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the portland Spectator

HONOR LIBERTY VIRTUE

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The Portland Spectator accepts letters to the editor and commentaries from students, faculty and staff at the Portland State University. Please limit your letters to 300 words.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Portland Spectator is to show that a conservative philosophy is the proper way to approach issues of common concern. Our viewpoint originates from the following principles:

Individual Liberty

The Importance of Values and Customs

Free Market Economy and Free Trade

The Rule of Law

The Portland Spectator is published by the Portland State University Publication Board; and is staffed solely by volunteer editors and writers. The Portland Spectator is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations. In general the staff of the Portland Spectator share beliefs in the following:

-We believe that the academic environment should become again an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent arguments to be heard. The current environment of political correctness, political fundamentalism and mob mentality stifle genuine political debate.

-We support high academic standards.

-We believe that each student should be judged solely on his/her merits.

-We oppose the special or preferential treatment of any one person or group.

-We believe in an open, fair and small student government. .

-We oppose all efforts toward an equality of condition, for this violates any principle of justice that can maintain a free and civilized society.

-We oppose the welfare state that either benefits individuals, groups or corporations. The welfare state in the long run creates more poverty, dependency, and social and economic decline.

-We believe in the Free Market, and that the sole role of government in economic matters is to provide the institutional arrangements that allow the Free Market to flourish.

-We do not hate the rich; we do not idolize the poor.

-We believe in an activist U.S. foreign policy that seeks to promote and establish freedom, political and economic, all around the world.

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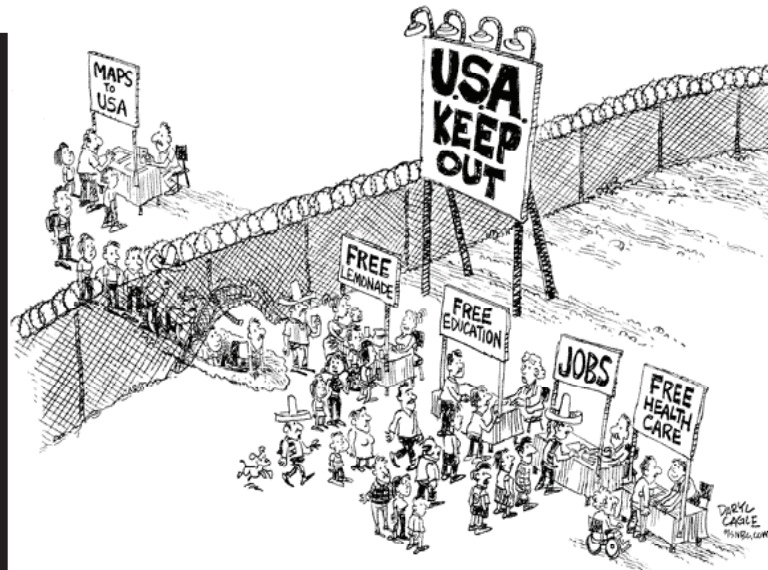
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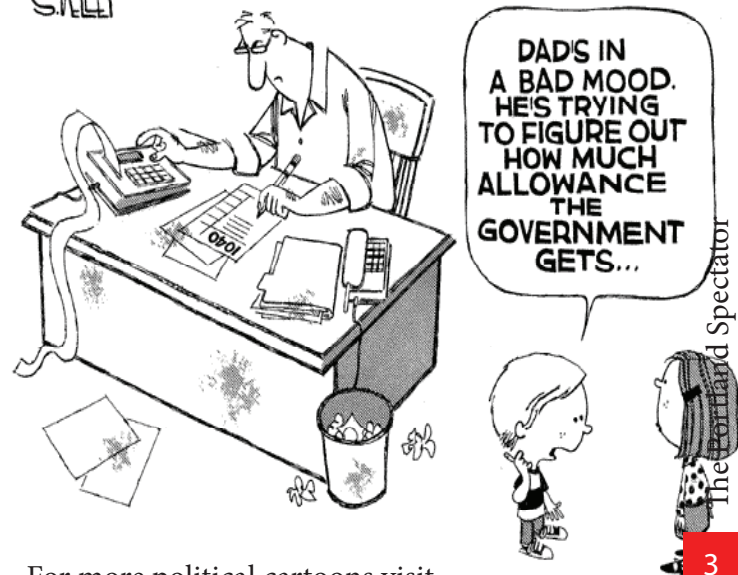
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SKILL THE TIMES-PICAYUNE © 2004



For more political cartoons visit
<http://cagle.msnbc.com/>

Letter to the Editor

To the editor

re: Persisting Double Standards Pertaining to Religion: the Cartoons, by Robert Hyett

We at the Vanguard welcome any interpretation of the cartoon, "How to Start a Riot (Part II)," which the Vanguard published Feb. 23.

However in this case, the writer does not simply offer his own interpretation, but rather attempts to infer artist's intent (the "point") of the cartoon. The writer could have easily asked someone from the Vanguard, or the artist himself about the intent of the cartoon (our office is right next door to that of the Spectator), but he did not.

The interpretation the writer offers, that the cartoon suggests "that cartoons of religious figures are a definite cause to riot," is one he is certainly entitled to, but not only is this one of the most simplistic interpretations of the cartoon possible, it is certainly not my personal interpretation of the cartoon. Nor is it appropriate to assume that it was the intent of the artist. Making such an assumption, especially without bothering to ask anyone involved, is simply poor journalism.

On another note, despite the title of the article, the writer commits the very sort of double standard he is criticizing. The remark, "Christians do not typically blow themselves up with the attempt at killing as many non-believers as possible," is essentially back-handed religious bigotry. Not only is this statement patently false, the implication is that this somehow sets Christians apart from other religions.

Muslims do not typically blow people up, nor do Jews, Hindus, or anyone else for that matter. But a few do. Just like a few Christians do. Take, for example, the National Liberation Front of Tripura, who have killed thousands of people in northeastern India in the name of Christianity.

I strongly believe in and support the most liberal interpretations of the meaning of "free speech," and agree with the writer that speech of any kind, even if offensive to some, "should not be censored either officially or thru (sic) threat of violence," which was a major part of our decision to publish our cartoon in the Vanguard. However, such violent responses to differing ideas are not limited to any particular race, religion or political ideology. To argue otherwise is to be extremely selective with history.

Matt Petrie

Editor-in-Chief

Portland State Vanguard

Sex... With Robots?

At what point do we halt robot development? Maybe when researchers begin discussing the new wave of robots who will act as... sexual partners? Julia Heiman, director of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction at Indiana University has released a statement informing consumers that by 2016, a multi-sensual sexual experience will be available... but it will be with a robot. This will mean that now, you can construct a sexual partner to the exact proportions and with the same urges as that of your fantasies. Should be interesting.

What Would You Put In Your Mouth?

Location: The Outback, Australia

Menu: Frogs, Leeches, Grasshoppers and Lizards

Ricky Megee survived the Outback for 3 months consuming nothing but frogs, leeches, grasshoppers and lizards. The result of his staggering stint in the wilderness was a depletion of his body weight as he was left with only half of what he started with.

Your Skin

300 years ago, books were bound with... skin? The book, which was recovered in England this past month, was bound using a system known as anthropodermic bibliopegy. This practice was once used to bind the account of murder trials as the skin of the accused and sentenced was connected to the crime for eternity. In addition to murder records, books were bound by the Nazis using the skin of Holocaust victims.

Pigs Representing Your Country

Your pig can now compete in the Olympics. Pig-racing, pig-swimming, and "pig-ball" are all the rage in Russia as piglets from various different countries join together for the annual games. With alternative sports on the rise, the pig Olympics can only get bigger.

