We Protest

Because we’re not ready to talk about it.

Faced with the university governance question, ASPSU has chosen to shout. Here’s how your representatives have found protesting easier than contributing.

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ASPSU President Jonathan Sanford speaks at the January 29 rally in the Park Blocks. Photo by Alexander Almeida
The Portland Spectator believes that the academic environment should be an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent conservative arguments to be heard. We encourage the expression of diverse ideology to promote thought-provoking discussions.

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Contact Us

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

The Portland Spectator: P.O. Box 347, Portland, OR 97207 // SMSU S29 pdxspectator@gmail.com // 503.725.9795 // www.pdxspectator.wordpress.com
Dear Readers,

Around *The Spectator* office, we’re proud of each new issue—it’s always the “best issue ever.” Every month is a learning experience in reporting, researching, and writing. Not to mention the sweat and strain that is design and layout—making complex information understandable is a skill that Laura Jones continues to develop. So why all the effort? Because we love what we do.

When a student tipped us off about the John Hall in-class incident, we knew this would be a serious story. Jeff Wickizer, our senior writer, handled the story carefully and thoroughly. Our senior editor, Jonathan Miles, did double duty this month covering the question surrounding the Memorial Coliseum as well as ASPSU’s activity surrounding the university governance question. Erica Charves had an insight connecting the dots of terrorism. And as always, rising star Molly Shove laments her fading crush on President Obama. *The Spectator*’s intrepid reporter Alexander Almeida faces down the Transportation Security Administration, while Megan Kimmelshue tells a story of how adventure and foreign aid can come together.

Throughout our work, we strive to apply critical thinking—meaning we ask relevant questions, base our thinking on evidence, and are interested in hearing contrary ideas. We want to be skeptical, not cynical. As we like to say every month, you’re holding in your hands the best *Spectator* issue ever.

Sincerely,

Joe Wirtheim
*Editor-in-Chief*
2009-2010
Dear Editor,
The inner cover of the issue states: “The Portland Spectator believes that the academic environment should be an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent conservative arguments to be heard.”

I am in agreement with the view and was initially heartened by what this paragraph implied, namely that this was a magazine of a conservative bent. Here at PSU the range of political discussion typically covers the entire spectrum of political thought from the far left, to the extremely far left. As such, I had, briefly, hoped that alas there might be some widening of the political spectrum and an increase in the quality and breadth of political discourse and debate.

Alas this was not to be. On the many occasions I have perused the various issues of the Spectator I have been hard pressed to find any articles, news or commentary that I could call “conservative.” Indeed the majority of the pieces could best be described as “liberal lite.”

If you are going to draft a conservative publication, try delineating and advocating conservative positions. If I want to read articles of a liberal position or ideology, I needn’t pick up The Spectator as these positions are already well covered on campus (and elsewhere). You may wish to consider that every Republican Senator who ran as a self described “moderate” or “independent” in the last cycle (including our own Gordon Smith) was defeated. Stop acting as if the conservative position needs to be hidden, watered down or apologized for and offer the public a real “alternative” magazine.

—Will Palumbo

Dear Editor,

With all due respect, Spectator, I don’t understand how you could say that without consulting any of the public workers here at this institution. Perhaps you did, but if that were true, you would know that your statement is quite ridiculous. We are under-funded, under-staffed, and at times like these state workers are forced to take the butt of this, with pay and hiring freezes, furlough days and more cuts to the already miniscule budget.

I find it disrespectful to all of the people that work so hard to make this institution work, to say that they’ve got it easier than we do, or anyone for that matter. In the long run, we’re all in this together and to generalize such a large group of people based on one small example is not fair and not good reporting.

—Kayla Newell

Dear Editor,

Thank you for being aware of ASPSU’s Ballot Measure Presentations. However, we feel you misinterpreted the purpose of our ballot measure presentations. ASPSU is a nonpartisan organization. By being nonpartisan, we can represent all students, regardless of their views and stance on an issue. As part of our Vote Campaign, we educate the students we represent on important issues that may have a significant impact on them. The information we provide disseminates from the state and examines both sides of an issue. Remaining nonpartisan allows us to tackle all sides objectively.

Representing students is key to ASPSU, especially those who are underrepresented. Color the Vote is imperative because it provides representation to our ethnic and queer students whose voice is often not heard. Furthermore, Color the Vote makes it possible for them to be heard and make a difference. We asked journalist Samantha Berrier to clarify her stance on Color the Vote, “These ballot measures were regarding fiscal matters, not social differences. We need to unite as a community of students rather than segregate based on race and gender.” By uniting all students as a community, the more powerful the impact will be. ASPSU strives to impact every student through its nonpartisanship.

—Amaya Taína
ASPSU Senator/Media Coordinator

-Alexander Almeida, writer for The Portland Spectator and president of PSU College Republicans
Ron Lee faces impeachment
ASPSU Judicial Board voted on Thursday, January 28 to hear an impeachment of Student Fee Committee member Ron Lee. The hearing request was placed by ASPSU Senator PV Jantz. Questions surrounding Lee’s use of his position on the SFC for his own gain surfaced after The Spectator’s January 2010 article “Allegations Leave Student Group Reeling.” As of press time, the Judicial Board has scheduled Lee’s hearing for Monday, February 8 at 3:00 p.m. in the ASPSU office SMSU 117. In response, Lee says he is filing paperwork to impeach Brad Vehafric, chair of the Judicial Board, Ashley McClain, Judicial Board member, Jonathan Sanford, ASPSU president, and Jantz.

Good news for the economy?
The New York Times reports that at the end of 2009, the U.S. economy experienced growth at its “fastest pace in more than six years.” Although the growth has not translated into more jobs, the Obama administration hopes that the “vigorous growth” will mean an increase in employment rates as well. “It was an excellent report, but it’s not clear how sustainable this pace of growth is,” said economist John Ryding in a New York Times interview.

Rough road ahead for Portland’s Bike Plan
A hearing to adopt the Portland Bicycle Plan of 2030 is set during the City Council meeting on February 4 at 2:00 p.m. The biggest advocate for the bike plan, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, is rallying supporters for a demonstration at City Hall on the afternoon of the hearing. City Commissioner Amanda Fritz told a neighborhood general meeting on January 27 that there was no doubt that the plan, “would pass in some way shape or form.” Its biggest obstacle, she mentioned, was funding and actual implementation. Portland’s Bureau of Transportation estimates that it will need $600 million to implement the plan.

A nod to Copenhagen
Reuters reports that the Obama administration officially endorsed the Copenhagen Accord on global warming on January 28, giving notice to the United Nations that “the U.S. will aim for a 17 percent emissions cut in carbon dioxide and other gases blamed for global warming by 2020.” According to U.S. Climate Envoy Todd Stern, meeting the 2020 emissions goal depends on Congress passing a climate bill. The current bill, which relies on the cap-and-trade system, has been delayed in the Senate by the healthcare debate, as well as opposition from most Republicans and many moderate Democrats.

