

Editorial

Campaign will help women report rape

A campaign initiated by Linda Ormsbee of Eugene has designated Friday, Valentine's Day, a day to report past rapes. Ormsbee, who was raped last year, has taken a positive approach to a sensitive issue.

Ormsbee's campaign encourages women to "Report Your Rape, Heal Your Heart." The campaign itself is positive because it spotlights the problem of unreported rapes. And several beneficial effects could be generated if women heed Ormsbee's message either Friday or in the future. Women should be encouraged to report their rapes.

The day is specifically set aside for women to report rapes that have thus far gone unreported. Establishing a special day may prompt women uncomfortable about reporting a rape that happened long ago to unburden themselves. It may provide a chance for them to recognize the crime and put it behind them.

And by associating the campaign with Valentine's Day, a positive holiday that focuses on love, reporting rape may be correlated with positive feelings rather than feelings of guilt and embarrassment.

And though police may be unable to investigate rapes that happened too far in the past, reports may help them with current investigations. Reports can also give police a clearer picture of the magnitude of the crime. If police are aware of the actual number of rapes being committed, they can devote more resources and hours to preventing it.

The day could also encourage women to report rapes in the future. If most rapes were reported, the attitude that women are partially responsible for being raped would erode. Education and increased attention have weakened this attitude in recent years, but the attitude that many women "ask for it" persists.

The FBI estimates that about 90 percent of rapes go unreported. Many aren't reported because the targets of the crime assume part of the blame. But women are not responsible for rapes committed against them and should not accept any burden of guilt.

Ideally, reporting rape should carry no more stigma than reporting a theft. By reporting rapes, women can help themselves accept that the rape was not their fault and eventually can persuade society to place full blame on rapists.

In addition, if reported, more rapists could be removed from society. If a woman fails to report a rape, she not only ensures the rapist will go unpunished for the crime, she enables him to rape again.

Further, if rape was reported as often as other crimes, rapists would feel less secure. Knowing the odds of remaining undiscovered are in their favor, legal repercussions probably do little to deter rapists.

But most importantly, reporting rape can be the first step a woman can take to heal herself. By actively doing something, reporting a rape can enable a woman to feel less like a victim and more like a fighter. It can replace feelings of powerlessness with feelings of effectiveness.

Ormsbee's Valentine's Day campaign can help women to recognize themselves, in Ormsbee's words, as rape survivors, not rape victims. Whether women choose to prosecute a rapist or simply to tell the police about a rape, the day can provide women the means to put the crime behind them and begin to heal.



Letters

Soviet tactics

In "Totalitarian morality remakes world" (Oregon Commentator, Jan. 27), I quoted Marxist philosopher V.G. Afanasyev's views on "communist morality: . . . that which promotes the movement of society toward communism is moral."

Yet while Communists are occasionally frank about their amorality, their Western apologists resort to obfuscation, cloaking communist aggression in progressive rhetoric. Two examples:

In yet another apologia for Soviet aggression in Afghanistan (ODE, Jan. 27), Glenn Sacks writes that the war has not "engendered much popular opposition in the U.S.S.R. . . . Is it necessary to point out to thinking students how vacuous it is to speak of "popular opposition" in a totalitarian society? Sacks might as well tell us that in Oceania (see "1984") Big Brother's wars enjoyed tremendous popular support.

Max Bennett (ODE, Jan. 30) writes that "when presented with a choice between feudal oppression and the economic and social justice of a Soviet puppet regime," he'd "take the latter."

May I enlighten Bennett about how the Soviets bring "economic and social justice" to Afghanistan? They point guns at their victims — i.e., landowners: "Your land or your life!" In America this is called a "stickup," in Afghanistan, "land reform."

Or consider how Soviet soldiers brought "social justice" to one village. "(A French doctor tells how the Russians punished an entire village after some Afgan troops deserted). They tied them up and piled them like wood. Then they poured gasoline on them and burned them alive. They were old men and young . . . women and children" (National Review, Oct. 4, 1985).

Tom Visoky
Managing Editor
Oregon Commentator

Awaiting reply

Would any of you out there care to explain to me how the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and a host of other public service organizations (not to mention the system of financial aid for higher education) qualify as being "horse-and-buggy programs that waste tax dollars and squander human potential" (President Reagan, quoted in ODE, Feb. 5), while increases in military spending, which insure a future dominated by continued East/West paranoia, can be considered good investments?

I would like to hear a serious answer to this confusing question, rather than a rephrasing of the rhetorical ramblings I keep hearing from the man who claims to represent the public opinion of our nation. This "Great American Comeback" should include people of all income levels, not just those who will benefit most from Reagan's proposed federal budget.

How much longer will we tolerate the spending of tax dollars on so-called defensive

weapons that do little more than glorify American technology? I'll be waiting for a good answer. Unfortunately, I may have to wait a long time.

Alan Moore
Senior

Some choice

Audrey Weiss, in her letter to the editor (ODE, Feb. 7), asks, "Why is it that the most zealous crusaders against women's choice are men?" Good question. The answer is probably that men react the most because they are the ones getting screwed by all this new freedom of choice.

If a man and a woman have a sexual encounter, they can choose to a) not use contraceptives; b) use contraceptives, or; c) claim they are using contraceptives and don't. So far things are equitable.

However, if a woman takes choice (c) and subsequently becomes pregnant, she can a) have an abortion; b) marry the father and bear the child, or; c) bear the child, leave the father and then milk him for all he's worth in a paternity suit. Men have less say about this choice.

If a woman does bear the child, she can a) let the father see his child occasionally, or; b) never let the father see his child again. This is exclusively the woman's choice.

What choice does this leave men? Well, we can a) become homosexual and make everyone happy, removing the threat of pregnancy; b) become impotent, quiet and ineffectual, removing both the threat of pregnancy and of male dominance, or; c) become woman-haters and condemn that entire half of the population for being goofy, thereby leaving the sexual game simply because it's such a pain in the ass.

Some choice.

Rob Young
Senior

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