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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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.portlandspectator.org

Staff

Editor-In-Chief
Joe Wirtheim

Senior Editor
Jonathan Miles

Copy Editor
Megan Kimmelshue

Asst. Copy Editor
Danielle Kulczyk

Online Editor
Molly Shove

Senior Writer
Jeff Wickizer

Staff Writers
Alexander Almeida
Erica Charves
Michael Munkvold

Art Director
Laura Jones

Graphic Designer
Nate Garvison

Photographer
Clara Rodriguez

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Dear Readers,

It’s true that you’re holding the academic year’s last issue; but we’d rather think of it as next year’s first issue. We’re already working ahead and setting the course for another big year for 2010-2011. Our new chief editor, Jonathan Miles, has an ambitious plan for the Spectator. He already has an A-Team staff of writers, editors and designers who have put this issue together.

For me, it’s farewell. As editor this past year I’ve had a challenging and exciting experience, as well as one of the greatest learning opportunities of my life. I can easily say that leading the Spectator has been equal to an extra year of college education. The lessons I have learned will stay with me throughout my career. I have to thank the Spectator staff of 2009-2010 for all their hard work, long hours and, most of all, for bearing with me through rewrites and redesigns.

I know all our work has paid off. We’ve built a news media institution that has won a loyal audience of readers like you. I’m confident that this magazine will continue to live up to its reputation of bringing you the stories that inform, surprise and make you think.

Sincerely,

Joe Wirtheim
Editor-in-Chief 2009-2010
What Now, ASPSU?

Another year down. ASPSU made promises, but what did they accomplish?

Danielle Kulczyk

Back in April of last year, Jonathan Sanford was running for the position of ASPSU president, and with only 800 votes, he got the job. From there, we have had a year of internal conflict, high turnover and very little of the promised transparency. So what has Sanford & Co. actually accomplished?

One of Sanford’s first promises was to find a space for two student groups without offices, he told the Vanguard [“Enlisted for Portland State change,” April 14, 2009], the Muslim Student Association and the Student Veterans Association. The MSA is still unhoused, but the SVA, of which Sanford is a member, is located in Smith Memorial Student Union. It is unknown whether Sanford himself is responsible for the SVA’s location, or if it was just their time on the waiting list for available space. Sanford did not respond to requests for comment on any ASPSU issues.

A “chief goal” of Sanford’s was to “widen the formerly narrow lines of communication between campus officials and students,” as he told The Vanguard one year ago [“ASPSU president-elect reveals big plans,” May 21, 2009]. Members of ASPSU currently sit on the restructuring task force—and a few meet with university President Wim Wiewel fairly often—but it’s probably safe to say that shouting “Shame on you!” at Wiewel in a Park Blocks protest did not do any good for communication [“We Protest. Because We’re Not Ready to Talk About It,” February 2010]. Fireside chats ended Sept. 10, before fall term even began, and ASPSU’s website is sorely outdated, as it has been for most of the year.

Jonathan Sanford’s Three Campaign Platforms:

1. Shared governance with PSU administration? Questionable.
2. Inexpensive and subsidized housing? Failed.

Another year down. ASPSU made promises, but what did they accomplish?

An Inside Look at Student Government

Transition Binders

Markey’s dedication to the VOTE! campaign was an asset to ASPSU this year, and as incoming president, she ideally will continue to benefit ASPSU. However, one obstacle standing in the way of progress is a lack of transition binders provided by outgoing staff. “Transition binders would be extremely beneficial,” said Poulsen. “It helps create a continuity between previous ASPSU administrations and the incoming administration.” At press time, the only known binder that was handed off was between Sanford and Markey. “A lack of binders might cause people to try to reinvent the wheel,” said Sanford.

If you’ve ever attended an ASPSU Senate meeting, you know that they often start late, plagued by low attendance, and assign last-minute proxies to sit in for missing Senators. Thinking about what accomplishments the Senate made this year, it’s hard to come up with anything tangible. Senate President Pro-Tempore Daniel Lyons asserts that the Senate was working on many things—including passing three resolutions—but most topics died out mid-year or before. Furthermore, Senate participation and accomplishments seem to have worsened since senators started being paid again in 2009, after a three year hiatus on Senate stipends. Lyons cited

2009–10 Senate Resolutions:

1. Senate support for the Dream Act.
2. Senate support for the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act.
The ASPSU Twitter has not been updated since February, and no member of ASPSU has posted to their Facebook page since March, during elections.

When you break it down, you can go through each of Sanford’s three major campaign platforms and the outcome is not good. There is no real shared governance with PSU administration. Sanford and team made zero impact on housing costs. And the supposed “hug fest” that was supposed to take place this spring? Sanford told The Vanguard that the event was canceled to focus on the new staff’s transition.

Sanford ran with additional campaigns in mind, but few of them came to be. A Standards and Ethics Advisory Board was proposed in November of last year, but never got off the ground. The PSU Programming Board has been successful this year, planning events such as Midnight Breakfast, but PSU Programming Board Co-Chair Christian Aniciete asserts that ASPSU had nothing to do with its creation back in fall term. Sanford also hoped to move ASPSU from under SALP to under the Division of Student Affairs, but that has not happened. The last campaign was “ASPSU ‘house-cleaning’” which seems to have been undertaken by incoming ASPSU President Katie Markey in her preparation to take over June 1. Markey spoke at the May 11 Senate meeting, asking for volunteers to help clean and re-organize the office, offering pizza as payment.