Dismal news for Americans close to retirement
The January 2010 Harper’s Index compiled some discouraging statistics regarding those who are near or at retirement age. It reports that the average 401(k) balance in 1998 was $61,000, and in 2009, the average 401(k) balance had dropped to $45,000. Forty-six percent of U.S. 401(k) accounts are worth less than $10,000.
What have You done for Me Lately, ASPSU?

Hell No—We Won’t be Civil!

ASPSU leads a protest for the sake of protesting, and it appears the student advocates don’t understand that they’re supposed to be negotiating for us.

By Jonathan Miles

ASPSU President Jonathan Sanford spoke at a protest rally held in the Park Blocks late this January to explain to students their reasons for gathering there. “We are intelligent and, I hope, thinking people. So we ask questions,” began Sanford. Standing behind the pulpit on a make-shift stage, he went on to describe the threat of “restructuring our university” as explored in the controversial White Paper issued by the Office of University President Wim Wiewel.

On January 29, the day of the protest, Wiewel met with Governor Ted Kulongoski to discuss the White Paper, which proposed restructuring for PSU and the Oregon University System (OUS). Sanford’s beef was that he and the public were excluded from this meeting. “The unions and the teachers haven’t had a chance to have their say in this,” said Sanford, just before leading a crowd of about 70 people in a call and answer chant.

“Want to restructure the University!” another shouting prompt.

“Without students!” Sanford finished. The crowd more or less gave up at this point.

Current problems?

“We agree the current structure of funding is bad,” Sanford conceded, as he continued his speech. And, he’s right. Oregon’s funding structure is terrible for higher education. The White Paper refers to a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislatures Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education stating that Oregon’s general fund gives PSU, “Whatever is left after allocations are made to K-12 education, Medicaid, corrections [prisons], transportation and other budget items.”

Dependence on Oregon’s general fund puts the stability of PSU in what ASPSU Executive Chief of Staff Zaki Bucharest called “an annual crisis.” He was half right, in that Oregon’s biennial budget always seems to fall short of funding higher education.

“Want to restructure the University!” another shouting prompt.

“Without students!” Sanford finished. The crowd more or less gave up at this point.

After Sanford, Bucharest spoke to a growing crowd about the possibility of restructuring PSU as a public corporation as outlined in the Frohnmayer Report (see The Spectator January 2010, “PSU Goes Corporate”). Bucharest referred to the “Prerogatives of big business,” and went as far as to assert that PSU, “will no longer belong to the taxpayers or the students.”

“We’re not ready for the White Paper”

While the White Paper does not recommend any one restructuring model, it does hold up OHSU as a positive example of how becoming a public corporation can benefit a university. Ironically, Bucharest referred to OHSU as a “disaster,” claiming that the restructuring of “that place up on the hill” caused unemployment, uncertainty, and greed. Bucharest concluded his speech with a diatribe about how the conversation that Wiewel was having with Gov. Kulongoski was a threat to our constitutional rights and that “we will not stand idly by.”

By the time Bucharest had finished his speech, about 100 people were standing idly by, including some holding ASPSU-prepared cardboard signs that read, “No Corporate Take Over,” and “Fund Education Not Prison.” At this point in the rally, it was still unclear what exactly these students were protesting. A student holding one of ASPSU’s pre-made neon protest signs told The Spectator, “I just like protesting.”

So does ASPSU, apparently. Sanford’s branch of our student government scheduled the rally to protest the exclusion of students from a public dialog about the future of PSU. This seems to be a reasonable dispute. The problem is with the content of the rally. As Gov. Kulongoski reads the White Paper that Wiewel presented to him that day, he will no doubt take into account the fact that the report begins by stating, “This paper has been prepared to facilitate discussions at Portland State University (PSU) and in the broader community about structural changes,” and that the report is “intended solely to promote thoughts and discussions and does not represent a final position of PSU or its administration.”

When the third speaker, Rowan Griffith, finally started to list ASPSU’s specific grievances, she pointed out that the problem is

ASPSU’s rally in the Park blocks on January 29 drew about 70 people. Photo by Alexander Almeida
the current funding structure for PSU and the disinvestment of the state in higher education. Unfortunately, even that message was being convoluted by contradictory claims. “M66 and M67 passed,” shouted Griffith to cheers and applause from the crowd, “so the state of Oregon has proven that they are willing to fund higher education.” In the same breath, she demanded that Oregon’s Legislature “stop funding prisons and start funding education,” a sentiment that was echoed throughout the rally.

**PSU tuition is going up regardless**

Authors of the White Paper had similar concerns as the protestors when they wrote, “State funding for PSU and its OUS peers has declined by 40 percent in real terms over the past 20 years. At PSU, state funding now accounts for only 16 percent of the annual operating budget.” The other 84 percent is coming from student tuition, which has gone up from an annual full-time cost of $1,540 twenty years ago, to about $6,400 today. The entire purpose of presenting this report to Gov. Kulongoski is to alert him to the fact that PSU recognizes the state’s disinvestment in higher education and that the administration is being forced to consider another mode of survival. “A new governance structure,” reads the report, “is the only viable solution to allow PSU to meet its potential and serve the citizens of Portland.”

To Sanford’s credit, he didn’t just show up to lead an awkward series of chants. After his speech, the student body president circulated through the crowd giving out copies of the White Paper. Included among the outlined goals of restructuring were: the “Establishment of a state funding floor,” so that Oregon couldn’t continue to cut state funding for PSU; “Go directly to voters for funding support,” when economic crises such force state tax revenues down, and most controversially, the “Ability to manage tuition.” An ability that ASPSU promises would result in massive tuition hikes.

**What’s the point?**

Whether PSU’s restructuring leads to the corporate takeover of Oregon’s largest state university or to the continued success of an old college in a new economy is dependent on a rational and prudent conversation. Leading 100 people in chanting “shame on you Wiewel!” is no way to facilitate that dialog. Especially when Wiewel chose to issue a report examining multiple possibilities ranging from making PSU a “constitutionally mandated fourth branch of the government,” to the OHSU-public corporation model. Wiewel doesn’t seem to be shoving an agenda down students’ throats.

It’s true that the administration needs a strong student body to provide a check against proposals that don’t jive with students’ wants. During her speech, Griffith appropriately pointed out the success of student power in stopping the administration’s 2009 proposal to consolidate all the multicultural studies departments (women’s studies, black studies, etc.) into one department, an issue that is still being discussed by administrators. Griffith then criticized the public corporation model, saying that if PSU or OSU were to adopt that proposal, students would lose the ability to lobby against the administration. If ASPSU is concerned about the strength of PSU’s future student body, then they should not resort to name calling and start using some of the political clout that they are so afraid of losing.

The term “white paper” refers to an internal report. White Papers are used in many industries and usually offer information as well as solutions to a problem, whether it’s a policy or technical issue. Wiewel’s White Paper, “Restructuring PSU’s Relationship with the State: The Case for Change” reports on issues surrounding the university governance model.