Medicare is getting tight.

Now, Medicare recipients must show proof of United States citizenship in order to be seen as eligible for the services of Medicare. Today, 50 million individuals already receiving benefits will be forced to provide documentation of legal residency to continue treatments. In addition, each new applicant will have to show the same documentation. Over the next ten years these changes are projected to save the United States \$735 million. Though this will result in some citizens losing coverage because they are unable to provide the correct documentation, it will also begin to protect our country's systems from illegal immigrants.

Exxon...

Apparently, the cost of living after retirement is on a steep incline. Lee Raymond, the current Exxon chair is retiring and in doing so, receiving a \$400 million departure gift. While gas prices continue to rise, Raymond is separating from one of the country's gasoline giants and in the divorce taking severance packages and stock options among other perks. Nice paycheck.

Homeless and Public Areas

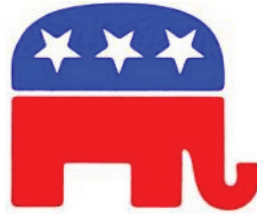
It is now considered cruel and unusual punishment to arrest homeless people sleeping in public areas in Los Angeles. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals made their ruling stating that the city ordinance stating that "no person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or public way" violates the 8th Amendment of the Constitution. Citizens of LA, be prepared to walk over sleeping persons on your way home from the bar.

Abusive Easter Bunnies?

Easter bunnies just are not the same as they used to be. In the spirit of the religious holiday, an Easter bunny was arrested in a Florida mall on counts of battery. When a customer complained that the photo booth was closed early the rabbit, who apparently was done with photographs for the day, reportedly struck the woman repeatedly.

Campus Update

DAN FLYNN TO SPEAK



April 11, 2006, Dan Flynn spoke to a Portland State audience in reference to his book, *Why the Left Hates America* presentation. Over 100 students showed up to listen to Flynn. Both sides of the issues were represented at this meeting and tempers soared. Flynn, who has been interviewed on Fox's O'Reilly factor, MSNBC, CNN, and has appeared as a guest on several hundred radio talk shows including our local talk show

host Lars Larson's conservative production, made available answers for students surrounding issues such as tolerance levels of individuals identified as liberals.

I F*ING VOTE



The Student Vote Coalition at PSU has been actively registering voters for the primary elections which will be held this next month. The Coalition registered 33,617 students last year and has hopes of registering even more this next fiscal year. The two week goal of registering 1,000 students on the PSU campus is half way over and volunteers have already reached over 600 students. Class wraps as well as contact-

ing students through tables set up in the park blocks have been the main methods of outreach as volunteers are continually pushing one another to register the most voters. It is important to recognize the individuals working for a better government and aiming at getting your voice heard at a state and national level.


FELLATIO AND BREAST CANCER

Not necessarily pertaining to PSU campus, but an interesting point that may be of interest to not only the male population but female population as well. CNN has just released a report stating that, "women who perform the act of fellatio on a regular basis, one to two times a week, may reduce their risk of breast cancer by up to 40 percent." This North Carolina University Study has begun to prove what doctors have suspected for years. The study included over 15,000 women and could possibly be a key in the reduction of breast cancer.

Crystal Joele Rea

Information derived from various state and national newspapers

Unemployment Systems are Killing America.



What is the purpose of our unemployment system? Unemployment systems in the United States were established to help bring people out of poverty. They were constructed to help its citizens in times of need and create a hope for a better tomorrow. Ideologically, this system is one with positive and constructive roots, but today it has become a flawed system that is accomplishing nothing but sucking the life out of government funds. In addition to supporting all the wrong people, it is a system that wastes millions of dollars each year in an attempt to reach a group of individuals in true need yet has fallen victim to those in search of an easy ride.

There are many different forms of aid for Americans in need; low income housing, food stamps, unemployment insurance and so on. Each of these can be beneficial in theory, but have been exploited to the point that they are no longer valuable to the greater good of society. It is because individuals have utilized these systems when they are not needed or have committed fraud in relation to these programs that they are now costing far more than what they are worth.

First, let us look at food stamps. Food stamps were created for low income families so that they have the ability to provide themselves with proper nutrition and maintain a relatively stable level of health. The monetary amount that one is eligible for varies depending on income and situation. The maximum allowance that is allotted to a single person household is \$152 each month. An 8 family household? \$912.

To receive food stamps, you simply must be making below the stated requirements to qualify. Unemployed? All you need to do is be "actively seeking work" to be eligible. Actively seeking work however, is subject to interpretation; and with offices as busy as they are today this requirement is rarely verified. Today, there are countless ways to get around the required paperwork and minimum requirements put forward by the USDA. This is becoming increasingly easy to do because the demand for services such as these far outweighs the manpower employed by the government to constructively deal with the issues. Further, students are receiving food stamps. I have friends who are fully supported by their parents, have absolutely no expenses that they must pay for themselves, and yet receive over \$100 a

month that allows them to drink on the weekends. I can assure you that this is not what our systems are in place to support. And this happens far more than you think.

Low income housing is also a promising system that fails in many ways. Once again, individuals are not reporting entirely accurate information and as a result low income housing options are not available to those that really need it. Further, is it ethical to provide low income housing? Is it fair to charge people drastically different prices for the same housing situation? In a way it is punishing those that work hard for what they earn, because once everything is said and done our systems make it so that the amount of remaining money (after paying for food, housing, etc) is equal despite some starting with far more.

What about unemployment insurance? The reality of our systems today is that individuals collecting unemployment are provided with enough benefits that they do not feel pressured to rush into finding a new job. I have had co-workers lose their job and turn around to collect more than they were making when employed. My co-workers did not begin looking for new jobs for months, but instead enjoyed lavish vacations, no work commitments, and shopping sprees. My roommate had the ability to purchase items such as a Coach purses (yes, multiple) with the leftover money from her unemployment check.

My statements are not intended to accuse everyone utilizing these systems of using them improperly, but it is to make people aware that there are horrendous flaws in the systems. These flaws should be of concern to each and every person who is actively working because it is the tax dollars that you work hard for that is supporting habits such as these. It is money going to illegal residents rather than supporting our failing schools. There do need to be systems in place in society so support those making a valid attempt to get his or her feet back underneath them. The systems that we currently live with, however, are in dire need of revitalization. If one works hard for what they have, they should have more. Legal residents of the United States should receive the benefits, because it is legal workers who are paying for them. Politicians should place an emphasis on issues such as these, because they are the issues that impact the well being of American citizens on a daily basis.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

What We Think You Shouldn't Miss on Campus

Portland State University College Republicans

Yes, Portland State does have its own chapter of College Republicans. Join other conservative students, such as yourself, to discuss what is happening politically in the world as well as the events that impact your campus. It is a great way to meet other students on campus and understand that there are far more conservatives at PSU than you may realize.

Website: www.gop.pdx.edu

To Be Announced - Lars Larson to Speak On Campus

The infamous Lars Larson will be visiting the Portland State campus. This event is sure to spark irritations and debate as the conservative speaker challenges the intellect and simplicity of liberal viewpoints. For more information, contact the PSU College Republicans.

It is time to VOTE: Primary Elections Held May 16th

It's that time... time to vote. Primary elections begin May 16th and are centered around elections that place individuals into the governor's office who make decisions concerning things such as your money and your education. Issues such as tuition increases, childcare in school systems, and need based aid are all points of discussion as hopeful candidates step forward. Your decision to participate in the primaries serves as your voice in reference to these issues. Whether you are a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or sit somewhere in between, it is vital to your educational experience that you VOTE. Don't miss the primaries.