Then what did ASPSU do for you this year? They registered over 2,700 students to vote. They increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant and kept tuition from skyrocketing with the help of the Oregon Student Association. They raised $2,300 for the Disability Resource Center. And they started a food pantry for hungry students. Sanford deserves credit for recognizing that bringing free food to hungry students is something that ASPSU can realistically do to lessen their financial burden, but it was then Senator and Vice President-elect Selina Poulsen who took charge of implementing the project.

Not exactly their campaign promises, but it’s something.

Markey had a huge role in the vote drive as legislative affairs director, so there is hope that she can do great things with next year’s student government. And, after the performance of this year’s ASPSU, it can only go up.

ASPSU Accomplishments:
1. Increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.
2. Raised $2,300 for the DRC.
3. Initiated a food pantry.

Self-motivation as an issue for some senators. From fall through winter term, there were consistently 20–25 senators, but halfway through winter term it dropped to around 15 for the remainder of the year. Only 12 senators have remained from fall term until present. Though the 2009–10 Senate successfully impeached a rogue Student Fee Committee member, even that accomplishment was undermined by the final decision to force that member’s resignation rather than follow through with the impeachment.

Markey asked senators to write down essential information about their constituents to add to transition binders. She also is planning on bringing this year’s Senators to a retreat in September with new Senators to help teach them, so hopefully there will be some institutional memory retained through to next year. Sadly, it’s hard to find worth in a group of students who are often elected in uncontested elections and show no tangible accomplishments.

Elections
The Elections Board did not release their official recommendations for next year’s election as of press time, but some suggestions have been tossed around already.

During the May 11 Senate meeting, Jacob Voegele, senator and E-Board member, asked senators for their input on the elections process—information he would take back to the E-Board when considering changes to their bylaws. When the inevitable question of voter turnout came up, Voegele said low turnout is an institutional problem within ASPSU as a whole, and not the E-Board’s fault alone.

One major change is possible for next year’s process, however, and that is a change to the voting system. According to Voegele, “The program software we used this year is now obsolete.” As of press time, no decision had been made on what type of system will replace the electronic voting software, and the Student Affairs Office, which runs the software, has not specifically heard of any such change taking place.

In any case, here’s to hoping at least the ASPSU elections are not uncontested next year.
Ban Banner Voting?

The best thing ASPSU can do to improve voter turnout is to count all the votes and get rid of a broken voting system.

According to the Chair of the ASPSU Elections Board, Debra Porta, “One-third of the students who opened the ballot to vote, did not complete the vote.” What that means is about 300 students started to fill out the ballot, but never finished. They either voted for some or none of the candidates on the ballot, before closing the window without submitting the final survey. Thus there are potentially hundreds of uncounted votes in an election that was won by a margin of 163 votes.

Did these students who filed incomplete ballots know that their votes wouldn’t be counted? That’s hard to say. But, consider how voting works in Oregon’s real world elections: If you don’t care who is running for vice-comptroller of municipal waste management, then you don’t vote for any of those candidates, but you still mail in your incomplete ballot with the confidence that a democratic system counts every vote that is cast for governor, senator or metro president. Perhaps some students felt it was unnecessary to vote for senators in an uncontested election. Perhaps students were discouraged from completing their ballot by the complicated and poorly presented constitutional amendments. Perhaps it’s time to examine the survey software that ASPSU uses to run its elections.

Both ASPSU President-elect Katie Markey and student politics pundit-at-large Chris Proudfoot told The Spectator last month that the ASPSU elections voting system was getting out of the Office of Information Technologies. The good news is that they were never there to begin with. The Spectator tracked down the team who runs this software—they work in the Division of Student Affairs. In an April 30 e-mail, William Garrick, one of the two people who manage the software, told The Spectator, “Data isn’t ‘lost’ if someone doesn’t complete the ballot—the incomplete ballot is saved as a session. But, they are not included in the results until the ballot is submitted.” Garrick’s partner, Morgan Harvey followed up in a phone interview saying that it’s possible to recover those uncounted votes, “There is a way,” said Harvey, “but it’s not a super-simple way.” Harvey relieved the E-Board and Student Activities and Leadership Programs of total culpability in not counting those votes, saying that they were “nothing that the normal users would have access to.” However, they were not prohibited from including those partial ballots in their final count. “We can definitely provide them with the data,” said Harvey.

One informal recommendation that has been tossed around for next year’s elections is to move to a different software, or even a paper ballot. Though Harvey is meeting with SALP Assistant Director Domanic Thomas this month to discuss software changes, he has not heard anything specific about the voting software. “PSU is switching to different software for all sorts of reasons,” said Harvey. Regardless of whether ASPSU uses paper ballots or survey software or heads-down-thumbs-up, they need to count every vote. Otherwise, it’s not democracy, and elections are as meaningless as everyone keeps saying they are.
PSU has three print “news” outlets. You obviously already know about The Spectator. Here’s a look at the other two.