“**There are a number of governance models**”

Examining multiple possibilities, Wiewel’s White Paper does not recommend a specific restructuring model. Instead, it reports on a number of existing models, and says that more input and discussion will be required.

**University of California model**

Similar to what OUS Board Member John von Schlegell championed, the UC model is “a constitutionally mandated fourth branch of the government, the UC system issues its own bonds, sets its own tuition, controls its own purchasing, contracting, and treasury functions and receives its state funding in the form of a block grant.” The system can also appeal to the state to issue additional bonds on its behalf.

**University of North Carolina model**

The UNC model has a tuition-setting authority and the ability to issue its own debt, but does not have control over purchasing, contracting or treasury functions.

**University of Virginia model**

Significant autonomy is awarded to the UVA model in setting tuition, issuing bonds, managing personnel, and controlling purchases and construction.

**The OHSU model**

A public corporation since 1995, OHSU has an independent governing board and authority to issue its own bonds and control personnel, purchasing and contracting, tuition, auditing and banking functions.

**The Oregon Hybrid**

Presented in Frohnmayer’s report and examined by The Spectator [January 2010, “PSU Goes Corporate”], this would allow the Oregon University System to be given authority to create one or more public corporations with independent governing boards similar to OHSU.
Accusations, Suspicions, and Possible Prosecution

Long time tenured economics professor removed from teaching after verbally attacking a student.

By Jeff Wickizer

PSU’s chair of the economics department, Randy Bluffstone, announced that the Economics 445/545 Comparative Economics class would continue without its original instructor, Professor John B. Hall. The class was temporarily put on hold after Hall accused a student in his class, Zaki Bucharest, of being armed and dangerous.

Bluffstone noted in his official response to the about 50 enrolled students, via e-mail, that the class would resume starting Tuesday, January 26. He added, “Please note that Professor Hall will not be teaching the course.”

Hall, a twenty-five year tenured economics professor at PSU, ended his class on Thursday, January 14 by using the last half hour to display a three-page letter he had signed and addressed to the Portland office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to witnesses. Hall ended by insisting Bucharest leave the class and stay off campus entirely.

Four students in Hall’s lecture on January 14, who would only speak on condition that their names not to be used, recalled what he said to the class. Hall started by announcing that Bucharest is an “informant” while pointing him out in the class. Then Hall walked the class through his letter to the FBI, projecting it on the overhead.

The letter, according to students in the class, first covered Hall’s own background, and then told of how he came to know Bucharest, who is currently ASPSU chief of staff. It also mentioned Bucharest’s military service and other experiences. Witnesses say that Hall called Bucharest an “agent provocateur.”

One witness said, “Hall told the class to report to him if they see Zaki on campus.” Hall then produced a digital camera and took photos of Bucharest, which witnesses say he threatened to post, along with the letter, around campus if he saw Bucharest at the school again. Hall finished his allegations by handing Bucharest a sealed copy of the letter, according to witnesses, asking him to deliver it to the FBI himself. Witnesses say Bucharest stood up in front of class, acknowledged his military experience, but denied having anything to do with the FBI.

Immediately after the incident, a group of students congregated to discuss amongst themselves what occurred, mostly trading rumors. Few facts about Hall’s claims exist, and witnesses say they were left in a confused and frightened state.

School officials declined to comment, including Scott Gallagher, director of communications for PSU, who did say that the university was looking into the situation based on a complaint, and added that he could not comment on the case while it is under investigation. Bucharest declined to comment on the incident, and Hall has not returned phone calls or e-mails. He has also not been available during normal office hours.

The Campus Public Safety Office has withheld copies of complaints relating to the incident, indicating in a statement that a criminal investigation may be pending.

Swift cancellation of Hall’s other classes followed the January 14 incident. Outside of the Economics 202 class Hall was teaching, a posted sign indicated that the class was canceled effective January 19. A student in the class informed The Spectator that no information was given as to why the change had been made.
What did the twitter feed have to say?

As one student in Hall’s class was tweeting about the experience. Here’s a log of tweets, identities have been removed for privacy.

3:10 PM Jan 14th
This Econ prof is killing. His long tangent on European and roman history just fried my brain. I. Don’t. Care. Fml

3:55 PM Jan 14th
No one would believe what just happened in my Econ.... I... Don’t even know what to think right now

4:17 PM Jan 14th
goole agent provocateur.

4:58 PM Jan 14th
so... i guess i should just... try and eat. i’m still so confused

5:47 PM Jan 14th
To break this awkward, WTF just happened feeling...

6:11 PM Jan 14th
classmate texted me.... “did that really happen today”. Yes [name removed] it did.

6:13 PM Jan 14th
ya know... i’m irritated. what if that guy flipped out and pulled out that gun?! It could of been PSU on the news of another shooting

6:13 PM Jan 14th
He could have at least called security!

6:49 PM Jan 14th
I feel crazy and i now i can’t concentrate on anything... I wish this had happened last week so i could have dropped the class.

8:11 PM Jan 14th
Chatted with [name removed]. She always makes me feel better. She thinks i should report what happened today. I think i agree

8:13 PM Jan 14th
Knowing that that guy carries a gun, i’d say it was reckless how he did it. Now the question is WHO to tell...

In a January 20 e-mail to students enrolled in Hall’s classes, Bluffstone wrote, “the university is 100% committed to your safety.” He went on to say students could drop the class, “without any registration, tuition or book cost penalties.”

Several factors suggest that the severity and sensitivity of this incident is extremely high. As indicated in a January 23 e-mail to students of the class, Bluffstone, Dr. Carol Mack, and Dr. Marvin Kaiser are currently conducting an inquiry into the incident, and part of this inquiry requires meeting with students privately to recall what happened during class. Bluffstone wrote, “We can discuss your experiences in Econ 445/545 and any safety concerns you might have.”

On Thursday January 28, Bluffstone showed up at the beginning of the Economics 445/545 course to address the current status of the investigation. In the only definitive statement heard thus far from PSU administrators, Bluffstone said, “The University has followed up on the allegation that Zaki Bucharest is working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Bureau has stated that Mr. Bucharest has no affiliation with the FBI whatsoever. That’s been part of the information gathering, and the university found that there has been no affiliation whatsoever.”

We may never know the whole story of what happened in Comparative Economics 445/545 on January 14, or more importantly, why. The unfolding story reads more like a spy thriller than an economics lecture. The one thing that is for sure is that when fiction turns into reality, the feeling can be scary. There is reason to believe that the incident was sufficiently traumatic that these students may require treatment for stress—treatment they may not seek on their own.

It appears that school administrators, in the race to reduce their liability and contain the situation, forgot that witnesses might be suffering silently. On Saturday January 23,
2010, nine days after the incident occurred, Chair of the Department of Economics Randy Bluffstone finally addressed the issue of student fears over the incident. In an e-mail to students he notified them that he, Dr. Carol Mack and Dr. Marvin Kaiser would be available for 30 minute meetings to discuss with students what happened in class. Publically, administrators still refuse to comment on the situation; barely acknowledging that anything even happened.

