

# Editorial & Opinion

## OSP pursues drunk driver

Drunk driving has been described by Oregon State Police as the state's most frequently committed crime, so it's good to see our troopers working now to help stop drunks before they drive.

State Police will host one of their first area alcohol awareness seminars 7-10 p.m. next Wednesday in Sandy Community Center at 38340 Pioneer Boulevard.

Other seminars are being held in Gresham, Lake Oswego, Tigard, Aloha and Oregon City.

Here the seminar will include a slide show, presentation and panel discussion by legislators, district attorneys, law-enforcement officers and judges.

Audience members will be able to ask questions.

OSP senior trooper Bernard

Giusto, an organizer, described Oregon's drinking drivers as a big problem.

He said the OSP alcohol awareness seminar also can be made available to clubs and groups at no charge.

The state's grassroots involvement in drunk driving prevention is a good idea whose time certainly has come.

It would be wise for anyone with or without drinking problems to attend the free seminar here Wednesday and consider scheduling the program for their inner circle of friends. And bring the kids. One way or another, we're all exposed to the dangers of drinking drivers on the loose on Oregon roads. (VB)

## Utility bill offers public control

Oregonians who want a compromise between the wide-open popular control of utilities through public power and the solidity of private utilities might like House Bill 2934 in Salem.

The proposal calls for a voluntarily funded statewide citizens' utility board to represent residential customer interests on electric, gas and telephone issues.

The citizens' board wouldn't receive tax dollars. It would send special notices to utility

customers enclosed in monthly utility bills. The notices would describe the board and invite people to join for only \$3 year.

The statewide board of directors, elected by CUB members statewide, would set board policy, decide specific issues and actions and hire an executive director and staff.

Hearings began last week on the bill, and comments to elected state officials would be timely—if not beneficial. (VB)

### Salem scene:

## State 'eyes' video harms

by JACK ZIMMERMAN  
 Associated Oregon Industries

There wasn't any Oregon Legislature when the piano was invented in 1709.

And the state's Assembly was preoccupied with other priorities when the typewriter was perfected in this country in 1868.

Consequently, we have no laws regulating the operation of that venerable musical instrument or the familiar typewriting office fixture.

But comes now the VDT (video display terminal) and the CRT (cathode ray tube), both components of computer technology, currently sweeping the nation and most of the developed world.

A number of members of the 62nd Oregon Legislative Assembly are concerned that people who operate computer terminals need protection and are bent on enacting law to achieve that goal.

The proposal, Senate Bill 568, arises from exhaustive studies by government, industry and independent organizations probing possible health hazards that might arise from this new technology. In essence, the bill attempts to legislate working conditions for VDT operators by mandating eye examinations, lighting standards, work breaks, specific types of equipment, maintenance and related furniture.

Two hearings were conducted before Senate Labor Committee on April 25. Both attracted standing-room-only audiences. Approximately 6 1/2 hours of testimony was recorded from about 45 witnesses. Testifying were a number of VDT operators, union representatives, manufacturers, vendors and employers currently utilizing the many forms of computer terminals now in use.

Worker testimony cited examples of eye strain, neck and back problems, fatigue and dizziness. Labor spokesman hailed the bill as a method of forcing employers to ease those complaints by required changes on equipment, furniture and working conditions.

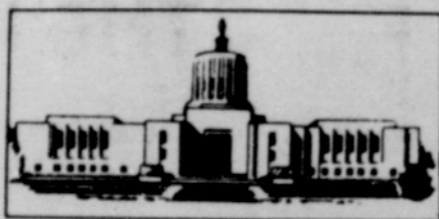
Employer testimony specified financial impacts of proposed requirements. And manufacturers cited both the difficulty of enforcement because of extensive varieties of computer visual display terminals and the deterrent effects such legislation would have on technology that is developing at an incredible pace.

Not lost in audiences at both hearings were representatives of so-called high technology firms currently operating in the state, who pointed out the restrictions would tend to hamper Oregon's efforts to attract still more job-producing industries of that type.

Involved are as many as 70,000 members of Oregon's present workforce. And industry projections indicate as much as 60 percent of all office workers will be using terminals before this decade ends.

Although no one disputes the potential exposure to visual and physical discomfort posed by the equipment, parallels are easily drawn between problems encountered by computer operators, piano players and typists.

Oddly enough, those parallels did not



surface during hearings. But if SB 568 does become law, one might suspect Oregon lawmakers to consider redesigning piano benches and typewriter stands.