**Rearguard**

*The Rearguard* provides the campus with an imperative service: a sense of humor. While *The Spectator* and *The Vanguard* bustle around the school self-importantly, *The Rearguard* does anything which might afford it a chuckle. Sometimes it does very offensive things to achieve this end, sometimes it falls flat and sometimes it’s fantastically spot-on. You can always trust them to drop with a bang, or in the case of the September 2009 issue: a big, bold **HOLY S***.

**Pro**

*The Rearguard* has historically struggled with timeliness (for example: the self proclaimed “three-week hangover after Christmas break”). They also haven’t always dealt with letters to the editor in the most professional way. Their humor has been very hit-or-miss and some of their news articles have lacked factual evidence altogether.

**Con**

On the downside, they don’t excel at breaking news right as it happens. For example, the May 21 issue of *The Vanguard* broke one of the biggest stories of the year (“PSU in space”), a story about PSU experiments being done on the International Space Station. However, the experiments started April 5. Many of their stories tell me about an event that I wanted to go to, two weeks after it happened.

*The Vanguard* provides news for distressed students.

**Pro**

*The Vanguard* is the go-to place if you care about updating your news more than once a month. On the upside, it won 14 (5 first and 9 second place) awards from Oregon Newspaper Publisher’s Association this year, as well as two honorable mentions. It had something to say about almost all of the noteworthy events on campus.

**Con**

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*The Vanguard* is an irreplaceable and valuable news source. However, it is often helpful to have a supplement to provide the in-depth analysis of important issues they sometimes neglect.

Even *me* not want to vote, and I was running for office! Their editorials on “how to clean up the system” was well thought out and interesting (“Editorial: You’re doing it wrong,” April 30, and “Editorial: A higher standard of excellence,” May 7), but they failed to tell us what the candidates actually stood for, which made it difficult to be an informed reader. The endorsements merely stated who they liked, without a whole lot of substantive information why.

Overall, *The Vanguard* is an irreplaceable and valuable news source. However, it is often helpful to have a supplement to provide the in-depth analysis of important issues they sometimes neglect.
Tight rope walker in the park blocks
Photo by Nate Garvison
**Summer Calendar**

8, 10, 15, 17, 22, and 24 **PSU Live! Spring Concert Series in the Park Blocks from noon to 1 p.m.** Catch some good local music while enjoying the summer sun.

1–13 **Portland Rose Festival at Tom McCall Waterfront Park**, and be sure to secure a curbside seat for the Rose Festival Parade on June 12.

14–18 **If you have any financial aid money left, why not** spend it backpacking in Olympic National Park with the Outdoor Club? Visit www.pdx.edu/recreation for more information.

14–20 **Portland Pride Festival and Parade.** For more information, visit www.pridenw.org.

20 **The campus rec center will resume their scheduled activities,** so you’ll be able to maintain your fitness program—or start a new one!
June and July · Watch the World Cup in the Multicultural Center (SMSU 228), 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The final game will be shown on July 11 in Pioneer Square on a 17 by 23 foot screen. Prepare for a mini-riot.

June through July · Portland Summer Concert Series in Washington Park, along with free movies on the weekends. Throw down a blanket and enjoy performances that have included The Portland Cello Project, Oregon Ballet Theatre, and well-known jazz
5th AVE CINEMA

Summer line-up

- June 18–20: The Fantastic Mr. Fox
- June 25–27: Clue
- July 9–11: The Planet of the Apes (1968)
- July 16–18: All the Real Girls
- July 23–25: Taste of Cherry
- July 30–Aug. 1: TBA
- Aug. 6–8: Little Otik
- Aug. 13–15: Umbrellas of Cherbourg

Show Times
- Friday & Saturday: 7 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.
- Sunday: 3 p.m.

Admission
- FREE for PSU Students & Faculty
- $2 for all other students
- $3 general admission

AUGUST

4  Save a life, give blood! The American Red Cross is holding a blood drive in SMSU room 338. They always have cookies afterward, too.

26–28  Celebrate la dolce vita and Italian-American culture at the Festa Italiana in Pioneer Courthouse Square.
New Chief, Old Tricks

Until Portland Police Bureau’s organizational culture changes, nothing else will.

As the recently self-appointed face of the PPB, it’s Mayor Sam Adams’ responsibility to transform the struggling agency and stem the tide of negative publicity. Not an easy task, but as the Keller Police Department in Texas has shown, it is possible.

Keller, Texas

On Jan. 29, 2001, newly appointed Police Chief Mark Hafner began the tedious and often difficult process of transforming a police department that had alienated many of the 30,000 residents it was supposed to serve.

“An underlying dissension existed in the community. Citizens perceived the department as an agency that suppressed and harassed people, particularly the youth,” said Hafner. He went on to add, “Officers were not breaking the law, but they did not come across as professional and compassionate to the community.”

After six months of observing his department and speaking with community members, Hafner realized, “The Keller Police Department failed to continuously improve and adapt.” He noticed that members of the department were well versed in the enforcement aspect and policies of the department, however, an emphasis on building a relationship with the community was missing. “The employees were not acting as a team, but rather, as
individuals with their own agenda.” He also noted, “Certain cliques existed among departmental leaders and employees.” The organization lacked a common mission and vision. Hafner knew that the Keller Police Department could not adequately serve the community until it learned how to operate internally. Hafner and his command staff knew it was time to change the culture of their organization and create a mission statement that better served not only the community, but also their agency as well.