Four students in Professor Hall’s economic class chose to speak to The Spectator, all indicated that the incident left them shocked. For their protection, all in-class witnesses asked that their names not be used. Although the matter is delicate, everyone appeared relieved to just talk about it.

“It was like a dream. I wondered if it was real. I had to talk to a classmate and ask, did that really happen?” said one witness. Another student witness said, “After the incident I had a terrible week. I couldn’t decipher things. The idea of guns in the classroom is scary.”

Students in the class appear to be having difficulty processing what happened, and now that the school administration has closed access to all information and refuses to speak, it’s only getting worse. A phrase repeated by administrators when meeting with witnesses is, “If you feel unsafe, call CPSO [Campus Public Safety Office],” but this fails to acknowledge the depth of the experience.

Hall has been a well-regarded professor. His work is prolific, and his career in economic scholarship is amazing. As a mentor, he has taken great interest in students and their studies, and is known for being someone who is well composed and together. That’s why students became alarmed when he appeared “shaky” and “stressed,” according to students, just before launching into his “informant” speech of January 14.

“It’s not so much whether the professor’s allegations were true or not, it’s the fact that the large amount of credibility he holds caused the allegations to be taken seriously by the students—enough to cause confusion and insecurity based on their statements:

“It’s hard to concentrate. I keep running through Hall’s rationale.”

“Most people I tried to tell didn’t believe me. Only my best friend believed me.”

“It was really hard to process. Just trying to piece it together, and with no info. I spent the whole afternoon thinking. I couldn’t do my homework.”

“When I try telling people about it, it just comes out like vomit.”

As of press time, it appears lawyers are handling the situation, while administrators seem to wish the whole thing would go away. Unfortunately, there is no way to keep a lid on a story like this. Bluffstone appears to be handling student witness interviews himself. Too bad economics professors are not trained in recognizing a stress disorder.
Plugging the Holes

Why there is still a danger in airport security, but it’s not in the U.S.

By Alexander Almeida

A day normally filled with ribbons and colorful pieces of paper adorned with penguins or polar bears or the baby Jesus turned a little harrowing this past Christmas, when news reports came in that a young man named Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to blow himself and all 289 passengers and crew up aboard NorthWest Flight 253 over Detroit. What happened afterward was a maelstrom of questions, accusations and anger regarding how this could have happened. And many jokes about someone’s underwear catching on fire and what use he’d be to his 72 virgins in heaven after an accident like that.

Jokes aside, much like Richard Reid, the notorious “shoe bomber,” this attack was almost successful. The only thing that prevented it from becoming another airline tragedy was a suicide bomber with a lack of experience and passengers willing to rise up and not be taken down without a fight.

The questions left are many. How did we not see this? What failings of bureaucracy let us down? Could this happen again? And what’s next? Underwear inspections?

As reports said, Abdulmutallab’s father did report his own son to the CIA in Yemen. His name was added to a list of over 500,000 with the possibility of terrorism ties, though due to lack of further evidence his name was not added to the no-fly list. Even based on a father’s concern for his son’s “extreme” Islamic religious views and many troubling messages, the CIA could not take further action, as the questionability of his visa in the United Kingdom was not shared with U.S. agencies. The many agencies charged with counter-terrorism (of which there are over 20 in the U.S. government, compared to Israel’s one) apparently did not work together, which President Obama described as a “systematic failure.”

However, the failings were not simply on U.S. agencies. The airport in Amsterdam, which had full body scanners, had yet to implement them due to privacy concerns of the European Union member states. These concerns, even after this, are still there, though the Dutch said they would use them on flights bound for the United States. Even after Reid’s failed shoe-bombing flight out of Paris’ Charles De Gaulle International Airport in 2001, France still does not require all passengers to take their shoes off to be X-rayed prior to boarding.

Certain security procedures used in the U.S. by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) might have also prevented this, such as the deployment of Behavior Detection Officers who monitor security checkpoints for certain behavior or oddities and pull people out for secondary screening. For instance, a passenger flying to Detroit in the wintertime without a coat, no checked baggage, no carry-on, and who paid for his ticket in cash would have automatically warranted secondary screening.

Secondary Screenings

"If the individual’s photo ID is a passport issued by the Government of Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, or Algeria, refer the individuals for selected screening unless the individual has been exempted from selected screening" by the airport’s federal security director or the aircraft operator, the manual stated.

Right: TSA officers do luggage screening at Portland International Airport.

Photo by Alexander Almeida
However, a Transportation Security Officer (TSO) is not allowed to do a proper police pat-down of any passenger, so when they get to “sensitive” areas of a man (genitals, buttocks) or of a woman (with the addendum of breasts), only the back of the hands are allowed to be used. If a TSO does feel an unusual bulge, that would get the police involved. So it’s arguable that even a pat-down would have been able to find explosives in underwear.

A Lead Transportation Security Officer (LTSO) at the Portland International Airport (PDX), who asked that his name not be mentioned since he’s not allowed to speak to the press, said that most security concerns are due to “flaws overseas,” saying that “no terrorist” threat had “left U.S. soil since TSA has been around.” Looking over all recent attempted attacks, he’s correct. The four most recent attempts or successes had all originated overseas. Richard Reid flew out of Paris. The two Chechen women who simultaneously blew up two Russian passenger jets flew out of Moscow, using pregnancy belts to mask their explosives. The liquid-bomb plot originated in London (though prevented before they ever made it to the airport), and Abdulmutallab from Amsterdam.

The news coverage, however, puts a spotlight on TSA. However, the LTSO points out that people “assume because it’s an airport, if something happens at an airport, they assume TSA” failed. But are there issues with TSA? Apparently there is the “rights versus security” issue, according to the LTSO. “[Americans] want their freedom, their rights.” He also cited that TSA is always more “reactive than proactive,” meaning once something has already been attempted, they try to then plug up that hole. He also said things at TSA are always changing. Part of why security procedures in Oakland are different than Dallas, which are different than New York, is TSA’s “unpredictability” portion of security. If terrorists can predict, they can plan. Sometimes if TSA procedures appear random or different, that’s the point. There is a standard that no one can go below, but the rest is airport by airport, TSO by TSO.

I went to PDX to take pictures for this story. As I used to work in checked baggage for TSA, I was more or less allowed to snap a few photographs as I chatted with former co-workers. Several other TSOs told me that at PDX they had been cracking down on a culture of laziness that I had seen when I worked there. They informed me that this was courtesy of the recession, as the need for security had gone down with the tightened passenger load. PDX is also about to unveil an inline checked baggage security system, so the large X-ray machines near the ticket counters will no longer be needed, and newer more efficient machines will be placed downstairs. This, according to several TSOs, lessened the need for the number of employees at checked baggage, resulting in even more TSOs at checkpoint.

When I approached the passenger security checkpoint with my camera and started adjusting settings, an airline employee informed me there was a $10,000 fine for taking pictures of any security checkpoint.