This despite the rather pointed testimony of one computer manufacturer that aspirin greatly predated VDT entry into the workplace as a solution to many of the complaints voiced by operators.

Meanwhile, the Accident Prevention Division of the Workers' Compensation Department reports only five claims—all denied—by workers suffering from use of VDTs and oscilloscopes. Two were in 1981 and three last year.

At the same time, passage of SB 568 likely would become another legislative first for Oregon. Connecticut, which is considering two bills that would require studies of VDTs and another that would require manufacturers to inform purchasers of precautions to alleviate potential human discomfort, joins Oregon along Illinois, Maine and Massachusetts in this pioneering endeavor.

Consequently perhaps, SE 568's sponsors must seek an early work session on the bill, hurry it to the Senate floor and on to the House of Representatives before another state beats them to the punch.

Enforcement of the bill, if it becomes law, would fall on the Workers' Comp Department. And that might be as difficult as making certain typists sit erect, face their typewriters, keep both feet on the floor, both eyes off the keys, fingers slightly clenched and wrist unbent.

Come to think of it, those requirements might well be amendments to SB 568. They might, that is, if all VDT operators utilized equipment as standardized as typewriters.

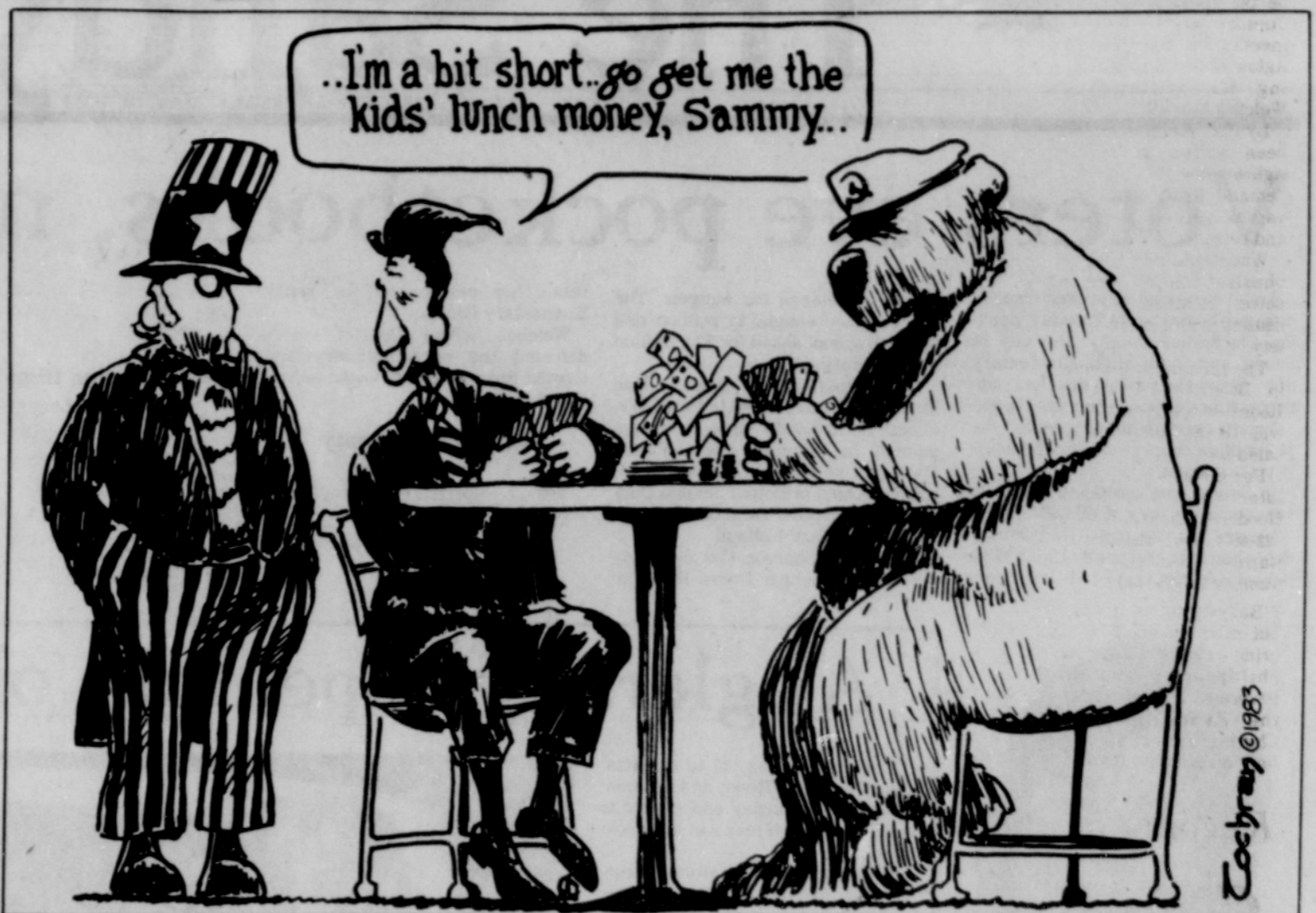
But just how do you delineate workable rules for machines with operators who stand, as well as sit; who activate terminals with electronic wands, as well as with keys, and who in the near future will be asked to adjust to voice activation of their equipment?