E
Empathy, Edification, Enthusiasm and Excellence are the four criteria that now guide the decisions and culture of the Keller Police Department. Since 2003, the Keller Police Department has tested all of their individual and organizational decisions, choices, actions and thoughts against “E to the Fourth Power.” Chief Hafner pointed out, “If our decisions, choices and actions did not promote E to the Fourth Power, we were not truly in line with our organizational philosophy.”

The Results
Using E to the Fourth Power to define the culture and guide the mission of the Keller P.D. has resulted in a clear direction for the agency. Chief Hafner points out, “If one action fails the test, we do not continue to consider it.” The changes have also increased employee job satisfaction. Officers are now holding each other accountable by implementing E to the Fourth Power.

Chief Hafner told The Spectator, “Since I wrote that article, we continue to grow and improve. Crime continues to decline, citizen satisfaction continues to increase.” He also points out that with their demonstrated success, “three lieutenants have landed chiefs jobs in the area and other cities want our talent.” Hafner and his officers know the way they run their department is not the norm. “We operate under a servant-leadership concept. People don’t leave the organization unless they are asked to because they don’t fit in the culture. When officers come back they often report ‘Chief, we are weird.’” Hafner prefers to be called weird, as he says, “They mean that in a good way. We care about victims of crime and officers follow up and show that we are doing everything we can to solve their case.”

All Eyes Now On Adams
After successfully dodging two recall attempts, Adams is reshaping the Portland Police Bureau in his image, clearing out those who publicly question his actions and judgment. As Jasun Wurster—the Portland State graduate who led two recall attempts against Adams—points out, “Adams has been emboldened to the point that he feels that he can get away with anything that is technically not illegal.”

Upon becoming mayor, Adams has had little interest in the Police Bureau and overseeing its direction, appointing Dan Saltzman as police commissioner, generally a responsibility reserved for the mayor. Over time, pressure mounted on Adams to become more involved with oversight after a string of officer-involved incidents have left the PPB’s image in tatters.

Police Chief Rosie Sizer called an impromptu press conference on May 10, in which she publically questioned Adams’ budget cuts in light of his previous pledge to protect police officers’ jobs. According to Sizer, her desire to hold this press conference stemmed from a news release the mayor issued in April, in which he claimed the police bureau was...
going to overspend their budget by $5 million.

Mayor Adams responded swiftly, firing Chief Sizer and deposing Police Commissioner Saltzman on Wednesday, May 12—two days after her press conference. He replaced Sizer with Central Precinct Commander Mike Reese, and vowed to listen to the calls for change by accepting responsibility for the Portland Police Bureau. Reese and Adams have vowed not to cut any members from the police force. Less than a week after firing Sizer, Adams released an updated version of his proposed budget, which protected many of the services and positions Sizer fought for. New Police Chief Reese will instead make his cuts by eliminating administrative positions, 35 in all. Eliminating Leslie Stevens’ position as the head of the Office of Accountability and Professional Standards does not strengthen the bureau and its relationship with the community—but sweeping problems under the rug is what Reese is good at.

Officer Tom Brennan, after going to his precinct commander about concerns over the erratic behavior of fellow officers, was banished to the evidence warehouse. This precinct commander is none other than our new Police Chief, Reese. Brennan received support from Commissioner Randy Leonard in an April 13 e-mail in which he said, “Thomas, I am hoping a change comes to the management of the Police Bureau sooner rather than later.” He added, “When that happens, it is at the top of my list to let the chief know that I consider your transfer an abuse of management rights and that any words about setting a new tone need to be followed by deeds.”

A change has come to the management of the Police Bureau. It is not known whether Leonard has followed through on that promise, but he is correct when he says that words about setting a new tone need to be followed by deeds.

Portland and Keller differ in that historically, the PPB has reacted to incidents and failed to be proactive in changing the internal culture of the bureau. It has also failed to first focus on working with the community and the multitude of organizations asking to be heard. Listening to their needs and concerns would help the PPB to restructure its mission statement and future goals, and address the needs of everyone involved. Developing an “all-inclusive” philosophy will eliminate the “us vs. them” mentality that exists within the current culture. “Police agencies often find it hard to motivate officers and employees to embrace a community policing philosophy,” said Keller Chief Hafner. “The culture inside serves as a mirror effect outside.”
Saltzmann’s Out—For Now

Activists say the mental health crisis continues unabated.

When Mayor Sam Adams stripped Dan Saltzman of his duties as police commissioner, it seemed an almost tragic end to a contentious era. Saltzman spent much of his tenure at odds with the rank-and-file police officers, fruitlessly advocating better police training to deal with homeless and mentally ill in the wake of several high-profile incidents in which officers have used deadly force against transients and people with mental disorders. For his efforts, Saltzman ended up with nothing to show but a vote of no confidence from the police union and a shove out the door. (Saltzman retains his other positions following his May 18 re-election.)

The question is, what now? Adams, took on the duties of Police Commissioner, has yet to make any new policy. Whatever he does, he will face many of the same problems that eventually took Saltzman down—perhaps more. Many voices within the community say that the relationship between Portland police and the homeless and mentally ill communities is as bad as ever.