When I started to argue with her and showed her my Spectator press credentials, a supervising officer from TSA came up to me and demanded that I put my camera away while a lead officer behind her radioed upstairs of someone trying to take pictures of security. Showing the supervisory press credentials also warranted no sympathy, informing me any pictures of security had to be deleted. I told her I had taken none and quickly departed. All of this happened within a matter of 30 seconds. At PDX, they seemed to be on top of anything they deemed a security risk.

I walked away with a different perspective of TSA. Passenger checkpoint was quick and attentive. Checked baggage had tightened their ranks according to the three officers I spoke to. Since the TSA’s inception following the September 11 attacks, no one has gotten through security checkpoint and attempted a bombing, and no bag has made it through checked baggage and blown up. Seemingly, the biggest threat to airline security does not come from domestic air travel, but from incoming international flights. On your next flight from PDX to LAX, rest assured you’re in good hands. But from your return flight from Europe? Keep a watchful eye.
Notable acts of airline terrorism post-Sept. 11th

Dec. 22, 2001—Richard Reid attempts to ignite his explosives laden shoes. Being detained by French Authorities on the 21st at Charles de Gaulle International Airport for looking suspicious, he is questioned, released, and allowed to fly the next day. Reid sweating under the detention is partially credited for the bomb not going off. Passengers also detain him. He is the reason you have to take your shoes off for domestic flights.

Aug. 24, 2004—Two Chechen women on two separate flights which left Moscow’s Domodedovo International Airport blow themselves up, taking down both planes, within five minutes of each other. The women get through security by wearing pregnancy belts, which are loaded with explosives, and bribing airport employees. 94 are killed.

Aug. 10, 2006—This is known as the Trans-Atlantic Plot, where British authorities make mass arrests across the United Kingdom, breaking up a plot to take down as many as 10 airlines destined for US airports out of London Heathrow Airport. The plot was to conceal liquid explosives inside of sports drink bottles by removing the labels and using a needle to replace the liquid and then putting the labels back on, ensuring the seal on the cap was never broken. They were going to put pornography and condoms in their luggage to mask the idea they might be Islamic and to psychologically deter further search of their bags. They are why you cannot take more than a quart sized bag of 3.4 oz bottles on carry-on. You can still take on condoms and porn.

Dec. 25, 2009—Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab plants explosives in his underwear and attempts to detonate the bomb in mid-flight. Prior to his attempt, he spends 20 minutes in the restroom assembling the bomb. The bomb does not properly go off, but he does manage to light himself and part of the wall of the plane on fire. He is the reason you might have to go through a full body scanner in the future, might not be able to go to the restroom an hour prior to landing for long distance flights, and why talks of disabling seat monitors on international flights which show the planes location are happening.

Troubled Waters of Politics and Pirates

How al-Qaida influences conflicts in an entire region, not merely Yemen.

By Erica Charves

Graphics by Laura Jones

We know that the United States has a non-consolidated array of defense agencies dedicated to preventing terrorist attacks on our soil, and while the Transportation Security Agency works to keep our airports free from underwear bombs, complex factors are at work in and around countries like Yemen, where terrorists like Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab learn their trade. Here’s a look at how the political and economic conflicts between some Horn of Africa countries and the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula provide impetus for a story that might end in an terrorist plot or an underwear bomb. Pirates, politics and terrorism are entangled in this picture of an unstable environment.
Why Yemen?

Factors:
The government of Yemen is focused on capturing the key officials in al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Yemen was the only neighboring country with an open door policy for refugees from Somalia fleeing their homeland, according to Ali al-Anisi, Yemeni director of national security. There are 800,000 Somali refugees in Yemen, though estimates from the United Nations and Reuters put the number closer to 142,000, with many more throughout Ethiopia, Kenya, Europe and North America.

Yemen’s nation has been torn with internal conflict between the north and southern separatists.

Results:
This instability, coupled with the presence of al-Qaida and heavy weaponry near Saudi Arabia, started conflicts recently resulting in the deaths of Saudi troops.

The U.S. Senate received news briefings about Yemen on January 20, 2010 that recommended more training and equipment for the Yemeni government to battle the rise of al-Qaida.

Continued page 14
Sudan
Leader Omar al-Bashir has been in power since 1989 and appointed himself President in 1993. Elections will be held later this year, and according to law, if a northern president is elected he must have a southern vice president and vice-versa. The Sudan has not had a multi-party election in 24 years; Arab news Al Jazeera reports that elections are set for April 11, 2010.

The U.N., EU and other organizations have placed arms embargoes banning the sale of weapons to any parties in Sudan. Al-Qaida presence in Sudan has been divisive in a nation of conflicts between Darfur, South Sudan and the North.

Kenya
Home to 300,000 Somali refugees and many indigenous Somali residents, Kenya is involved in both peacekeeping and refugee aid. According to Associated French Press, authorities recently cracked down on illegal Somali refugees with alleged ties to al-Qaida following a riot in Nairobi, over the incarceration of Jamaican-born Muslim leader Abdullah Ibrahim el-Faisal, who is on international terrorist watch lists.

Pirates
Pirates recently garnered their largest ever ransom of $5+. The coast of Somalia saw more than half of last year’s 406 reported acts of piracy, according to the Washington Post.

Somalia
This Horn of Africa country, which is nearly the size of California and Oregon combined, is just across pirate infested waters from Yemen. Without a long-standing government since 1991, some international sources such as the U.K. news giant The Guardian and EU officials call the current Transitional Federal Government a propped-up government in a failed or weak state.

Aside from pirates being the nation’s biggest earners, the country suffers from internal conflicts between three separate parts. In the 1970’s, the capital of Mogadishu was a dynamic, lovely city; now the city is so unsafe that the parliament cannot even meet within its borders. If not interrupted by the insurgents of the al-Shabab, an al-Qaida affiliated organization, Somali elections are expected later this year.
The Somalia Connection:

Since the beginning of January, according to CNN, the state allied forces are clashing with al-Qaida backed al-Shabab insurgents in the central region of Somalia, displacing over 63,000 people.

The state allied forces do not fully support the Transitional Federal Government, which has basic support from the African Union peacekeeping troops.

The road to current President Abdullahi Yusuf’s home is so dangerous that African Union troops with heavily armed vehicles rush through a dangerous stretch of road avoiding IED’s and insurgent sniper fire.

The instability continues throughout Somalia, which is known for its pirates who take ships passing through the Red Sea to the Suez Canal, one of the most convenient shipping passageways linking the Horn of African and the Arabian Peninsula with Europe.

The Somali prime minister recently wrote an op-ed for the *New York Times* stating that internal organizations have been organizing approximately 100 Somali-led reconciliation processes all over the country, including Somaliland—the more stable northern region of Somalia, which has a capital, Hargeisa, and a separately elected president, Dahir Riyale Kahin.

Somaliland vs. al-Qaida

Somaliland has often sought to secede from Somalia but the international community has yet to recognize its sovereignty. Unlike southern Somalia, Somaliland does not often have military conflicts with the capital in Mogadishu but has support from Djibouti and the international community to keep al-Qaida backed al-Shabab at bay. The southern portion of Somalia has insurgents and al-Shabab fighters attacking Mogadishu and other cities to overthrow the government and impose a strict form of Shariah, or Islamic law. With conflicts across Somalia, the more stable government found in Somaliland is important for increasing stability for Somali people.