When the latter occurs, will Oregon lawmakers consider a measure requiring employer-paid supplies of throat lozenges and diction lessons for operators?

How about regulating the noise level of operators tempted to shout at terminals when a glitch appears on the screen?

And if SB 568 becomes law, perhaps the next Assembly will consider some way to outlaw stenographer's spread? After all, that's the bottom line.

(EDIT NOTE: Jack Zimmerman writes a column for Associated Oregon Industries, a state lobbying group. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of The Post.)



### Letters to the editor:

## Shorts sans fly 'reverse descrimination?'

### Times tough

Things are bad enough when I find I can no longer obtain the simple flat sealing ring for my No. 5 National canning pressure cooker. For the lack of a nail a shoe was lost, for lack of a shoe a horse was lost, for lack of a horse a soldier was lost and for lack of the soldier the battle was lost—all for lack of a horseshoe nail.

Nope, that ain't bad enough. I go out in search of a pattern. Just want to make the ol' man some boxer shorts. He doesn't like those broadcloth fashions. Got that pattern home and just try to guess what. This pattern has no fly. I am all for equal rights, but he refuses to give up the old outside plumm'n'.

Maybe you can tell us what this world is coming to. Reverse descrimination no less!

Elizabeth Horgan  
 Sandy

### Many helped

My husband and I want to thank everyone who responded to the traffic accident at Shorty's Corner Saturday. The rescue unit from the Sandy Fire District and Alpine am-

balance were very efficient and very professional.

Thank you, also, to New's towing for their extra effort and to all of the witnesses to the accident who stayed to help. It is good to know that in our community there are such professional people and good neighbors.

Nick and Lisa Geren  
 Sandy

Schlaht, Bill Wardy (who took the time out from organizing this year's soccer), Mary and Ernie Marshal, Dave Farmer and John and Debi Day.

Bruce and Debra Hoard  
 Mt. Hood Body Shop

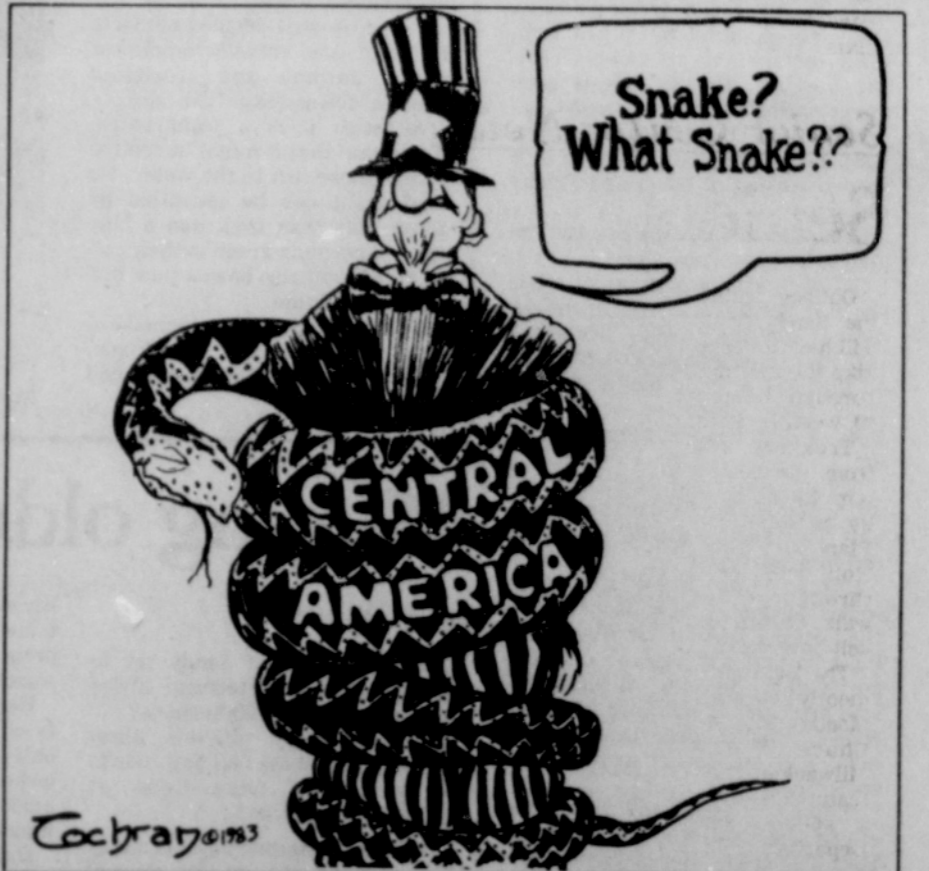
The Post asks that all letters to the editor be typed, double-spaced and signed. Deadline is noon, Tuesday. Letters should be accurate, free of libelous remarks and in good taste. This newspaper attempts to publish all letters it receives and may edit material lightly to conform to guidelines. Maximum length is 200 words.