“Portland is in the middle of a mental health crisis,” says Jesse Cornett, one of Saltzman’s top-tier opponents in the election. “You’re dealing with people with mental health issues and addiction, and the police officer is at the forefront of that. Do we need more people out there? Maybe. Do we need more trained people out there? Definitely.”

“We have significant anger from the homeless and the mentally ill [toward] the police,” says Ed Garren, a Beaverton psychotherapist and another of Saltzman’s opponents in the election. “They are at the same breaking point with the police that the black communities in Miami and L.A. were.”

The department’s track record with the homeless and mentally ill has recently been highlighted by a series of violent incidents that have shaken the entire city.

Three years ago, James Chasse, a homeless man suffering from schizophrenia, died from injuries he sustained while three police officers tried to subdue him; a grand jury ruled his death an accident, but the city recently settled with his family for $1.6 million. This April, Officer Ronald Frashour fatally shot Aaron Campbell, a depressed and suicidal young man who was unarmed. The following month, Officer Jason Walters shot and killed Jack Dale Collins after Collins approached him armed with an X-Acto knife and covered in blood; Collins, a homeless man who had a history of mental illness, alcoholism and self-injury, had requested police assistance 11 days earlier.

All of these incidents occurred on Saltzman’s watch, but some observers say that the problem goes beyond him—or any commissioner—and can only be fixed by addressing attitudes ingrained in the police force itself. “You’ve got to deal with the police culture rather than individual officers,” says Garren. “There are enough people of good will in the police who don’t like what’s going on, to come up with better ways to self-govern.”

Of particular concern to Garren is the “code of silence” he says is endemic to police forces everywhere, in which police officers fear—and usually face—reprisals if they speak out against their colleagues and superiors. He recommends taking measures such as charging cops who cover for their fellow officers’ misconduct as criminal accessories, or cutting their salaries.

Others say the problem lies at still a higher level; with counties struggling to get by on ever-diminishing state and federal allowances, Some critics contend, the social services meant to address societal problems such as mental illness and drug abuse are left by the wayside, leaving police officers to deal with problems they lack the training for. In other words, it’s not the police who are failing, but the system itself.

“The federal government basically gives us peanuts, and county officials are expected to work with it,” says Israel Bayer, director of Street Roots, a Portland-based homeless advocacy newspaper. “The federal government, the city government
and the county government have scaled back funding, and have left [the rules for dealing with the mentally ill] to the discretion of the police officers. The answer is more training.

Bayer, who was once homeless, says that the crisis is made worse when the debate over how to deal with homeless and mentally ill offenders is framed as a question of crime and punishment.

“Homelessness is being framed as a public safety issue, when in fact it’s a public health issue,” says Bayer. “The Health and Housing Departments should have every bit of the muscle that the police do. What ends up happening is that these big events happen and get splashed on the headlines, and the conversation is shifted.”

Bayer reflects the opinion of many homeless advocates when he says the mental health crisis must be dealt with where it has the most effect: in the community.

“All law enforcement does in our realm is shift the problem from neighborhood to neighborhood,” Bayer says. “We need to break out of that model and turn to people in the community with relationships with people in the street.”

I would like to take a moment to thank you and briefly explain why my admission to the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society is important to me. I graduated from the Out Side In Living Program when I was a kid living on the streets. During that time I was introduced to the Greenhouse program, which helped me to obtain my GED.

I am a former foster kid who went through several foster homes before being adopted. I am also an ethnic minority starting to understand what it means to identify as a Latino, as well as a student of the Disabilities Resource Center which has its many challenges. I represent the first generation of my biological family to receive a higher education and am a part of the Equal Opportunity Program at PSU. Over the past three years my teachers in the Communication Department at PSU, my adopted family, and the local church community Fathers House City Ministries pastor Steve Trujillo, who is also the president of the neighborhood association, have all tirelessly invested their time and energy into me. City Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Mayor Sam Adams both took the time to listen to my ideas and made me feel as though I have a voice. I will never forget that several years ago Mr. Saltzman encouraged me to get a higher education so someday I could be heard. His advice must have stuck in the back of my mind. I hope to be an advocate for the city of Portland for those who feel they do not have a voice.

It took all of these individuals, as well as and my faith in God, to join forces in ensuring that I became holistically sustainable in mind, body, and soul. Now that I am holistically sustainable I can invest in others and my city. My hope is to see communities and people become healed so they too can invest in others and their community. To impact someone can be simply by listening to them with empathy, seeing them as valuable, smiling, asking if they need help, telling them something you like about them, or celebrating the good in them. Let us come together to begin to help those in need so they too can become holistically sustainable and will be able to contribute positively to our community and beyond.

To be invited for membership in The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is an amazing moment in my life. This membership validates everyone that has invested so much of their time in me. I love PSU and the city of Portland for its dedication to making sure I receive the tools needed to flourish in the world.

Thank you,
Alexander L. Villarreal
Arizona’s recently passed Immigration Enforcement Bill (SB 1070) is attacked by proponents of Illegal Immigration, and opponents of informed arguments.

Jeff Wickizer

After reading a recent article in *The Vanguard* titled “Racially suspicious” [May 7] it became clear that we are under attack. No, not from law enforcement, as the article would have you believe, but from activists who condone illegal activity and spew hyperbole.