The al-Qaida Triangle

Like Yemen and Somalia, Sudan has three clashing regions: Darfur, South Sudan and the north of Sudan. South Sudan’s predominant militia has clashed with the northern capital of Khartoum (Kar-toom) since the country gained independence from the British in 1954; in 2005, however, a peace treaty was signed to work together with the capital city. Darfur, the southwestern region of Sudan, has long been in conflict with Khartoum and the humanitarian crisis in the region has displaced over a million people into the neighboring country of Chad. According to a survey by a Swiss organization called Small Arms Survey, the mass amounts of weapons in civilian hands are a problem in Sudan, with the majority of weapons coming in from China and Iran. It is estimated that there are approximately 500,000 weapons under government control and possibly 2 million small arms and weapons (including tanks and anti-aircraft missiles) with insurgents and private citizens.

What Now?

The presence of al-Qaida found in the triangle of Sudan, Yemen and Somalia, coupled with the proliferate availability of weapons in those regions, are certainly cause for alarm. However, Sudan and Somalia are scheduled for democratic elections later this year, and with the presence of U.N. and African Union peacekeeping troops as support, they are posed for an important change. The nearby Muslim countries, such as Qatar, have stepped up support through investment and encouraging conflict resolution. The people of Somalia and Sudan are resilient and should be given the chance to participate in their own government and see a change. At this time, Europe and America can do best by supporting the peacekeeping and arms embargoes limiting weapons brought to both Somalia and the Sudan.

By allowing these nations the flexibility of a democratic process with the assistance of other Muslim countries, the U.S. and other western allies can support change without direct interference.

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Special Report

**USS Chosin**, a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, patrols the waters in support of counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, 2010. *Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy*
The recent natural disaster in Haiti has many people asking themselves, “What can I do?” Of course, you can do what former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush recently suggested, which is, “send cash, not blankets.” But natural disasters usually have a way of bringing out the desire in people to make service and humanitarian work a part of their permanent lifestyle.

While most of us will only be able to fantasize about making a career out of traveling and helping those in need, Matt George has turned this dream into a reality and, along the way, broken the stereotypical surfer image of the Jeff Spicoli-esque slacker who only needs “some tasty waves, a cool buzz, and I’m fine.” In fact, he’s the farthest thing from it.

“It took the largest wave in the world to make me who I am today,” says George, speaking of the East Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. As a journalist, Senior Editor of SURFER magazine and former professional surfer, Matt had spent a good deal of time in Indonesia. “Banda Aceh [Sumatra] is a surfing mecca; I had been there before,” he said in a video interview. “I knew of remote villages where relief agencies would never dream of going. No one was going to help these people—I had to get there.” George and a few other professional surfers, initially dubbing themselves “Surfzone Relief Effort,” used their personal credit cards to secure supplies and charter a boat to take much-needed supplies to the villages George knew would be overlooked.

Keeping a travel log that would eventually be published by Surfer’s Path magazine, George wrote, “We were met on the beach by hundreds of villagers in a desperate state, and it was there we fashioned a crude refugee camp for over 2,000 souls…we organized the distribution of over 200 rescue buckets, one ton of dried fish, one ton of fruit and vegetables, and sundry tools and materials for rebuilding.”

After their initial efforts in 2004, George and his colleague and friend, Chris Faucher, established the nonprofit organization called Last Mile Operations (LMO), with the intent of focusing on natural disaster zones and, according to their mission statement, “helping those who are overlooked by the larger-scale aid organizations.” What sets LMO apart from many other relief organizations is that George and Faucher provide aid independently. Instead of arriving at his destination with a large team already assembled, George works as a one-man operation, recruiting local specialists from the inside. This gives him the flexibility that is crucial when faced with disaster response and the ability to change plans easily, depending on the needs of the people. After the tsunami, George visited the local medical university in Padang, West Sumatra, and recruited three young doctors to take inland with him. In 2006, after the earthquake in Pakistan, George was featured on BBC News as he worked alongside Pakistani people, organizing and building a helicopter pad from stones at an elevation of 8,000 feet.

“We’ve been to all these places and we’ve been able to help people by making sure that aid is taken directly to them,” says George. “It usually never reaches these areas because of bureaucracy and corruption.” Corruption that includes, according to George, the “local mafias, who steal and sell relief supplies.” In remote areas like Padang, George says, “It’s hard to tell the difference between the military and the...
mafia.” On their way out of Banda Aceh by boat, one such group boarded their ship. “They wanted everything,” Matt relayed, “and we had just enough time to hide our most valuable supplies below deck.” The thieves only got away with their cooking oil.

George has spent the last few years supplying aid in Pakistan, Java and Bali, and after Hurricane Katrina, he and his team entered New Orleans on jet skis nine hours after the levees failed. The last five months have been spent back in Padang after the September 2009 earthquake, again assisting locals in delivering aid into areas heavily restricted by terrain, weather, and transportation problems. According to a recent letter from Faucher, he also had a bout of Dengue fever. Matt wrote on his online travel journal, “Our most recent mission was into the jungle of Pariama, finding small enclaves of need. With Dengue setting in, I could barely help as David, Tony and Patra dug in and built shelters for a number of families, and one memorable old man.”

Having been recognized by the U.N., Matt George and his small team are now a sort of “freelance” aid workers, heading to wherever natural disasters strike and going, as they like to say, “the last mile.”

At time of publication, George is still in Indonesia. We are awaiting and expecting news that he will be heading to Haiti to assist in the relief efforts.

Join Matt George on the SERF Program

In 2008, George and Faucher expanded their vision and created a study abroad program that merges surfing, education, and humanitarian work into three two-week expeditions into Indonesia. The accredited college course, called SERF (Surfers Education and Relief Force), takes place on a chartered boat in the Mentawai Islands and hosts as instructors some of the best surf journalists and photographers, while distributing aid to the still-recovering area of Padang. Matt tells Surfer magazine that the students “will continue the work that we started after the tsunami, providing shelter, medicine, general health clinic resource, and anything else they need.” Not only are the participants taking classes on writing for the surf industry, but are also enjoying some of the world’s best waves.

Students who are chosen to participate in the program will be writing for their online web magazine, and the best work will be featured in SURFER Magazine. Through the SERF program, George and Faucher hope to help usher in the new generation of surf journalists.

To learn more about Last Mile Operations, donate or learn more about the SERF program, visit: www.lastmileexpeditions.com

Left: Matt George helps with Katrina evacuation.
Right: SERF Student Greg Branam leads the way across a rickety footbridge over a sewage swamp to deliver aid in Indonesia. Photo courtesy of Serf Academy
Remember the Coliseum

The City of Portland hears plans to redesign the historic Memorial Coliseum. But how much will the community be involved?

