

Crime in Oregon a complex problem

Seven years ago Portland was one of the country's most liveable cities. According to FBI crime figures released last week, however, that has changed. Portland now is considered one of nation's most dangerous cities because of its increased crime rate. If crime in Portland, and the rest of Oregon, is to be solved, several aspects must be considered.

The FBI report showed Portland to have the 28th highest overall murder rate while remaining the nation's 40th largest city. Fifty-three murders have been committed in Portland this year compared to 50 in 1986. Burglary and robbery were the only crime rates down since the first of the year.

Portland surpasses larger cities such as Washington D.C., Cleveland or San Francisco. Cincinnati, a city slightly larger than Portland, only has about half the amount of crime.

The most apparent reason for an increase in crime is overcrowded jails. Currently, officials have been issuing temporary leave to convicts to create more space. Temporary leave releases inmates before they are eligible for parole.

But reports from state officials say even releasing some inmates early is not solving the problem. Corrections Director Michael Francke cited public support for stiffer jail sentences and an increased number of jail arrests as the main cause of current overcrowding.

Both Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and the public support plans for more prison space. A minimum-security prison has been proposed and would add space for 1,00 inmates. But because of problems with the temporary-leave system, the credibility of determining dangerous criminals and low-risk criminals has been questioned.

The increase in crime also is related to and perpetuates an understaffed police force. Already Portland police in the homicide department are overburdened with screening which cases to investigate. Because of the lack of police, some cases cannot be investigated.

"We're on the verge of burnout up here. We're simply going day and night non-stop," Sgt. Larry Neville of the Portland homicide unit said after the 52nd murder was discovered.

It is easy to cite the sources of a problem, but not always as easy to solve them. Obviously, increasing jail space will enforce the punishment principle of our judicial system. It also will reduce the potential for dangerous criminals to be released on temporary leave.

Increasing the police force is another solution. Training people to investigate and solve crimes will alleviate the problem.

Individuals can take preventive measures to stop crime by locking their homes or protecting themselves when traveling. This is the most direct way of stopping potential crimes.

Both increasing jail space and improving the police force require money and will take time. Oregonians should not hesitate to support these options, however, because our lives may literally depend on it.

Portland and Oregon can be known as a liveable city without the fear of crime if its citizens are willing to recognize the reasons for crime and work to solve them.



Letters

Limit weapons

The superpowers have agreed finally to do something about the arms race.

The treaty that would eliminate Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe is a historical first step in arms control, but it covers barely 4 percent of the immense nuclear arsenal. The threat of global destruction remains essentially unchanged.

Further deep reductions in nuclear weapons are essential for continued life on earth. Ending nuclear weapons tests through a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is for now the best way to slow the nuclear arms race because it freezes the development of new weapons, including the destabilizing Star Wars chimera.

Both sides could halt testing right now while they negotiate the details of the INF treaty. Purposeful negotiations for a balance and reduction of conventional weapons have to follow. Too many of the world's resources are devoured by the military moloch.

The House of Representatives already has voted to implement many of the steps for arms limitations, but the president

has threatened to veto them.

Bob Packwood canceled Sen. Hatfield's vote four times by voting for SDI funding, against the SALT II treaty limit, against a continued bilateral ban of Anti-Satellite weapons (ASAT), a part of Star Wars, and against Hatfield's own amendment to severely limit nuclear weapons testing that drives the arms race. Packwood voted with the majority for a conservative interpretation of Anti Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM), thus barring SDI tests that would violate this treaty.

The Senate joined the House on this issue in limiting, for now, another frightful spiral in the arms race.

As local representatives of a worldwide group of physicians who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 for public education on the dangers of nuclear arms, we express our thanks and gratitude to Sen. Hatfield and to our Rep. Peter DeFazio for their commitment to peace and stability.

Hans U. Tschersich, M.D.
President, Physicians for
Social Responsibility
Eugene chapter

closed mindedness that brings about Greek/non-Greek clashes.

I, as I'm sure the rest of the Greek system does, take great offense to your malicious statements made in the Emerald. "Tear their limbs from their bodies and while they writhe in agony eat some of their flesh..." is quite a profound statement, but I feel it has absolutely no justification.

The Greek system has no desire to start trouble with the non-Greek population on campus, and to come to verbal blows is no solution to this problem. What I suggest is that Mr. Sliter and his proponents take a good objective look at the Greek system on the inside, and avoid using the actions of two men to pass judgement on all of us. Then, AND ONLY THEN, can Mr. Sliter justify such a verbal assault.

Frank Hanson
Sophomore

Keep the space

My hats off in praise and appreciation to Frale de Guzman and Shelly Kehm for their excellent and informative articles on Womenspace.

It certainly was refreshing to see two articles on such an important organization. Unfortunately, domestic violence and other forms of violence against women are all too common in this largely patriarchal society we live in, and people need to know that places such as Womenspace exist (even though it is such a sad thing that there is such a need for them).

I also would like to say "thank you" to the woman who shared her experience as a trapped and battered woman in a destructive relationship.

It's great to know that she is devoting most of her time to other women in the same situation.

Keep up the good work! The woman's movement needs all the press it can get.

Amy Brickell
English

Generalizations

This concerns Blake Louis Sliter's letter pertaining to Margaret Thompson's unfortunate bicycle accident (ODE, Oct. 14).

To generalize the Greek system as a whole by saying that the two men at question here represent the entire Greek system is not only absurd but is a perfect example of the type of

Letters Policy

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Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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