The article, although amusing, failed to back its claims with factual support from any credible or even questionable source. When attempts were made to state “fact,” they too were misrepresented. In the article, the author Natalia Grozina writes, “The law allows police officers to question people about their immigration status and to request to see their papers only on ‘reasonable suspicion.’”

When you actually read Arizona Senate Bill 1070, Section B, it reads, “For any lawful contact made by a law enforcement official or agency where reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States, a reasonable attempt shall be made, when practicable, to determine the immigration status of the person,” (emphasis added).

Let me break this down for you. This law does not allow a police officer to question every Hispanic person they see on the street, just to determine their residency. What this law does mean is that if a police officer has lawfully stopped a Hispanic person—for say a traffic violation—and that individual does not have or cannot provide a drivers license or other form of identification from the United States, then that is “reasonable suspicion.” If a person was a legal resident of this country, they would most likely have a state issued driver’s license, if not their social security card or birth certificate. To recap, a police officer cannot just pull over a vehicle because someone is Hispanic—there actually has to be a lawful reason, prior to questioning them about their immigration status. Not to mention that driving without identification is actually a crime, but why start worrying about that now, we are losing focus of what is important.

This article is not about politics. It is supposed to be about understanding the plight of illegal immigrants and the struggles they face. Grozina writes, “It is time to out the purple elephant in the room: Conservative folks… You can be honest—just embrace your subtle racism.” Well…um…maybe it isn’t about the plight of illegal immigrants.

At the very least, this article is about exposing racial profiling, stereotyping and judging people based on their skin color. As Grozina writes, “We can all breathe a little more easily knowing that the likes of John McCain, the epitome of white, might well be requested to prove he is authorized to be in the U.S. (just kidding John, you look like you could be in a commercial for a life-insurance policy, not an illegal immigrant).” Perfect example.

Grozina suggests, “Shouldn’t our officers be investigating the illegal activities themselves?” Last time I checked, it was a crime to be in this country illegally. Grozina goes on to add that this bill will not encourage “good-willed illegal immigrants” to cooperate with law enforcement.

What we need to realize is that no amount of “police bashing” is going to solve this problem. Calling conservative’s racists will not solve the problem. What will solve the problem is all of us working together, to find a fair and reasonable way to assist those currently in the country illegally to gain citizenship status.

I recognize that, as student journalists, we’re all here to learn. Part of learning means making mistakes, and Grozina shouldn’t shoulder all the blame for failing to write a reasonable opinion piece in a student news publication. Nationally, many journalists have failed to effectively cover this story with any amount of honesty. It is the job of editors to catch this kind of article before it goes to print, and work with the author to improve their writing. Somewhere along the line, this article slipped through the cracks, and if *The Vanguard* wasn’t an important institution on and off campus, then it wouldn’t matter. Student journalists need to take pride in the work they are doing, so let’s make our work worthy of that pride. Let’s end the lazy journalism and the practice of perpetuating political stereotypes based on emotion. Logical discussion and cooperation between both sides of the aisle can overcome many obstacles.
By now, there has been a lot written about Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070. And from what I’ve seen so far, most people who have gone ape-shit over the bill have not, in fact, read the bill. This was most obvious during KPSU’s Debate Hour show (every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.) when after 40-plus minutes of discussion of the bill, there was a vote of how many of the panelists disagreed with the bill. Every liberal’s hand went up. Then they asked who had actually read the bill. Those same people’s hands stayed down. They were quick to condemn a bill they had not, by their own admission, read.

This isn’t the health care bill, either, which is over 2,000 pages in length. This is a mere 17 pages, and the part which had everyone so up in arms was on page one. And should their attention span be slightly longer than that of a gnat’s and they actually read past page one, then they would discover this gem buried all the way back on the second page: “This section shall be implemented in a manner consistent with federal laws regulating immigration, protecting the civil rights of all persons and respecting the privileges and immunities of United States citizens,” (emphasis added). Why emphasis added? Because that’s the kicker. When people criticize the law, they obviously have not taken into account that racial profiling, which is against civil rights law, is also in violation with this law. Or that any U.S. citizen, who has a great number of rights to protect themselves against the police, should they so educate themselves enough to exercise them, are also stalwartly protected by this new law.

What’s the other important thing to keep in mind about this bill? It’s that in order to even be asked about this, “lawful contact” has to be made. Which counters every paranoid Nazi-Germany reference to “Vhere are yer papers?” Because you’d have to be breaking a law to begin with to even be asked. And even still, it only allows officers to make a “reasonable effort” to obtain them. And should this sound so crazy, let’s also add that for the past 60 years, it’s been federal law that all lawful aliens in this country have to have their papers on them at all times, anyways. And why? So they can prove they’re here lawfully. The only difference this law had made in regards to how border protection and laws that already exist are enforced is allowing law enforcement who are not federal, to enforce them. Traditionally, local, county and state troopers did not have the authority to ask for these papers. Border Patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement had to do this. That’s no longer the case.

And let’s look at why this even came to be? Federal inaction. It’s the desire to score points with constituents on both sides and the politicizing of immigration law by both sides and the desire to score points with constituents on both sides have all lead to this. “I think our bottom line is there is so much untested rhetoric out there,” said PSU Professor Laura Hickman. “I think people are just spouting off their mouths without any basis in data.” Professor Hickman of the Hatfield School of Government, conducted a study with the RAND Corporation’s Marika J. Suttorp about the relationship between deportability and repeat criminality. They found that not only was there almost no evidence for that association, but also that even a study from the U.S. Justice Department fell short of scientific. So the anger should be put squarely on Washington, not Arizona, for this, if you need someone to be mad at. If anything, Arizona’s finally taking action on federal inaction, will force comprehensive reform and border protection. 