By Jonathan Miles

The first meeting of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee was held back in September 2009 when it was declared that the “future Rose Quarter development will realize the long-anticipated community vision of a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district that showcases leading edge sustainability practices.” The outreach and public involvement process is being sponsored by the City and the Portland Development Commission [PDC] in an effort to solicit proposals for what to do with the old building, but at least one group has been feeling left out.

Gina Botel is a member of the group who proposed that the Coliseum be used as a natural history museum, and she told The Spectator that there are some concerns over how the City is handling public input. “Mayor Sam Adams has said that he and the City are aware that non-profit groups do not have money upfront, yet their deadlines clearly place community groups at a disadvantage,” wrote Botel in an email. One of those deadlines was the end of January, when groups like Botel’s had to come up with some private backers in order to be considered a “full proposal” and be included in the short list of viable options.

However, the deadline was only announced at the SAC meeting on January 12. That short timeline changed the game for proposals like the museum project, which were once considered full proposals under the PDC’s previous definition. In an earlier report from the PDC, groups were informed that a proposal would be considered “full,” therefore viable if it “makes use of the entire building.”

Botel indicated her frustration when she wrote, “It would appear as though the City is deciding its procedure as it goes along.” But it’s not just the rush that concerns Botel. Proposals from private groups with large financial backing may be taking priority in the process. Only three groups will be considered viable after February, and there are already at least that many with private firms ready to pay for groundbreaking in spring.

“Coliseum” continued on page 18

Community Doesn’t Stand a Chance

Quaint, underfunded museums have a hard time stacking up against the glitz and money of Jumptown.

By Jonathan Miles

The lobby was buzzing with interested community members, local TV reporters, and concept presenters who tried to sell their ideas to passers-by before they made their way to the inner arena of the building for PowerPoint presentations from the 25 plus groups that showed up.

As soon as I walked in, I was pulled aside by an animated elderly gentleman, Gil Frey, who adamantly defended the Coliseum’s right to remain intact and unmodified. “If something has historical value, it should have value from the ground to the top,” asserted Frey. “I’ve got a museum back here,” Frey said as he moved behind his group’s table, “lemme show ya.” A minute or so later, Frey was positioning a cardboard display board with old newspaper clippings and photos from the early nineties (before the Rose Garden was built on top of the actual garden of roses that used to make up the Coliseum’s back yard). One photo, Frey told me, was used to prove that a pole bearing the American flag was permanently removed while the Blazers were building their gigantic basketball court. Frey fought then to have that flag replaced, and now he is fighting to ensure that the Blazer’s Jumptown

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Local

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One such proposal is coming from the Trail Blazers, owned by billionaire Paul Allen, who also owns Portland Arena Management (PAM), the company that owns roughly two-thirds of the Rose Quarter. Allen’s Blazers are proposing a total redevelopment of the Rose Quarter into something like a 24-hour entertainment district in which the Memorial Coliseum, owned by the City, would undergo a few improvements and become a strictly sports-centric building.

Negotiations between PAM and the PDC over what to do with the Memorial Coliseum began in the wake of a failed attempt at relocating the Portland Beaver’s baseball stadium from PGE Park to the Rose Quarter. The project, which would have resulted in the demolition of the Coliseum, was spearheaded by City Commissioner Randy Leonard and backed financially by billionaire Merritt Paulson. Ultimately, the community opposed the change, preferring to keep the old building that the City dedicated to Portland’s veterans nearly 50 years ago. Now, demolition of the building is looking less and less likely. Last August, the PDC issued a report noting that the City has received notification that the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation approved a nomination of the Coliseum to the National Register of Historic Places.

While neither the concept of a natural history museum nor that of a Blazer village include demolition of the soon-to-be historic building, the question remains as to which one would best represent the interests of the community. The proposal from Botel’s group isn’t the only unfunded proposal soon to meet the chopping block. Portland Mayor Sam Adams wrote in a recent press release that, “More than 95 different proposals were submitted for the renovation or adaptive reuse of Portland’s Memorial Coliseum.”

COMMENTARY

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It became clear during presentations that the Blazer’s Jumptown Plaza was the goliath that stood in the way of community proposals. At least a dozen proposals drew attention to the disparity between these grassroots concepts and the billionaire-sponsored Jumptown. After two hours of slide shows, I left remembering something Botel had said to me earlier in the week, “Community groups are most definitely the underdogs in this process, but I still have hope.”

Women Veteran Students

Join us for a brunch that celebrates You!
Please join the PSU Student Veterans Association and Women’s Resource Center for a collaborative brunch designed specifically for Portland’s Women Veteran students. We hope this can be an opportunity for you to meet other women with similar interests and connect with resources that may be of value to you. Join us. We look forward to meeting you.

Date: February 11th, 2010 @ 9:30am
Location: PSU Smith Building
Address: Multicultural Center Rm. 225
POC: Bridge D’Urso 503-725-5672
Mandy Martin 971-219-9114

Continued from page 17

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A new co-ed fraternity on campus offers more than a social agenda. Alpha Kappa Psi is a fraternity for students interested in honing skills for the business world.

Viking Fest 2010 is a rock concert coming to Smith Memorial Student Union on February 19, and the group behind the event is hoping to make an impression. Members of Alpha Kappa Psi have reinvigorated their coed business fraternity and hope the concert will help PSU students take notice.

“We figured a concert would be the best way to bring in the Portland State student body and make ourselves more visible,” said Ali Bolt, secretary of the PSU chapter of Alpha Kappa Psi. Last winter the Organizational Budget Council awarded the emerging group an $800 initial budget.

The local chapter is technically referred to as a “colony” until it becomes fully established with Alpha Kappa Psi’s National Heritage Center. Still, the group offers a range of opportunities to students who choose to join with a one-time $50 membership fee. Students learn the keys to succeed in the business community through workshops hosted by professionals. Over the course of winter term, the fraternity will host several workshops covering the development of cover letters, resumes, and important interview techniques.

Planning the concert event has also taught the students important communication skills as they deal with bands and deciding on event activities. “It’s a lot of fun, but we still get a lot done,” says Ali Bolt, the fraternity secretary.

“Collin Davis gets lots of credit for bringing the event to life, setting the plans into motion,” says Vice President of Finance Antonea Payton of the fraternity’s vice president of alumni relations. “He really worked out the details.”

Founded in 1908 at New York University, this nation-wide fraternity has over 300 chapters across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Their global presence has created a sustainable infrastructure for a chapter at Portland State University.

For more information about how you can get involved with Alpha Kappa Psi, please contact rush@pdxakpsi.org

**Viking Fest 2010**

Rock concert featuring

Holding Out, And I’ve Landed, I Will Be King, and Diamond Liars

Friday, February 19

8 to 11 p.m.

Smith Ballroom

Tickets go on sale at 7 p.m.