Heads Up all Seniors

Are you graduating in June?

Do you like to PARTY??

Come to the Spring Graduation Party at Halocene!!!

June 15th starting at 9pm

Sponsored by KPSU

Hot music all night long!

Lots of beer!

For more information, contact

Jessica Lyness at lyness@pdx.edu

Everyone will be there, it's time to celebrate!

Want to Write for the Spectator?

We are always looking for new ideas and new writers, so if you are interested stop by our office or e-mail us at portlandspectator@gmail.com

IMMIGRATION

An Issue of Enforcing Existing Laws to Close the Porous Borders of America

by Amanda Marie Newberg

"It is estimated there are around 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States. They did not get here because of their ingenuity, they got here because we have porous borders. Our porous borders are a result of under funded border patrol and the companies who like the idea of hiring cheap labor."

Our country is in the midst of a great international debate. America is becoming increasingly polarized day by day and there does not appear to be any relief on the way. Instead of people becoming more open to compromise, people are taking sides. This is not an issue strictly concerning our Congressmen but is centered on every day Americans. Hopefully, we are all aware of the massive protests occurring around the country on a daily basis. It is important to recognize the events occurring in our country since every issue surrounding immigration impacts every individual residing in America, legal or not.

There was a protest centered around these very issues causing nationwide outbursts in downtown Portland on the 11th of April. Such as is the case in the rest of the United States, the majority of the protestors involved in the Portland protest were Latino youth. It is interesting to note that many of the protests that have been causing a scene were organized on Myspace.com. High school students have come together and formed large groups who have skipped school to protest issues that many do not even

understand. These protestors, armed with Mexican flags, have proceeded to take over highways and other highly visual locations in densely populated areas such as Los Angeles. Youth in Portland

acted obscenely and disrespectfully as they flipped off and cursed at adults who disagreed with them about what should happen to illegal immigrants. Many others marched down the street scream-



ing, "Si, se puede", or "Yes, we can." One enlightened youth carried a sign stating, "All Europeans are illegal!!" And to emphasize the point, did not even properly spell illegal.

As tempers reach their maximum levels, it is important to ask what exactly instigated this emotional reaction? The answer is House Resolution 4437. This resolution, which addresses a variety of topics, boasts the most controversial aspects of the bill being the following: making it a felony to be in the country illegally and penalizing those who knowingly assist or encourage illegal immigrants to stay in the country.

During this past week, the Senate has been in debate as they shake out their version of an immigration bill. Their attempted compromise did nothing but complicate the issue at hand. Rather than reach a solution that caters to each group involved, it effectively divided immigrants into three categories. The first group created by the Senate included illegal im-

migrants who have been in the country for five to seven years. Those residing in the U.S. for this length of time were granted legal status and were put on a fast track for citizenship. It did come with requirements such as the payment of back taxes, fines, and speaking the English language (or at least learning how to spell). The second group included those who have been here for two to five years. These people must travel to a border crossing or international airport and leave the country for only a few hours with guaranteed access back into the U.S. Those who have been here for less than two years will have to leave the country permanently. If these new laws are not confusing enough on their own, the bill stating these requirements is 471 pages in length.

Everyone has his or her own opinion on what the "real" problem is in relation to immigration. Is giving amnesty to those who break the law wrong? Can our economy survive if all the illegal im-

migrants leave? How should we punish the American companies who continue to hire illegal immigrants? Should illegal immigrants receive in-state tuition at American universities? Though all question must be addressed, the last question hits home here in Oregon.

"Tuition equity" as it is known in Oregon is an issue that has been widely debated in the state legislature and Oregon University System. Should the children of illegal immigrants in Oregon receive the benefits of in-state tuition? There are two sides to this argument. Number one, it is not their fault that they were brought into Oregon. They have graduated from Oregon high schools, have completed the same educational requirements as United States citizens, they speak English, and they cannot go back home because their home is here. Should we punish them for the decisions of their parents? Then, such as any major cause of debate, there is the other side. Why should an illegal immi-



grant receive a benefit that a U.S. citizen who is a student of another state does not receive? At the federal level this is called "The Dream Act." It was offered as an amendment to the recent Senate immigration bill and it passed on a voice vote. Could this be a preview of what could happen in Oregon?

If there is one thing that sets the United

States apart from most of the world it is our track record with "rule of law." We have a keen respect for recognizing and enforcing the rule of law at the local, state, and federal levels of society. Obviously there are exceptions and flaws in the system, but no one can deny that America strives to punish those who break the law and reward those who do

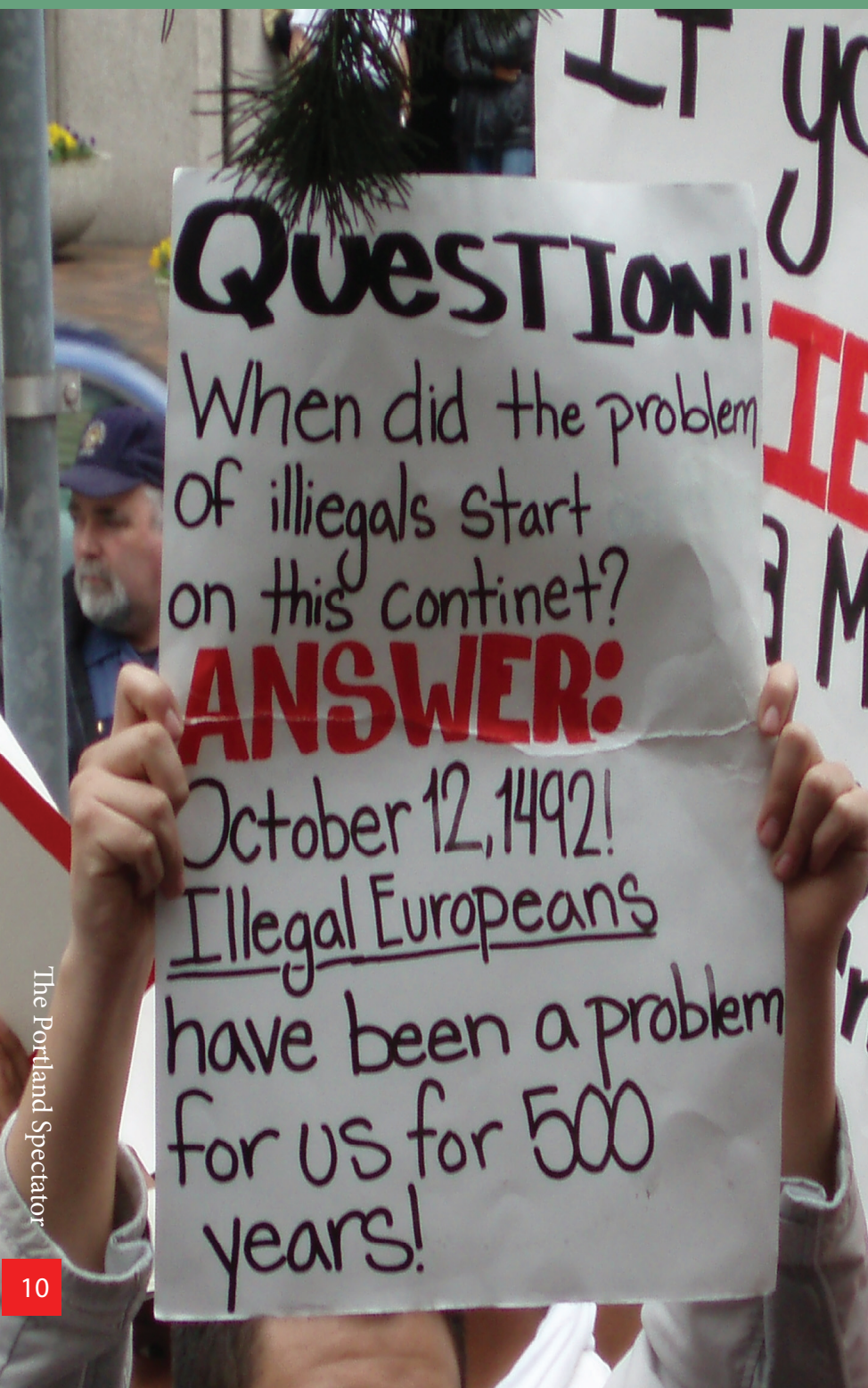
not. We have an intricate system of laws which thousands of individuals in our legal system try to make work successfully on a daily basis. Americans should feel safe, or at least know there is a route they can take when they feel injustice as occurred. Bottom line is that immigrants are illegal. They are destroying the systems of society.