Photos courtesy of Flickr member Fibonacci Blue
"I come across as an asshole to plenty of people," Col. JD Wilkes of Th’Legendary Shack Shakers tells me. “I have a dim cynical view of everything… my wife says I need to lighten up.” Listening to their latest album “Agriustrial,” you get a real sense of the music Wilkes is trying to show the world. The album is put between two tracks of raw industrial sounds, recorded at the Oak Level Forge in Kentucky, literally of clanking iron and the groans of rusting machines, sounds not often heard today by most Americans.

Wilkes isn’t just a front man of one of the most ferocious Southern country-gypsy-punk bands in the world. He’s an artistic painter specializing in carnival signs, a cartoonist and master lyricist. His comic “Head Cheese” shows an obvious contempt for smug coffee shops, hippie culture, political correctness and other such attempts at forced niceties. “One of the problems I have with liberals is they view America as this ideal, that we’re all entitled to this big tent ideal, that the whole world are Americans, they just don’t live here yet, this big hippie group hug that America should be. No! America is a large plot of land with boundaries and blood lines and families.” However, he doesn’t ascribe himself to any political party, saying both have their problems. In the middle of describing President Bush as “too imperial” with President Obama following suit, someone hands him a piece of paper. “I was just passed a note that cell phones cause cancer,” he says as he laughs.

Anyone who’s gone to a Shack Shakers show knows a cell phone cancer is the least of your worries. Being in the front effectively gets you out of his impressive snot rocket range, although does leave you within the range of the hairs he tends to pull out of his body, sprinkling them over the devotees like holy water.

While the Shack Shakers acquired two new members for this album. Wilkes and Bassist Mark Robertson remain, and Duane Denison and Brett Whiteacre are the newcomers. Whiteacre provides an incredible variety of percussion. The signature double kick drum that the Shack Shakers have become known for is brutally abundant in the opening musical track titled “Sin-Eater,” a song about Jesus, the original eater of sin. The double kick drum in the song resonates like a manic pounding with ungodly fury on your chest, beating in the damnations of hellfire.

By the time ‘Hammer and Tongs’ comes into play in the album, the Tom Waits-ian influence is quite apparent in a salute to Waits’ signature bloody knuckle raw percussion sound. Wilkes himself cites Waits’ Bone Machine as a primary influence in creation of “Agriustrial.”

This album itself takes you on a journey, from delta blues vamped up on an IV whiskey drip to a manic preacher whose very finger tips have touched the tips of Hell. The addition of Denison on guitar as well as prepared guitar added to the rustic nature of the album. Prepared guitar being the insertion of random objects into a guitar, where they ought not belong. Wilkes said that he and Dension put “twist ties, metal saw blades, little jigsaw blades and things like that,” saying that all of these items had their “own tonal quality.”

Despite the relentless country punk southern prided influence of the Shack Shakers, and the preconceived notion that such music lacks poetry, Wilkes does his
Stories

Photo courtesy of JD Wilkes
best to destroy this notion as well. His lyrics are entrenched deeply within southern roots, making reference from everything from experiences as a boy to crazed members of his church to legends and ghost stories which have heavy influence and prevalence to Southern living. Part of his fury seems two pronged. On one end, like a cornered animal clawing at the pop-country mega-church take-over of the Southern way of life while also, at least through his comics, consistently railing against the politically correct hipster cultures of the coasts.

“Pop-culture being what it is affects even religion now a days, it’s its main competitor. It’s hard to tell the Christian version of Madonna, the pop star, from Madonna the pop star herself. Everything has been…sexualized and streamline for mass consumption rather than church being a place where humble agrarian types go,” contends Wilkes, while comparing those humble churches to the likes of mom and pop shops, and the mega churches (which he refers to as “Goditoriums” in his comics) to the more corporate model that is taking over the country.

Even after insisting he didn’t want to talk about politics, Wilkes can’t help but get his two cents in, all of which have an obvious influence on the album. “I think the federalization of the government, the bigger it gets, with the corporate state it’s trying to set up, I think that’s a dangerous thing. I’m more for states rights and local level politics,” saying that he’s recently become less of a hermit in his town of Paducah, Ky.

When asked about the coffee shops of Portland, Wilkes went in for another jab of the city “Smug Mug” mentality. “What I don’t understand is what makes baristas think that they’re rock stars? They’re in the service industry… I never understand this haughty smug thing from the guy giving you coffee… I don’t get that at the truck stop.”

Still, he says, he loves Portland. He also laughs that he’s talking to me on a cell phone outside a coffee shop. “My wife works here, so, you know.”

Going back to the album, Wilkes said he “basically cut it live… it was the real man, old school way of doing it for the most part.” Robertson, the bassist, was also the producer. Wilkes contends Mark “had to fight his own instincts, to mess with it… to keep it low to the ground and lean and mean.”