Admission is $5; all ages are welcome

Alpha Kappa Psi members will also be collecting canned goods for the Oregon Food Bank and there will be a raffle with prizes.
Rudy Soto is not your average political candidate. He resembles Obama’s little brother, and even seems to channel the president’s sincerity, while drawing strength from his family and community. When Soto made his formal announcement January 18, he was in front of about 50 friends and family. It was clear that these are the people from whom Soto draws strength—there were more hugs than handshakes that night. Except Soto, 24, is a bit of a long shot in the campaign for a Portland City Council seat—he’s a senior here at PSU; a liberal arts major who plans to graduate this Spring.

Q: You have a very interesting life story for someone so young, as well as a tendency to strive for leadership. Is there an experience that stands out as shaping you into who you are today?

A: More than anything, the hardship I experienced growing up in a poverty-stricken midsize American town with an immigrant father with three jobs, and a mother who was a caretaker of six siblings; two of the younger ones were born with spina bifida. They are paralyzed from the waist down. Experiencing this as a troubled youth made me yearn for something warm and the deep desire to transform my own life but to also help others. My Native American and Latino heritage is a huge part of my identity and influences my outlook on the world. I have strong connections with both communities.

Q: You were student body president here at PSU for 2007-2008. Did that inspire you to take the next step politically?

A: Serving as the spokesperson and representative of 27,000+ students certainly provided me with some insight as to what is takes to be a public servant. I learned a lot from that experience. Part of my duties included overseeing a sizeable staff and a considerable budget. My responsibilities also included travel and public speaking. We were working on policies and issues that would effect students immediately and in the future.

Q: You are in the Oregon National Guard, and I saw that you serve on a Military Funeral Honor Guard. Have your experiences with the Honor Guard changed your views about what it means to serve?

A: Absolutely. Being a part of the Military Funeral Honor Guard has been the utmost privilege and honor, as well as a humbling experience. It makes you think a lot about the meaning of life—not taking your family and friends for granted because tomorrow is never promised.

Q: Yesterday (January 18) you announced your candidacy for Portland City Commissioner. Is there a special reason you chose Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to make your announcement?

A: It was intentional. When I was a young man my father placed a poster on my bedroom wall—an inspirational poster that says, “Live the dream,” —which is my motto. MLK is one of the people that I look up to and have studied and I’m thankful for all that he did to create opportunities that our generation too often takes for granted.

Q: You’ve been working with Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish. Has being close to city government encouraged you to pursue your own seat on the council?

A: Yes it has. Being around these politicians has helped me understand that they are decision makers and are more concerned with the big picture, while their staff deals with the policy details. I am running because I believe I have what it takes to do the job and do it well. I’ve been a part of small meetings with [Portland City Commissioners] Leonard and Fish and public events with commissioners; I serve on multiple boards and committees and I’ve testified in front of City Council. I’ve taken phone calls from constituents. Having a wide variety of experience inside and outside city hall has given me the confidence in my ability to be a capable and effective Commissioner of Public Affairs.

Q: The candidate field is getting crowded. How do you plan on standing out?

A: None of the candidates look like me so that speaks for itself. On top of that,
none of the candidates have the same experience and background as me. I have strong relationships throughout the city with a variety of demographics, young and old, Republican and Democrat, students and professionals.

Q: What makes you think you have a chance against Dan Saltzman, an experienced commissioner?
A: While he has been in office for well over a decade, Portland politics are as toxic as ever. He is part of a city hall that doesn’t have a very good reputation because of all of the recent scandals and controversies. My sense is that Portlanders, like much of America, are discontented with the self-serving politics as usual and the general sentiment is that a shakeup is needed. Portland deserves better.

Q: Commissioner Leonard wants to arm water reservoir guards, but Saltzman is against it. What is your position?
A: In regards to the Water Bureau, I favor contracting with the Portland Police Bureau and/or Multnomah & Clackamas County Sheriff for any armed security needs.

Q: Do you support the second recall of Mayor Sam Adams?
A: It’s no secret that there’s a lack of public trust within the political process. That’s why I have signed the recall petition. There’s an overwhelming need to restore honesty, integrity, and accountability. Voters deserve to have full confidence in the leaders who are elected to represent them.

Q: Do you agree with the Commission’s decision to move ahead on plans to convert PGE Park into a Major League Soccer venue without a binding agreement? Do you have a stance on MLS coming to PGE?
A: While there’s much excitement and anticipation about the prospects of converting PGE Park into a Major League Soccer venue, my vote would have been cast alongside those of Commissioners Fish and Fritz. It’s unwise to move ahead without a development agreement. With the plan that’s been approved by Leonard, Adams, and Saltzman, Portlanders stand the risk of losing. I simply wouldn’t stand for that.

The Spectator’s Rearbuttal

Editor’s Note: Through June, The Rearguard and The Spectator will each feature a column of “banter,” in a civilized manner, on issues of concern to the reading public at Portland State University.

This is the Portland Spectator’s response.

"WE WANT RESULTS, NOT RHETORIC” – OBAMA’S FIRST STATE OF THE UNION WAS HOPEFUL ABOUT CHANGE, BUT WE’RE STILL WAITING.

By Molly Shove

I felt a familiar flutter of butterfly wings listening to Obama give his 2010 state of the union address. Could he really be the one? The hope for America, the change we can believe in; the cool, calm, tall, dark and handsome man this country fell in love with those long months ago. How could we resist his wieldy charms? Little kids, old ladies and firefighters write him letters about how wonderful he is—he is the knight in shining armor to save us from the evil Wall Street CEO’s and he always knows just what to say to make you feel like you really matter (usually “hope” or “change,” but thankfully, he’s expanded his vocabulary since taking office.) He threw out dazzling statistics and smiled at us; he chastised Congress, big business, and China and he talked about doing a lot of awesome things to solve the nation’s problems.

The only problem is I’ve heard it all before. I’ve heard his promises to cut taxes for the middle class, to spend money on making jobs, funding students, helping little old ladies and finding two trillion in mythical savings to cut the exorbitant deficit. It’s not that he isn’t charming and the smartest guy in the room; it’s just that the campaign and the honeymoon are over. He said he was going to get out of Iraq for real this time, actually do anything about the de

This isn’t to say he’s entirely worthless. Despite my better judgment and his use of language, I do feel some hope regarding his ability to change things. He outlined goals, with dates and specifics attached to them, including repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” doubling exports in the next five years, freezing spending for three years and by 2020 having the highest proportion of graduates in the world. However, he’s promised lots of things. Like having Guantanamo Bay closed by now. And making Congress be nice to each other, or actually do anything (or recognizing the Armenian genocide, or doing anything about the deficit etc.).

The State of the Union address made me feel like I fell in love with him all over again. Like he was back on the campaign trail with “obamagirl” and the press swooning at his side; back when we actually believed he could save the world and bring the nation together to holding hands and singing kumbaya. However, the year of broken promises has stung, making me less likely to open my heart to his political games.

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SWING MON AMOUR

February 9th • 6–9pm
Portland State University
Smith Memorial Hall Ballroom • Rm 328

1940’s Themed
6–7pm Free Dance Instruction
Followed by Featured Artist
Stolen Sweets

Admission: FREE

Brought to you by Music Committee | co-sponsored: PSPS, World Dance Club