### 'Thank you'

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make our move last weekend a success. Mt. Hood Body Shop now is at their new location. We have purchased the old Al Russell tire shop next to Calamity Jane's. This will enable us to expand our business into large trucks, buses, RV vehicles, boats and more.

We would like to thank all our past customers during the last five years, which has enabled us to expand our operations. Our hours are 8:30-6 Monday-Friday.

Special thanks to Barry Fretz and family (who took time out from his busy schedule with the Soap Box Derby), George and Connie Rathjen, Rodger and Denise Redmand, Terry and Rita Weibel, Phil and Sherry Schneider, Terry



### Senator's report:

## Homestead bill likely property relief

by STEVE STARKOVICH  
 State Senator, Dist. 14

Communication many times gets muddled between sender and receiver. This seems to be the case with the message voters were sending to the Oregon Legislature by nearly passing Ballot Measure 3 last fall. The message, I have no doubt, was that Oregonians are tired of paying rising property taxes. Yet I sometimes feel that some of my colleagues have lost sight of that message and think that we can get by this session without doing anything about property tax reform.

I do not agree with this "do nothing" attitude. One item I am strongly committed to this session is property tax relief for Oregon homeowners.

Currently, there are two ways that homeowners can receive property tax relief from the State. The first, known as the Homeowner and Renters Refund Program (HARRP), gives a rebate to homeowners and renters based on their household income. This rebate is only available to applicants with a



total household income of less than \$17,500. The second form of property tax relief is a direct subsidy paid by the state to local taxing districts to offset local property taxes. This program is known as the "state partial payment" program, and provides for a maximum of 30 percent of each taxpayer's tax bill to be paid by the state.

In his 1983-85 budget, the governor has recommended significant changes in these property tax relief programs. His proposal

would do away with the partial payment program and raise the income limit for the HARRP program to \$29,999 per household. So far this plan has received little support. As of last week, the House Revenue Committee singled out three property tax relief proposals for consideration. These proposals include:

(1) Homestead Exemption. This proposal would exempt the first \$20,000 value of a house from property taxes. For the most part, individuals owning homes assessed at lower values will realize the greatest benefit from this program. For homeowners with homes of higher value, the exclusion of \$20,000 will not significantly reduce their tax bill.

(2) Sales Tax. The sales tax currently being considered is a 4 percent tax on all goods and services except for such things as food, shelter and medical costs. The money raised through such a tax (an estimated \$800 million) would be used to offset property taxes. A rebate system would also be established for lower-income individuals, since a sales tax would put a disproportionate burden on these people.

(3) Expenditure Limitation. Under this program, local governments would be allowed to have a tax base no higher than the highest base since 1979. Growth in local governments would be tied to statewide personal income and local population growth. Budgets submitted to voters must be within the limitation; however, voters could override the limitation once a year at elections (held in May).

At present there is no consensus for any one of these proposals. Proponents and opponents of the various plans, however, have begun their assault on the Capitol.

Although I am leaning toward the first alternative (the "homestead exemption"), what I believe is most important is that we adopt some measure this session to assure that property taxpayers get relief.

I hope residents of District 14 will let me know what their preference is among these proposals. I intend to direct most of my time and effort during the closing months of the Legislature toward finding an equitable solution to the question of property tax relief.