This album—born out of recession— has a more industrial nature than their others. The machinery in rural America is lurching forward, looking to find a place again in American life. Wilkes describes the large cities as “such a famine of culture and identity,” having dealt with the “bullshit” of Nashville for ten years. But down in the rural south, Wilkes has put forth a mission to “capture the rustic rural sound of machinery in music.” While not quite as strong as his previous releases, with the track “Everything I Wanted to Do” most noticeably falling short, there are so many solid tracks the album is well worth your while, including some of the best musical diversity Wilkes has produced. Together, with Wilkes favorite whiskey, Bulliet Burbon, this is the ideal album to weather out the hard economic times to, while you rethink your life.

After their European tour, Th’ Legendary Shack Shakers will be coming to the west coast. They will playing at Dante’s during the fall, in September, or October at the latest.
The minute you read the word “abortion,” you’re going to have pre-conceived notions on what I’m going to say in the article. You’re going to assume that, because this is the Conservative Corner and that I’m talking about abortion, I plan on condemning all birth control as baby killers and chastise all of the people who even consider using it. That’s not the plan. From “gendercide” in China to a contended Oklahoma law, the virtues of potential life and a woman’s choice are being abused, with very real consequences. I’m not here to badger you with canned pro-choice or pro-life arguments. I’m here to show you that the issues surrounding abortion are legitimate, topical and important.

The most obvious factors to this debate are a woman’s rights to bodily autonomy versus the unborn child’s right to exist. Both of these values are very important and should be given considerations. Some of the less considered factors are patient-doctor relationships, socio-economic factors and cultural customs. Both frequent abortion and the absolute intolerance of women’s right to autonomy can be grossly unethical.

Even the most pro-choice people out there can recognize the repulsiveness of the “gendercide” which has gone on in India, China, South Korea and Singapore to name a few. According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences there are 123 boys born for every 100 girls—which is statistically impossible without human intervention (the natural rate being 105 boys per every 100 girls). Because of dowry and other cultural customs, it’s more economically sustainable to have a boy than a girl in many countries. Women are choosing the most economically and culturally acceptable thing to do. While ordinarily that sounds like something to be strived for, on this scale, it’s both morally repugnant and demographically undesirable. Clearly, freedom of choice is not inherently good.

The issue of discrimination in abortion isn’t confined to Asia. In a study from Kings College, approximately 92 percent of the babies diagnosed with down syndrome were terminated. This sends a message that our global society does not value these people, or that they aren’t worth the trouble of raising, in the same way that some in China don’t think girls are worth raising.

Another scary trend of abortion is that of ethnic minorities. According to the Center for Disease Control, 12.3 percent of the U.S. population is African American. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 35 percent of abortions are performed on African American women. And, 33.9 out of every 1,000 African American women have abortions. This compares to 10.8 abortions per 1,000 white women. That’s three times as many abortions for African American women as white women. Why such an absurdly lopsided rate? What does this say about our country? Though the Supreme Court doesn’t define a baby as “alive” until they are born, unborn children still symbolize the possibility of life—something not to be taken lightly.

While these trends are disturbing, so is the notion of getting rid of abortion entirely. Women do have a legitimate right to control over their bodies. If abortion isn’t available in a safe clinic, they will seek it elsewhere, in dangerous and unpalatable ways. Historically, women have harmed themselves to the point of death seeking abortions when they were not available legally. If no legal clinics are available, then illegal ones, that charge exorbitant prices and use unsafe techniques, will pop up. While some may find the idea of abortion abhorrent, practically speaking, the alternative still spells the same fate for the unborn child, and is worse for everyone involved. And, there is no sense in targeting women in a debate that should be about public health.

Harassing a woman making such a difficult decision may be bad for the baby, and is definitely bad for her mental health. And being unfriendly doesn’t do much to win sympathy for any cause. Holding doctors
who perform abortions responsible for murder is also wrong, and lashing out against them, even more so. Any such doctor is fulfilling their Hippocratic oath, which states: “Above all, I must not play at God.” While doctors should be able to make the choice of whether or not they personally want to perform an abortion, it is clearly not their job to judge others.

In Oklahoma, a potential law (which is expected to override the governor’s veto) forces doctors to show the woman an ultrasound. While I can understand the intent, laws like this are ethically wrong. The Hippocratic oath also states, “I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy and understanding may outweigh the surgeon’s knife or the chemist’s drug.” This means that doctors should treat people going through this delicate process like people. It’s not the job of the doctor to judge the woman going through this process, and no law should be made to force a doctor to do so. The Hippocratic Oath additionally states, “I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know.” This means that there is no way a doctor can ethically enforce the law, being that he cannot tell anyone who is planning to get an abortion. If one thing is crystal clear in this debate, it’s that doctors should treat all patients with respect, and no law should force a doctor to break the oath.

How do we deal with these issues? What is ethical? I don’t advocate writing motives into legislation, but I do think that these issues should be taken into consideration. I can’t tell you when tissue turns into unique life, or what the exact value of that life is. I can’t compare that unknown value to that of a woman’s right to choose the condition of her body. What I can say is that abortion is an important issue which is too often over simplified for political gain, or to create a rally of angry people. Don’t be manipulated by rhetoric. Don’t let yourself become an extremist. The best thing you can do to get informed and get rational.

National abortion rates by racial group.*

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*Data and category names from the most recent CDC study in 2006.
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