The legal system of this country provides its citizens with safety, but Congress does not see law in this exact light. We do not necessarily need any more laws in this country, but should fix and enforce those that already exist. Legislation does nothing but continue to complicate the issues at hand as politicians on both sides are primarily focused on scoring points, especially in a tense mid-term election years. We need enforcement.

It is estimated there are around 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States. They did not get here because of their ingenuity, they got here because we have porous borders. Our porous borders are a result of under funded border patrol and the companies who like the idea of hiring cheap labor. Instead of creatively figuring out how we can get around current law, our lawmakers should be focused on how we can enforce the law that currently exists and in doing so stay true to America's legacy.

For the record, I am not saying illegal immigrants are not human beings I am saying that illegal immigrants are breaking our laws. There are hundreds of immigrants waiting in line to enter this country through legal means, many of who are living in the same if not worse predicament than those immigrants who are already here. How about we continue to be the America we all know, love, and are proud to be a part of. How about we continue to be the America based on the principles of the rule of law and inclusion of all colors and cultures. This is a country built and maintained by immigrants and their descendants, but at the end of day all legal residents should all identify as one thing: Americans.

Please note the signs used by protestors. They cannot seem to agree on a proper spelling of illegal. English may be a problem here.



Oregon Federation of College Republicans Conference Update

Account by Amanda Marie Newberg

The 2006 Oregon Federation of College Republicans State Convention convened April 7th through the 9th in Newport, Oregon. This year, the conference was slightly different than in years past. Over the weekend, our own College Republican President Mario Campbell was elected co-chairman of the Oregon Federation of College Republicans for 2006-2007. In addition to this honor, the weekend featured multiple notable speakers in addition to some surprises.

On Friday, in a black tie dinner setting, the College Republicans witnessed one of the most intriguing gubernatorial debates this year has offered up to this point. After outlining Oregon's need for agriculture-friendly legislation and highlighting key details of our state's farm economy, the floor was opened up to audience questions. Upon the arrival of the 4th question of the evening, the all-important question was asked, "If you were a fruit, what fruit would you be and why?" Now we know once and for all that Jason Atkinson would be a pear, Kevin Mannix would be a pinot noir grape, and Ron Saxton would be an orange. And they say Republicans have no sense of humor.

Moving beyond the light hearted questions of the evening, perhaps the most memorable part of the night was Jason Atkinson's closing speech. In his speech he highlighted the importance of taking risks. While the candidates and the College Republicans watched perplexed, Atkinson pulled off his suit coat and draped it over the podium. After a short pause, he began to un-button his dress shirt - to which the audience's confusion grew. Next, Senator Atkinson pulled open his dress shirt and exposed his "Viva La Ronald Reagan Revolucion!" shirt, which he had purchased from the College Republicans during the Dorchester Conference.

The night was a wonderful introduction to the weekend to come. In a world where seriousness seems to overshadow the light-hearted side of politics, the evening was lot of fun for the candidates as well as the College Republicans. The event was the largest youth gathering the governor-hopefuls had spoken to on the campaign trail thus far. Ron Saxton, Kevin Mannix, and Jason Atkinson each enjoyed meeting all the young activists as one of them will greatly benefit by this new presence of support during the general election campaign races.

On Saturday morning, the conference was opened as the College Republicans heard from House Majority Leader Wayne Scott, Representative Alan Brown, and Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli. Each speaker made a point to note that they were inspired to see so many College Republicans, and the CR's were equally fascinated by the poise and command held by the speakers.

After the day's opening remarks, the College Republicans broke into four different groups and entered into various training sessions. In one session, Representative Linda Flores and Representative Andy Olson articulated the main dynamics of door-to-

door campaigning. Another small group featured Oregon's GOP National Committeeman Solomon Yue, who spoke of RNC and ORP strategy utilizing a power point display (even the big guys use basic technology). Bob Avery, the legendary GOP Chairman of Lane County, taught a "Leadership 101" seminar that detailed the qualities of certain leaders in the history of America. In the last station, the College Republicans were captivated by Jeff Grossman's presentation on the constitution, which gave them a deeper understanding of America's greatest document.

After a lunch break, the College Republicans massed together to support Representative Alan Brown - a Republican with the largest demographic disadvantage out of any other district in the state. The storm of Republicans then broke loose to walk up and down the streets of Newport, knock on doors, and distribute literature in support of Representative Alan Brown and candidate for Lincoln County Commissioner Kevin Pfannes.

After the door-to-door campaigning, it was time for a break. The College Republicans relaxed at a barbecue for several hours networking and reviewing the events of the day. Afterward, the night was concluded with a grand finale of prominent speakers: Oregon Republican Party Chairman Vance Day, District 4 Congressional Candidate Jim Feldkamp, and Talk Radio Host Lars Larson. The Portland State delegation had a successful weekend and learned a lot about the persons and issues currently being brought to the table in Oregon. This host of valuable knowledge has now been brought back to our campus and it is the hope of the attendants of the conference to put this new knowledge into play. Come to our next meeting to find out how you can get involved in events like this!! Meeting times for the PSU College Republicans may be found at <http://gop.pdx.edu> or through contacting President Mario Campbell at psucrs@gmail.com.



What *President Bush*

By Chris Morrow

President Bush recently has seen his approval rating drop in various polls to the lowest number to this point in his political reign. What we can conclude from the low approval rating of our President is that he is not being polled on his presidency, but the rhetoric that surrounds every decision he makes. Why do I say this? Simply because our President has done many things right for our country, and the world, during his presidency that are not reflected in his approval rating. I am here to enlighten, or remind you, of what President Bush has done right in his Presidency.

Economy

During the era of President Bush our economy has recovered from a recession and has since been on the upswing. In the beginning of his presidency, our economy experienced the dot-com bust and corporate accounting scandals, leaving the Dow Jones at a 2002 low of 7286.27. As of April 6, 2006, the Dow closed at 11,216.50, a number rivaling the highs seen prior to the recession. As noted on the White House website, "Because the President believes that the American people can spend their hard-earned money better than the Federal government can," President Bush promoted and pushed the passing of the tax cuts on dividends and capitals gains, affecting business owners, and lowered taxes for individuals and families. By imposing these tax cuts, the framework for economic growth was laid, keeping \$880 billion in the hands of the American people.

Due to the innovative thinking of President Bush and his administration, we are witnessing historic achievements of economic success. The economic plan of the Bush administration has fueled the creation of 5.1 million new jobs since August

2003, placing our national unemployment level at 4.7%. The United States has not seen unemployment at this level since the 1950s. Going hand-in-hand with our historically low unemployment rate, our economy has been growing for the past 17 quarters, with our GDP increasing 3.5% in 2005 alone. However, rather than recognize the positives, the headlines of our media installations negatively focus on our national budget deficit. Truth is that during 2005, with the costly Global War on Terror and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, our national budget deficit has decreased by \$95 billion to \$318 billion, down from \$413 billion in 2004. The data, part of our nation's major economic indicators, clearly proves President Bush has implemented the right economic plan for America.

