

Draft registration: "Be informed"

By Stephanie Cole

As expected, registration for the draft began Monday, July 21, 1980 in local post offices across the nation. The criteria for draft registration is as follows: Registration for males born between 1960-1961 will proceed until August 1, 1980. Males born in 1962 will be required to register between January 5 and 11, 1981. After that all males will be required to register upon their 18th birthday.

The organization in charge of registration is a government agency called Selective Service System. According to the brochure, the objective of Selective Service is to "provide people for the armed forces." In the event of a national emergency, Selective Service must be ready to respond immediately in time of need. "The purpose of its registration is to improve this ability."

Selective Service System by its name may sound like one of your local buff-puff dating services, but in reality, you could be stuck on a blind date with the military unless you are fully aware of your rights and options as citizens of this country.

In Portland, there are several agencies that provide information and counseling for citizens concerned about draft registration. The Oregon branch of Coalition Against the Draft and Registration is a coalition of over 50 national peace, civil rights, womens, students and religious groups.

Other groups are the Urban League and the Northwest Draft Counseling Center. These agencies are also established to assist you in determining your own decisions. What are your options? In order to examine these options, a look was taken at brochures put out by both the Selective Service System and the Oregon (CARD) organization.

Is registration for the Draft necessary?

According to Selective Service, the purpose of registration is to have on file, the names and addresses of draft registers. In a national emergency, these names could be processed quickly and smoothly.

According to CARD, there are over 2 million persons already on active military duty and over a million more in the Reserves. If our country was in jeopardy, there would be more than enough volunteers. Also when the government wants to make war in foreign countries, draft registration is needed to eliminate the possibility that the American people might not volunteer to fight.

Will there be a Draft?

According to Selective Service, no one has been drafted in the military since 1972. A draft could not begin unless Congress enacted one. Currently, there are no plans for a draft.

CARD disagrees. There are already powerful members of Congress and the military calling for a peacetime draft. Congress has given Selective Service funds to select and train local draft board members who decide who will be drafted.

Will a Draft registration lead to war?

The Selective Service says, the addresses and names of those drafted, could be used in the event of a national emergency.

CARD, on the other hand says, peacetime drafts have always been followed by war. Carter announced the beginning of draft registration at the same time he advocated going to war for oil in the Persian Gulf.

Who would be called in the event of a Draft?

According to the Selective Service, any person not a member of the Armed Services could be selected through a lottery based upon his birthdate. Those who reach their 20th birthday in the year of the draft would be the first group called. Other groups would be called as necessary.

Not so says CARD. The draft has always discriminated against the poor and minorities. People who have power and money have always been able to get out of the draft. These advantages are taken by specific loopholes in the draft system.

If a Draft begins, then what are your rights/options?

The Selective Service says there are reasons which may permit postponements, deferments or exemptions to be granted:

1) A student in college. You may



Portland residents of many political persuasions, including former State Representative

Howard Willits, picketed the Portland Post Office protesting registration for the draft.

finish the semester, if a senior, you may finish the year.

2) If you are a high school student, you may stay in school until you graduate (up to age 20).

3) If your induction would create a hardship to your dependents, you may ask for a deferment.

4) If you are a student studying for the ministry or a minister of religion you may request an exemption.

5) If you hold deeply-religious, moral or ethical beliefs against participation in war in any form,

you could register as a conscientious objector. If found to be a conscientious objector, you would be required to serve in a non-combat area of the Armed Forces, or in a civilian public service job.

But according to CARD, the draft is a basic violation of freedom. It allows the government to have control of individual lives and forces them into war. The rights you would lose would be:

1) The right to live and work where you want.

2) The right to travel, or not as

you choose.

3) The right to marry and raise a family or live with other individuals of your choice.

4) The right to many forms of political protest and free speech.

In part II of "Be Informed," information will be given concerning your rights, draft resisters, what happens to them, how deferments are decided and what percentages of minorities receive deferments, what you can expect to happen if you register, and how to go about obtaining a (CO) classification.

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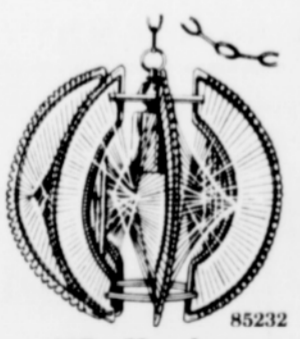
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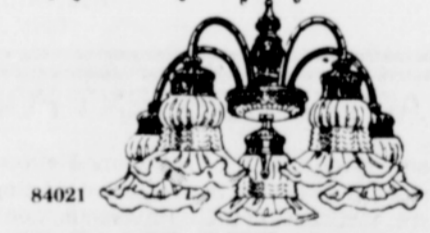
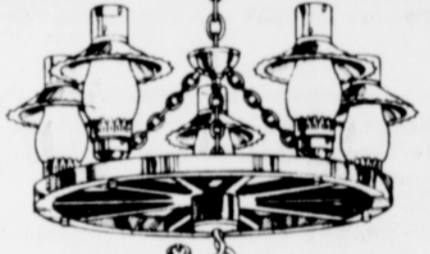
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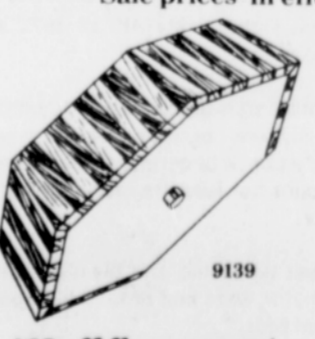
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