They are learning more than just how to take notes at a lecture, write a paper and allocate time, they are learning about dating and

## The Sacred & The Profane

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dorms, beer drinking and sports and how to bet on them. The college experience is a social event that should not be passed by.

This is all fine for those who need to pass this gauntlet, but the non-traditional student is already beyond that game, they want the steak right now and forget all that stuff about sizzle.

The non-traditional student represents different needs for education and Clackamas needs to address this by splitting in two and developing both methods of educating in order to be a viable business.

We are in fact an economically driven progression based on competition and the needs of the consumer. Using distance learning is just a recognition of that fact. The consumer in this case is the student who wants to get what is necessary to move ahead. We will need to serve these two masters, the traditional and the non-traditional student. The sooner we reach out to them the faster we also will progress.

The profile of the student is changing and the way that they are educated is splitting into two methods. The non-traditional student is looking for convenience and speed while the traditional student is looking into the same manner of instruction they received in high school. The community college should and can react faster than the university in meeting these needs and transform themselves into a college that can meet the demands of both groups, both classroom lecture style and the newer computer based instruction.

# THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

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