Liberation

President Bush's belief in free markets extends to his belief in free society. With 9/11 as the instigating factor, we are in Afghanistan and Iraq to promote democracy over terrorism and tyranny.

The Taliban is known to have close ties to the same terrorist who masterminded 9/11, Osama bin Laden. The close relationship started as an alliance between bin Laden's al-Qaeda and the Taliban to the point that bin Laden's 055 Brigade was integrated with the Taliban army between 1997 to 2001. Extending beyond strategic alliances, bin Laden's son married Taliban leader Mullah Omar's daughter. By aligning with bin Laden's al-Qaeda, it is clear that the Taliban sought the same terrorist ideals as bin Laden himself. As the newly formed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (the Middle East's nearest form to our American democracy) aims to build 2000 new schools in the country in 2006, the Taliban is focused on attacks against de-

mocracy, as they more recently have killed two Afghan intelligence officials in the last 24 hours. By liberating Afghanistan from the Taliban, President Bush is right in ousting the terrorist-harboring regime that held the very terrorist who is responsible for leading the attacks resulting in 2,967 American deaths from 9/11.

Iraq has been liberated from a tyrannous dictator in Saddam Hussein, yet President Bush now receives strong, heated criticism for making the executive decision. It must be mentioned that many critics believe we are not fighting terrorism in Iraq and many American and Iraqi deaths have resulted from President Bush's misguided decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The fact is that U.S. military commanders, who do wake to face the violence in Iraq, have confirmed terrorists are in Iraq killing Iraqis and Americans. To say we are not fighting terrorists in Iraq is itself misguided. Would an Iraqi seeking a democracy kill a fellow Iraqi seeking the same thing? Furthermore, would an Iraqi seeking democracy kill the American soldier, or aid worker, who is there to assist in the development of the Iraqi democracy? The logical answer is that the Iraqi seeking democracy would not, but the terrorist seeking their radical, inhumane ideology would. That being said, I refer to Andrew Bolton of the Herald Sun in Australia when he says, "And so the terrorists have won one victory at least. They have made many in the West forget that the price of 'peace' under Saddam was far higher in that grimmest of measures -- deaths each day." Bolton makes a superior point when he concretely establishes in his article "Body of Evidence," that Saddam was the cause of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths. Cutting through the rhetoric, the facts are that Iraqis have been freed of tyranny, and right now Iraqis and Americans

hHasDoneRight

fight terrorists trying to promote their radical, inhumane ideology in Iraq.

Whether you agree or disagree with the current military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, the undeniable truth is that under our President's leadership we have liberated and provided the foundation for democracy in these two countries.

Ideas

President Bush is a man of ideas. Without diving into details, you will see that the Bush administration has put domestic issues at the forefront along with the Global War on Terror. President Bush's agenda as found on the White House website includes:

- * "No Child Left Behind"
- * Portable Health Savings Accounts
- * Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit
- * Personal Savings Accounts
- * The Advanced Energy Initiative
- * Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- * Patriot Act

This list of initiatives, enacted or proposed, proves the President is taking action on his ideas. As can be expected, much criticism has surrounded every

single one of these initiatives, which has stalled much of the progress President Bush strives to make in our country. What we are seeing is that many hardball issues such as Social Security Reform and Comprehensive Immigration Reform, which the president aims to take care of, are stymied once they reach the public by both the media installations and our elected leaders on Capitol Hill. The point everyone must take into account is that many Presidents, like Bill Clinton, have ignored the prevalent issues during their presidency and passed them onto the next President because they were afraid to deal with them and did not have the capacity to do so. President Bush is taking on the prevalent issues of our time, and is right in taking on every issue and promoting his ideas and solutions through initiatives. It is absolutely essential that the Bush opposition join President Bush in taking action and stop criticizing his initiatives, thus putting at the forefront of the United States agenda bi-partisan solutions.

Right Man For Our Time

President Bush is faced with some of the toughest issues in the history of the

United States in the Global War on Terror, the country's major domestic issues, and the state of our economy. In each decision he makes President Bush displays resolve, making him the right man for the job. Without resolve, America would cut and run from the Global War on Terror, leaving millions of Iraqi and Afghani citizens at the will of terrorists. President Bush would leave all major domestic issues such as Social Security and Comprehensive Immigration Reform to our next president. Furthermore, without resolve in his economic policies, President Bush would have raised taxes on American citizens to cut the deficit. Our President's resolve is to be commended as he is taking action to change our country and the world for better, not "flip-flopping" along with the opposition.

Again, our President is not getting a fair shake. When we see the President's approval rating, we see how the media and the Liberal opposition have effectively clouded the facts and fails to recognize what has been done right by President Bush. President Bush is the right man to lead our country through this uncharted, defining moment in history. In his own words, President Bush tells us his agenda and the legacy he will leave:

"The idealsthat have inspired our history—freedom, democracy, and human dignity—are increasingly inspiring individuals and nations throughout the world.... We choose leadership over isolationism, and the pursuit of free trade and open markets over protectionism. We choose to deal with challenges now rather than leaving them for future generations. We fight our enemies abroad instead of waiting for them to arrive in our country. We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it; to influence events for the better instead of being at their mercy."

President George W. Bush
Letter Introducing The National Security Strategy
March 16, 2006

The Hypocrisy of the LEFT

By Mark Egglestein

Tolerance and appeasement: these are the two most loved characteristics of the political left in America. The Democratic party of America has determined their policy toward all things shall be tolerating those that would harm you and appease those that support you. Although these are typically applied to foreign policy issues, the same methodology is apparent in local politics as well.

The members of Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) have championed to:

1. The lowering of tuition!
2. The reduction of text book costs!
3. Reduce the burden of student Debt!

On one hand they will attempt to do all three and on the other hand they will attempt to reverse the same things. During the 2005 Oregon legislature, OSPIRG lobbied state legislatures to reduce the tuition burden on students across the state. In their attempt, they tried to pull as much political weight as they could. Unfortunately, the political weight of OSPIRG is tantamount to that of an Olsen twin and the end result was merely a tuition freeze. Where is the hypocrisy? While they were lobbying the state to reduce the cost of tuition, they were at Portland State lobbying for increased student fees.

If OSPIRG had succeeded in reducing the tuition burden upon PSU students, we would not have reaped the benefits because OSPIRG had already transplanted members of its organization onto the Student Fee Committee (SFC). Control of the SFC allows them to have control over the amount of money collected by the school for the purpose of student organizations. We saw the effect of phase two of their plan in the February 22nd issue of the Vanguard (<http://www.dailyvanguard.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2006/02/22/43fcd7c8255e1>). They raised student fees \$30 per term, which equates to \$90 per year for a typical student.

Congratulations OSPIRG! On one hand you coddle the students of PSU by saying you are working hard for them by lobbying the state and with the other hand you will attempt to decimate their pocket books. The question becomes, what's the big

deal if OSPIRG is successful in both attempts? A typical student will wonder this because they are not seeing a net change in the funds being removed from either their bank account or their student loans for the purpose of paying for school. The problem is the allocation of the funds. **Student fees go to student groups whereas tuition dollars go to education expenses.**

Had OSPIRG been successful in both attempts, we would have seen a reduction in services via the reduction in student funding of the college's primary purpose of educating students and an increase in a tertiary purpose of college of connecting students with others. The net result of OSPIRG's work would have been to decimate the already faltering economy that is PSU.

