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The Clackamas Print is a weekly publication and is distributed every Wednesday except during Finals Week.  
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**Advertising:**  
The advertising rate is \$4.75 per column inch

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# Ashcroft oversteps authority; Oregon's Death With Dignity Act will survive



*That's madness!*

**Erinn Lerten**  
Opinion Editor

In 1997, the Supreme Court found that states can constitutionally prohibit physician-assisted suicide and can make it a crime to assist in a suicide. But the Supreme Court also said the states can and should debate the issue, vote on it, legislate about it, and different states, it said, will reach different conclusions.

To quote the court, "Throughout the nation, Americans are engaged in an earnest and profound debate about physician-assisted suicide. Our holding permits this debate to continue, as it should in a democratic society." It was a victory for states' rights, a doctrine supported by many conservative lawyers, judges and legislators, including Attorney General John Ashcroft. But it seems the doctrine of states' rights he built his career on was not as passionate as we once thought.

When a state such as Oregon takes its autonomy in a direction he disapproves of, he'll use the long arm of the federal government to intervene. The State of Oregon took him to court and last month won a ruling from a federal district court invalidating the attorney general's new rule.

Portland-based U.S. District Judge Robert Jones ruled April 17 that Ashcroft had overstepped the authority of the federal

Controlled Substances Act when he declared that physician-assisted suicide was not a "legitimate medical purpose" and threatened to revoke the license to prescribe narcotics from any doctor who wrote a lethal-dose prescription to a patient who requested one.

While appeals may take some time, we will find that not only is the attorney general's position hypocritical, it's legally unsound. Oregon's Death With Dignity Act has been in place for four years. In this time at least 91 people have used it. There have been no reports of abuse or irregularities in the law.

Mainly cancer patients who were in the last stages of what was clearly a terminal disease have used it. Independent academics in Oregon, who have had no involvement with advocacy or even with treating patients under the law, have found that these patients were not showing symptoms of depression. We have not seen any abuses for financial rea-

sons. What Oregon has created is an atmosphere in which people can choose, under certain circumstances, to have a humane, peaceful and compassionate death. If anything, this debate and the existence of this law in Oregon has improved health care and pain care.

There's been much more effective treatment, greater use of hospices, fewer unnecessary tests and unnecessary machines. While people may dispute that it is not a doctor's right to end someone's life, Oregonians have passed this law twice, by increasing numbers. In his battle to overturn this law Ashcroft is saying that his one vote counts for more than Oregonian's 1.3 million. Hopefully Oregon's battle over assisted suicide will set a precedent that federal opinion does not rule state's rights.

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## Should the federal government interfere with a state ballot initiative?



**Jason Gibson**  
Candidate for ASG President

"Absolutely not. That violates the sovereignty of the states. The US government is a conglomerate of 50 sovereign states that we fought to identify as the forum for the voice of the people."



**Erika Egger**  
Candidate for ASG President

"I think if they have the right to put something in then they have the right to take it out."



**Molly Stanley**  
Candidate for ASG Vice-President

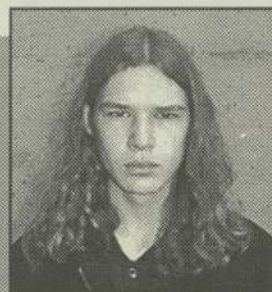
"If the state passes it [a law] then obviously they support it. So in that sense the federal government shouldn't be able to override it."



**Stephanie Neuhauser**  
Candidate for ASG Vice-President

At press time Stephanie Neuhauser was not available for comment.

## The ups and downs of getting older



*Be Human*

**Jesse Gurzynski**  
Staff Writer

I have become aware that kids these days seem to be growing down at an ever-earlier age. I worry that some of my fellow students might be lagging in growing down, and a few troublemakers might actually be growing up. I have thought about what is important to know about growing down, and I shall present my thoughts as an aid to the late wilters among us.

One has to learn proper time

management.

The properly adjusted grown-down, as I call them, experiences virtually no variation from one day to the next, one week to the next, one year to the next. Thinking of this as "boring monotony" is going about it from the wrong perspective. Instead, learn to slide through the routine; pretty soon you won't even notice it, you'll just be doing what you need to do without even thinking about it.

Beware of actual experience, as it is risky and unbecoming of a grown-down. An excellent substitute for actual experience can be found in television. You can watch friends hanging out, watch people making love, watch people dancing, racing cars, fishing on a lake. Not only do you not have to actually do any of these things yourself, television skips right to the exciting parts without quiet moments.

Quiet moments in real experiences allow for reflection, which can be extremely frightening to the grown-down. (It is worthy to note that television does not

allow for quiet moments of reflection as they simply risk exposing how boring television really is.) If you must suffer actual experiences, learn the art of "being there without being there," and you will have much less risk of powerful moments, "religious" experiences or reflection.

The rules to growing down are endless, but they don't have to be memorized like test answers; it is a way of life learned through imitation and ridicule. It includes a certain way of walking, a certain way of sitting, and a certain way of standing in one place. The proper way to behave in any given situation is dictated by the social demands of growing down. Quirks are called "childish," and are possible grounds for committal to a mental institution.

As long as you can successfully crush your spirit, you shouldn't have too much trouble becoming a perfectly normal grown-down and leading a perfectly ordinary, unhappy and meaningless life. Beware of

behavior in others that does not conform to that of ordinary grown-downs; do not allow yourself to be influenced by them. If you know someone, even a friend, who behaves this way, either avoid him or her or try to help by ridiculing this person until the spirit is crushed.

Finally, a note on growing up. Many grown-downs will ridicule someone by telling them to grow up, when they really mean grow down. Growing up involves being completely honest with yourself. Once you decide to be honest with yourself, your old world view is at risk of collapsing, and your consciousness may change to one that does not agree with the official "stories" given by authorities in government, religion, or science.

Our society dictates that sanity means that your state of consciousness is within a certain narrow spectrum that is easy to manipulate with words and threats of violence (i.e. the police). Growing up involves exploring states of consciousness that fall outside this narrow range.

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