

Local prejudice alive and growing steadily

We only can hope the Eugene-Springfield community awakens and unites, as public response seems to indicate it might, in the wake of recent incidents of primordial ignorance and prejudice.

While some will expend great energy searching for and denouncing the guilty, the rest of us can participate in the cause of enlightenment.

First, we must realize that prejudice did not suddenly step off the bus from Mississippi. Prejudice did not arrive in the suitcases of recruiters of back-alley hate mongers with shaved heads and swastika tattoos. Hate grew up here, living off of the negligence and complacency in our environmentally active, but ethnically vulnerable, community.

Prejudice rarely chooses to identify itself with a costume or an outright exclamation of its wrongheaded principles. Prejudice occurs on a daily basis all around us, the normal traffic of the minds of our friends, our relatives and associates.

The majority ignores it, and it grows. Every day in Eugene and Springfield, local prejudice blocks opportunities, creates aggravations, denies housing and jobs, and feeds cynicism and resentment in the minds of those tortured by it and those who operate its self-destructive machinery.

We have not won the fight against it, not here, not anywhere. Few people in the majority realize the extent to which the results of prejudice permeate the lives and lend to the attitudes of the minority.

We are not witnessing the persistence of a tired problem of an earlier time or the nagging demands of an oversensitive segment of society. As the era of technology and information begins in earnest, we had hoped for an age of cooperation and understanding. Instead, we have moved backward.

Apparently, we are witnessing the growth of a malignancy, the rebirth of a challenge to our right as Americans to stand on common ground. We stand at the crossroads of the narrowing of the American mind. The winds of ultra-conservatism have fanned the fires of ethnocentricity. We cannot create an enlightened world amid tolerated attitudes of discrimination, ethnic smugness and cultural single-mindedness.

When the minority community feels compelled to cry out, why must we always grow defensive? We must listen, and we must act. When the minority community feels outraged, we should investigate. The majority community can easily brush aside complaints as unfounded since it does not understand the complaints in the first place. The well-intentioned do not see the problems.

Our main concern, if indeed we are concerned, should be an understanding and an appreciation of the complaint, not a simple desire that the complainers would just shut up.

Worst of all, the true poison of discrimination is tasted most bitterly by our children. Children believe anything if they hear it enough.

As ignorance breeds intolerance and hate, children and young adults can benefit from education and enlightenment. We owe them the opportunity to develop original thought and understanding, whether we have had the same opportunity ourselves. We have no right to exclude the next generation from the truth in their own determination, that they may meet the demands of their own times. If we deny them, they will rebel against us as we rebelled in our time. If they do not, they risk the very moral stagnation and degeneration our good intentions seek to circumvent.

We encourage our leaders and the people of the local community in the continuing fight against prejudice, regardless of its victim, regardless of the disguise it wears, regardless of the number of people who offer righteous testimony to its truth.

Prejudice of all groups must be denounced. But first it must be recognized. We must lower our defenses and listen, not only to the victims among us, but to the subtly unenlightened who keep the problem alive.



Letters

Frankenstein

Being one who believes in the right of people to peacefully assemble and petition, I cannot object too strenuously to the PETA/SETA demonstration at the end of last term. But it seems to me that their goals and objectives have become counterproductive. Nobody, or at least not many, agree with wanton torture or abuse of animals. That, I believe, is fairly universal.

But it seems that the PETA/SETA group would have us believe in the image of Dr. Frankenstein in our science research laboratory experiments creating teratogenic mutants! Such is just not the case. The money given to research on animals is carefully distributed to minimize unnecessary cruelty to test animals.

One wonders how many PETA/SETA people have benefitted in their health, indeed, possibly in their life, by research on animals? How are we to test new drugs, new treatments for disease? Possibly might some of the PETA people be willing to donate themselves, or heaven help us, their children, to save a rat or a monkey?

I have a five-year-old son. And if he became ill, I would kill 10,000 rats or 1,000 monkeys in any necessary experiments to save his life. I believe that with regard to any human being. Whether or not one believes in evolution or creationism it is philosophically difficult to take a different rational position. Man is primary, even if only as a matter of "survival

of the fittest." A rational person cannot put animals on the same level as human beings.

Another possible suggestion would be to use mental patients, prisoners or illegal aliens for experimentation. Or, as Hitler did, we can pick on Jews, elderly, or the mentally retarded. Or in light of the passage of Measure 8 we could use gays or lesbians. I do not say that to be distasteful or bigoted! I would hope I am neither! But, really, without animal research, what other options do we have? It is interesting to note that in Nazi Germany there was a law prohibiting the use of animals in research. So what did Nazi doctors use?

I am not advocating that we should have no controls or checks on animal research and/or experimentation. It needs to be controlled and balanced with alternatives where possible. But I believe it would be easy at this time, because of a vocal minority, to do away with any animal research. That, over the long haul, will have detrimental effects not only on humanity, but possibly on the animals we are attempting to protect.

Timothy G. Barnes
Social Services

Wasted

Jill Freidberg (ODE, Jan. 17) is not the only person who feels that this term is almost a waste of time and money.

I am a sophomore and this is my first term at the University — but it might also be my last. Registration this term was probably the worst, most frustrating day of my life. I had selected the five classes I wanted beforehand, plus seven back-up classes, in case some of those first choices were full. When I arrived at registration, I first checked the board to see which classes were full. All five of my first choices were full. I looked up my alternates, and all seven of those were also closed. I wish they would have had a board stating which classes were left, instead of which ones were closed. It took so long to find classes that were still available, and I ended up feel-

ing very disappointed with my finished schedule. None of the classes have anything to do with my major.

Of course, I did happen to be in one of the last groups that registered, so maybe next term I will be one of the first; but if not, and if my spring term schedule turns out to be as absurd and useless as this term's, I definitely will find another college to attend next year. I'm beginning to think it was a mistake to have selected the University. I wonder how many others here feel this way.

Rebecca Tyler
English

Risky business

In regard to the recent graphic and detailed explanations of "unnatural, unhealthy (and) unsanitary" (ODE, Jan. 11 and 12) diseases that result from both homosexual and heterosexual practices, I would like to make an observation.

That all these health risks are real is true. But that people would risk all these complications (including death) for a moment's pleasure astounds me! In reading both commentaries, I found further reason to wait until marriage to enjoy sex. Furthermore, both letters only supported my opinion that all of these health risks have occurred because mankind has perverted what God had originally planned to be a natural, healthy and sanitary practice — sex, pure and simple between a married man and his wife.

I know my view is not popular in this day and age where the pressure to be sexually active is promoted most avidly by the media and such. But if anyone is looking for a reason to say "no" to homosexuality, sex before marriage, or sex outside of marriage, I suggest you reread Mr. Wollander's (ODE, Jan. 11) and Miss Van Buren's (ODE, Jan. 12) graphic and detailed lists of why you should wait. A fleeting moment of pleasure is not worth it!

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Eugene

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, Oregon 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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