"Let us not think that this case study of OSPIRG is representative of a single group, but rather a result of ideology that tries to determine facts through feelings."

Let us not think that this case study of OSPIRG is representative of a single group, but rather a result of ideology that tries to determine facts through feelings. On a daily basis we see that the majority power in any level of government is corrupt and

unable to address the fiscal concerns facing their constituency. On the local level, look no further than the tram debacle facing OHSU and the city of Portland, the failed attempt at light rail, and the streetcars. Coincidentally, the solution to all three is more buses.

The only solution to the more general problem of mismanagement of public funds seems to be a spending limit based upon population growth and inflation. Once government has strict budget they will have to reform how to spend the public dollar. If raising taxes is not the first option, we will see real reforms in the allocation of dollars throughout the state.

Rather than spending it on failed projects, government will have to improve infrastructure and allocate it to schools first. When government is forced to listen to the people we have a government that is working properly. I implore the legislature of Oregon to listen to the voters: We do not support higher taxes! This has been emphatically stated multiple times over the past 10 years. Lastly, Let us all hope that the people running OSPIRG will never control anything more than student fees, else the entire state will see the horrific results of their policies.

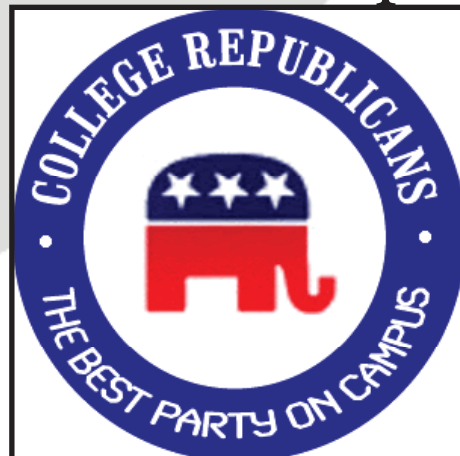


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HEALTHCARE...

A Right or a Privilege?

Editorial by Cameron Turner

In the political climate of today where entitlement seems to have replaced ethics, it seems fitting to dredge up the national healthcare debate in order to create yet another addiction to yet another government program. This is the adage and mantra heard coming from uninformed, party line walking Republicans and conservatives. Before you mistake me for something I am not remember that I am the senior editor of this conservative paper for a reason... I am a staunch conservative! As a staunch, informed conservative I recognize the need for limited government yet understand that sometimes government involvement is appropriate; healthcare is such an issue. Healthcare is a right that should be afforded to all American citizens (legal citizens, not illegal immigrants). One reason (amongst others) is that conservatives are preventing the right to healthcare implementation through a single-payer system (do not call it socialized medicine; its not).

Many conservatives are oblivious to the problem and some have even asked me what the problem was with the healthcare delivery system. Nothing is really wrong beyond the fact that 45 million Americans, even many middle class Americans, cannot access or afford basic health insurance not to mention millions more with inadequate, insufficient insurance. I could go on to prove my point for why a single-payer system is in order for our great country by talking about our health indicators and our pathetic ranking. I could talk about one of the leading causes of bankruptcy being the inability of the patient to repay medical bills.

I could talk about the “spending down” by our senior citizens, vulnerable members of our society, to appear broke in order to be eligible to afford better Medicare benefits. I could talk about the reimbursement rates being low enough that physicians cannot even afford to take Medicaid or Medicare patients. I could talk about the serious effects skyrocketing healthcare costs are having on small business and even large corporations; even one of America’s biggest companies General Motors cannot stay competitive with other worldwide car makers because of healthcare costs. I could talk until I am blue in the face about the extensive problems our healthcare system is facing but I will leave that for my series of editorials on healthcare yet to come, stay tuned.

Instead, I am going to start from the beginning with the begging question, “Is healthcare a right or a privilege?” The answer is more complicated than maybe as Conservatives you first realized; let me explain. Albeit is in terrible, irrevocable condition yet the educational system in this country is a right. A right the vast majorities of conservatives and liberals uphold and believe to be appropriate given its utility. After all, it would not be as great of a country if everyone ran around ignorant and completely uneducated. Furthermore, if you like it or not, education is a right. But why is healthcare restricted to being a privilege? It shouldn’t be, in principal at least. However, what keeps me from saying anything beyond principals is my fear of what will happen to the principal when the government actually gets their hands on it. Attitude

reflects leadership and I am deeply concerned that my vision for a basic coverage for all Americans structured as a single-payer system will turn into a monster that will do the same thing it set out to end under our current system. In other words, under liberal leadership the promise of better healthcare could turn into a tax burden so heavy Americans could not afford it. Healthcare is a right, but our government squanders money so ferociously it will drag Americans back into a healthcare crisis. Even though education is a right our systems have become some of the most inefficient educational systems in the world. Americans pay about \$10,000 per child per year and our kids are consistently behind other industrialized countries despite the disproportionate spending. This failure on the other fundamental right – education -- is like a silver bullet in the gun of conservatives. If the government and special interests, mainly teachers unions, have done such a disservice to our kids, what would stop them from disappointing us with another fundamental right like healthcare.

Healthcare is a right and the best way to deliver healthcare is through a single-payer system. However, our government has no track record of responsible spending and until conservatives are denied the free use of these legitimate arguments, which can only be stifled by success in the programs our government created, our rights as Americans to healthcare will never be realized. My advice to the liberals and Democrats is to urge your political leaders to reform our other government programs that are bankrupt and inefficient. Education and social security are in horrendous condition and conservatives, whom you need to come along to achieve national healthcare reform, will never agree to another government program of this size given the handling of our other government afforded rights.

This is the first editorial of a series in reference to healthcare systems in America. Look for Cameron's next piece in June's issue of the Portland Spectator.

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Why the Left HATES America

A Day of the Leftist showing their Unacceptable Colors

account by Mario Campbell

On April 11, 2006, Dan Flynn spoke to a Portland State audience about his book, *Why the Left Hates America*. Flynn addressed the issue of usual intolerance exhibited by the political leftists. Dan Flynn is accustomed to speaking on campus where he regularly faces off with book-burners, mobs shouting at him, and attempts of fanatical officials to ban his lectures. Dan Flynn has written articles which have appeared in the *Boston Globe* and *The Washington Times* in addition to many other widely recognized publications. He has been interviewed on Fox's O'Reilly Factor, MSNBC, CNN, and has appeared as a guest on several hundred radio talk shows including our local talk show host Lars Larson's conservative radio show. Flynn currently has two books available for purchase, the one previously mentioned as well as *Intellectual Morons: How Ideology Makes Smart People Fall for Stupid Ideas*. Basically, Dan Flynn is a

conservative with tremendous resume.

As the lecture began I noticed that there was a wide variety of people that had showed up for the speech. Some showed that they were ready to lash out and attack Dan Flynn while some showed respect for his ideas and some completely agreed. Nonetheless, as he stood giving his lecture, some of the aforementioned people with the intent to lash out did so which stuck me as hypocritical. From my understanding, the political left is supposed to be the type of people who are tolerant of others; they are self proclaimed tolerant people. Many of those liberals hell bent on trashing him and his speech didn't appear as tolerant of true diversity—diversity of thought—as self described. Nonetheless, Flynn dismantled this longstanding notion through facts based on the actions of the left throughout history. It did not take much more, however, than to look around the room at the intolerant haters

in the room we all sat in to see his points being proven. Incessant interruptions and yelling certainly made it difficult to hear but Flynn was composed and presented effectively.

Flynn pointed out that the left speaks only of negatives of our country rather than any positives. He pointed out that when someone on the left speaks inappropriately and intolerantly the left never speak out against them; they sometimes even embrace them simply because they stand on the left. The ideas of Ward Churchill seem to be great evidence of such neutral, at times embracing, attitude toward a man who speaks of those murdered on 9/11 as “little Eichmans”. When a conservative or right leaning official says something that is even mildly offensive the witch hunt is on and everyone including average citizens are calling for resignations.

Flynn also brought up sensitive issues



that professors have shown to be significant in history. When first coming to America, we were a society built upon standards which we now see to be inhumane and intolerable. There was slavery, women could not vote, and there was false equality. Despite these imperfections, we had a lot going for us as a country. What about the fact that anybody could vote in the first place? The fact that the people of America had representation in the government was a positive, especially when compared to the rest of the world.

America is the leader of Planet Earth. Last time I checked, many of the things that have brought us from a less civilized state to a civilized society of convenience and equality have been headed by Americans...all Americans; not just the left, though they seem to think they are the only "progressive" thinkers.

Immigration has come to light recently as a hot topic among each individual residing in this country. Why is this issue so important on such a large scale? Because so many people want to have the benefits that we have as American citizens. Benefits we have and yet take for granted. Whether it is economical benefits, the ability to send money back to ones home land, or being able to live with the freedoms given to American citizens such as starting your own company and prospering from your hard work and decisions you make in life, America is the place to go find these benefits. How many first generation Americans can you think of who own companies in this country? It could be the local Mexican taco cart in

your neighborhood, or maybe a famous foreign food restaurant in downtown Portland. The point is, this is a land of opportunity yet we continually condemn it.

What about the fact that a plain, "normal" citizen has the ability to hold a seat in government and has power enabling him or her to make decisions that impact America as a whole? Arnold Schwarzenegger is a current example of just this; an immigrant who came to America for a better future for himself. He came to this country identifying our freedoms which his country did not have. Now a citizen by legally entering and waiting for his papers to be processed, Arnold is Governor of one of the major economic back bones in America. Dan Flynn writes on his website, www.flynnfiles.com, that "In America, protestors shout: Let us stay. Elsewhere, protestors whisper: Let us leave." The majority of those want to come here, to America.

Dream. Such a simple word; so simple, yet incredibly powerful. The American Dream-- To make something of yourself and create a future for your family. This country offers so much, yet the left pushes their ideology on us with negativity and fails to recognize everything that is going right in America. They strive to show how "evil" this country is everyday.

The American economy is growing at a rapid pace, unemployment is staying low, and wages are increasing. These are all statistical facts that you can find from the U.S. Department of Labor, and all these facts show that something is going right

in our country. Other countries now have democracies in which the people have control of their government; and all because of us. Afghanistan and Iraq now have free elections where the people are not only in control, but can be a part of their country's decision making process. Is spreading freedom to the oppressed that bad? We do not force upon others our democratic ways; heck, we are not even have a pure democratic government ourselves. We are a Republic with a strong democratic tradition. As a Republic we simply allow the oppressed their freedom from dictators.

We have done well in the creation of this nation we have the privilege of calling home. We can be proud to live here. We can be proud of our ancestors who have created this great country out of nothing. Nothing in life is perfect bliss, but everyday we can, at the very least, say thanks (to God) and keep moving forward in a positive direction to fix our minor kinks as a country – but lets us move forward as a unified front. Think of what we complain about in this country. Think about the freedoms we have as American citizens. We should be so grateful for having so much with so little true negativity. So to all of you leftist out there, and those of you who say you are not Leftist but still think negatively about this wonderful country, take to heart what you have. I challenge you to broaden your horizons to learn about the opportunities our citizens possess that other countries would kill for.



What Constitutes *Happiness?*

by Crystal Joele Rea

What constitutes happiness? This is perhaps the most loaded question one could ask. Happiness has an endless number of definitions and connotations each meaning something entirely different to each individual. Happiness to me is a smile. It is having the ability to breathe and know that everything is going to be alright; it is a feeling you experience throughout your entire body as you allow yourself to relax.

No matter how you define the gray area that is happiness, it is a state that the majority of mankind is continually striving to achieve. It seems to me that in the constant push to achieve this word, we keep getting lost in the world of development, technology, and advancement. Don't get me wrong, I believe these factors are all vital to a successful culture, but I also believe they have begun to overshadow what it means to be happy.

This past summer I spent a month in Costa Rica participating in community development and conservation work. An eight hour public bus ride out of San Jose and an additional hour in the back of a rickety blue truck (or at least blue where paint once existed) later, I found myself as far away from my typical realm of comfort as I could have ever imagined.

Since my level of Spanish is that which I obtained my sophomore year of high school, the following weeks would be filled with relatively continual observation on my part.

About an hour and a lot of Spanish that I did not understand later, I found myself standing in the humid rain staring into the front room of my host family's "casa." You would make the automatic assumption that since I could see inside I would be looking through the front door; this would be an incorrect assumption.

Chicken wire served as the windows. Entering the house I was greeted by cracked cement floors, a couch without cushions, walls that did not extend to the ceiling, a bucket of water to shower with, a fire to cook on outside, and a room I was to share with my host sister and two brothers. After growing up in West Linn, it is an understatement to say that I experienced a bit of culture shock.

While thinking in the back of my mind that there was no possible way to survive this experience, I grabbed my Spanish dictionary and the few communication skills I did possess and began the broken conversations that would become a normality with my host family for the remainder of my stay. One cliché did prove to be true that night – a smile is universal. As we laughed over my pathetic attempts at the Spanish language, I discovered a common ground requiring few if any words: baseball. Within minutes we had set the bases (the couch was first base, the laundry basket second, and the beam holding up the house third), found a ball and makeshift bat and begun the game. For about an hour and a half we tumbled around the living room not as people from different cultures, but as kids playing a game while communicating





ness, then I can promise that this (and not Disneyland) was the happiest place on earth. But what is its root? What must happen for this extreme contentment with life to come into existence? As I watched my host family go about their daily lives, I realized that it is the relationships they develop with others that serves to occupy their time.

My host sister (like my sister in real life) was absolutely beautiful. She was the girl that every boy in the town would have killed to end up with. Not only was she beautiful on the outside, but the person she was on the inside was exquisite. Every night various boys would stop by to see my sister and each conversation took place in the doorway of the house so her father could keep an eye on his daughter. Initially, I thought that this procedure was completely odd, but I soon realized how traditional it actually was. Really, the majority of their culture was traditional. Men are the breadwinners and the wives take care of the home and watch over the families. Children obey and respect their elders and spend as much time as is necessary to help the mother complete the tasks of the day; and still gender roles exist as girls help with things such as cooking and boys chop wood and tend to the plantation.

Perhaps a traditional family is the key to happiness, but I do not believe the answer is so simple. Another thing I learned in Costa Rica is that you do not need video games, 500 television stations, or the nicest car

through laughter and smiles.

As I fell asleep that first night in Costa Rica, I know I had a smile glued to my face. The next morning I awoke to the smell of rice, beans, and fried meat. This became a normality as it was what I consumed three meals a day for the remainder of my trip. I could tell my host mother had been up for at least an hour prior to me waking because she had lunches packed, breakfast cooked, and the day's laundry completed. All of this and it was still dark outside. With the completion of my meal I was handed a sack lunch (rice and beans) and was hurried out the front door by a joyful host mother.

During the twenty minute walk to work I could hear the streams running and birds chirping. Occasionally, my peaceful walk was intruded by a passing car or school bus that boasted not only full seats but children filling the aisle and hanging out the front door. The bus was only an issue on specific days due to the fact that half of the time the bus could not make it up the hill. Despite these brief interruptions, the majority of the time it was me and the hills. Walking was the mode of transportation for most of the people in my town, so my walks were littered with occasional smiles and cheerful greetings in Spanish. It is amazing how a simple "buenos dias" from someone can make your entire being feel loved.

And not only were Costa Ricans pleasant in passing, they were pleasant in all that they did. Work, play, school... my entire stay I do not recall witnessing a single serious conflict. Everyone in this beautiful and remote location seemed ridiculously and entirely happy. If a smile is how you choose to define happi-

ness, then I can promise that this (and not Disneyland) was the happiest place on earth. The fewer distractions in one's life, the more time and energy they have to expend through real relationships. At the end of the day, your Xbox does not bring you happiness. Yes, beating the game results in excitement, but it is short lived and faulty at best. It is through the continuation and development of relationships with other people that we receive a tangible experience of happiness.

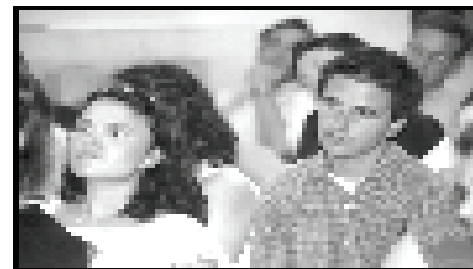
Maybe they have it right. Maybe areas which have not yet developed technologically to the extent that society has developed in the United States are the areas that are truly blessed. The simplicity of life that I lived with for that month allowed me to see the world differently. It resulted in a sense of calm and allowed for introspection. During this time, I met new people. The individuals who I experienced this strange world with were amazing, and I cultivated relationships at a pace that I did not realize was possible. And these relationships will last for the rest of my life. They are made special by the fact that we know each other on such an incredibly deep level; it is a level that cannot be reached at such a pace in our culture because so many external distractions exist. Here, we were one another's entertainment and life.

Despite being in a setting that was foreign to me in every way that I could have imagined, the month that I spent in Costa Rica was the best month of my life. I wish that in our society we had the ability to reach happiness at this level. In order to do so, we must return to our traditional roots and avoid placing such extreme emphasis on worldly possessions. Simplicity, I believe, is the key; it constitutes my happiness.

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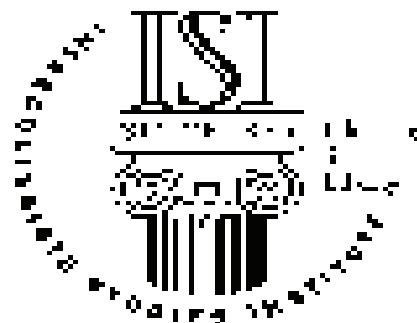
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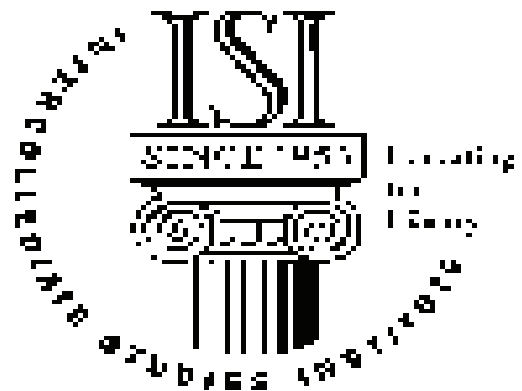
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We were right to invade Iraq

The failures of occupation may be legion, but at least we confronted Saddam at a time of our choosing
Oliver Kamm

The Guardian, Tuesday March 14, 2006

With the advantage of three years of hindsight, politicians' failed predictions about Iraq make dispiriting reading. "Any war will cause a refugee crisis of huge proportions," insisted Charles Kennedy. Iraqis proved him wrong by distinguishing perfectly well between a war on tyranny and a war on them, and stayed put. "The same doctrines [of pre-emptive war] could equally be applied by India vis-a-vis Pakistan, or in any dispute where a state feels threatened," warned Shirley Williams, shortly before India and Pakistan initiated talks to resolve the Kashmir dispute. In his tirade before the US Senate, George Galloway eulogised his own wartime perspicacity, which presumably included his assessment of Saddam Hussein: "I think he will be the last man standing in the bunker."

It is not a vulgar truism to point out that those who supported regime change in Iraq are far from exceptional in having some explaining to do. Mistaken ideas have consequences, even when the inference drawn from them is a counsel of inaction. Had we not overthrown Saddam, Iraq today would be far from tranquil. Many argue that the absence of WMD shows that western policy had been working. It was in reality unravelling fast, and few opponents of war treated the problem seriously.

Saddam allowed intrusive inspections only because of the threat of force. Containment of his regime would have meant continuous military deployment in neighbouring states and the no-fly zones; intensified economic sanctions; inspections coercive enough to withstand Saddam's intimidation and fraud; and the support of France and Russia. Even with personalities of greater competence than Hans Blix and higher morals than Jacques Chirac, that commitment would have been inconceivable. Of the permanent members of the security council, only the US and UK could have been relied on.

Recall also the alacrity with which some commentators attributed the 7/7 bombings to the provocation of the Iraq war. Disgracefully, the New Statesman carried a cover picture of a rucksack with the caption "Blair's bombs". But containment would have meant persisting with what most outraged Osama bin Laden: western troops in Saudi Arabia - and Bin Laden urges "Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorise the enemies of God".

Mainstream opponents of the war accepted a delusory picture of containment's accomplishments, and understated the costs. Even the Islamists and Leninists of the Stop the War Coalition were less evasive; they can be faulted for lack of candour only in describing themselves as anti-war, rather than anti-American and anti-British. "While war lasts by far the lesser evil would be reverses, or defeat, for the US and British forces," declared Socialist Worker when war broke out.

The failures of the occupation are legion: delayed elections, inadequate security, eroding infrastructure, complacency over the tortures at Abu Ghraib, and a heavy death toll among Iraqi civilians and our troops. But had we allowed Saddam's regime to persist, in defiance of its obligations under 17 UN security council resolutions, the consequences would have been an unalloyed catastrophe. The Uday-Qusay dynasty would have ensured further extreme oppression, unless and until the regime collapsed in chaos. It is a fine judgment whether a rogue state or a failed state, prey to the barbarities that jihadists are trying to inflict on Iraq now but without hindrance, would have been the worse prospect. The notion that terrorism has been brought to Iraq uniquely by the west's overthrow of Saddam, who bankrolled it and was the most likely conduit for Islamist groups to obtain WMD, is astonishingly ahistorical.

Against those disastrous scenarios, there are clear advances. We no longer have to bear one major risk: a psychopathic despot overcoming a porous sanctions regime, and using oil sales to pay for resumed WMD production. The absence of WMD was a huge intelligence failure; so it is fortunate that we are no longer reliant on Saddam's word. As Professor Graham Pearson, of the Bradford University school of peace studies, has written, focusing on stockpiles is misconceived: "In an aggressor state, there is no requirement to have such stockpiles as the national strategy is not one of having an ability to retaliate in kind but rather ... to use chemical and biological weapons at a time of its choosing." Saddam did possess dual-use facilities that, according to Charles Duelfer of the Iraq Survey Group, could quickly have produced chemical and biological weapons.

We have no assurance that the struggle to establish a constitutional society in Iraq will succeed. But we can be certain that the security of the region and of ourselves, as well as the welfare of those to whom we have obligations, will be damaged if we fail to support Iraqis against theocratic and Ba'athist totalitarianism. We at least have the advantage in that struggle of having confronted Saddam at a time of our choosing.

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