

Beta's behavior not wanted at University

In the early morning hours of Jan. 15, 1989, Eugene Police Department officers were dispatched to the alleyway between the University's Beta Theta Pi house and the neighboring Chi Psi yard and fire escape balcony. Arriving at the melee, involving 35-40 people, officers discovered numerous broken beer bottles, broken windows, about 10 fisticuffing men and several intoxicated fraternity men — one of whom was arrested and charged with being a minor in possession of alcohol.

And now the question that arises: Why did University President Paul Olum, who was set to revoke the Beta's charter after this most recent incident, decide against it?

As Olum himself noted in a letter drafted to the brothers and pledges of the Beta Rho Chapter of Beta Theta Pi, he was "deeply disturbed by the news of the recent outbreak of violence ... a fundamental breach of trust which (violated) the understanding reached between the Betas and the University about acceptable behavior for social fraternities at the University."

True, this one particular incident is probably not worthy of revoking the Beta's charter. But considering the Beta's past indiscretions and the fact they were held at a higher level of responsibility than the Chi Psi's for last month's act of violence, they should be disassociated from the University.

As a matter of past indiscretions, perhaps what sticks in most people's minds is last spring's lawsuit against the Beta Theta Pi fraternity and two other defendants. The trial centered on an incident from Oct. 27 and 28, 1984, which plaintiff Robert Seyler contended left him suffering from abrasions, lacerations, contusions, humiliation, mental anguish, extreme emotional distress, alcohol poisoning, hypothermia and incarceration.

According to testimony, the Betas and their party guests of the evening were angry with Seyler for his part in selling them diluted cocaine. Seyler then paid for his mistakes as the Betas allegedly forced him to drink alcohol, beat him, robbed him, spat and urinated on him and then abandoned him naked and unconscious (with a jacket covering his upper torso) on the front lawn of the Alpha Phi sorority.

The jury's verdict found the Beta fraternity guilty of negligence and former Beta President Greg Halverson and former University student and football player Richard Geiser guilty of assault.

Surely the October 1984 and the January 1989 incidents are enough reason to revoke the fraternity's charter. But now add the numerous phone calls, letters and personal accounts given to Emerald staff members in the past week concerning the overall behavior of Beta members.

We'd like to think that what we've heard are rumors, half-truths, hearsay, yarn-spinning and the like. But considering the diversity of sources, from University students to retired business and community leaders, and considering the Beta's tried-and-true, unseemly and disgraceful behavior, we have to give some credence not only to what we've been told, but to what some staff members have witnessed in their own right.

And apparently, we're not the only ones who would like to see the Betas kicked off campus. Members of other Greek houses have voiced their disgust at the Betas and the embarrassment of having them included in the Greek system. Former Beta members have done the same.

Unfortunately though, the Betas have slipped through the system again, and will maintain their ties with the University.

As a result of January's incident, both the Beta Theta Pi and Chi Psi fraternities have received disciplinary action from the Interfraternity Council, the IFC Tribunal, the vice provost for academic support and student services, the acting assistant dean of students and student conduct coordinator and the president's office.

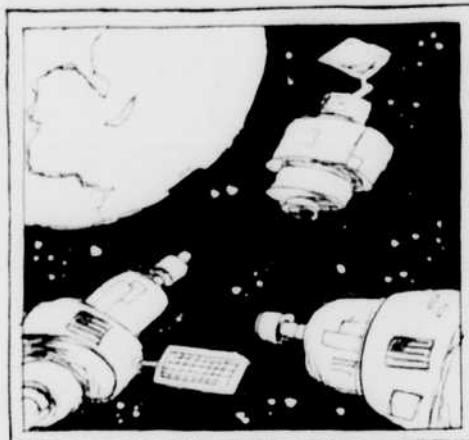
Appropriately, the Betas have been banned from rushing and pledging activities until winter term 1990. I suppose our next question is why would anyone want to pledge the Beta house anyway?

Olum also has made clear that should the Betas (be found to) violate the student conduct code or other reasonable standards of civilized behavior at any time during the next three years — through the winter term of 1992 — Olum or his successor will revoke their charter.

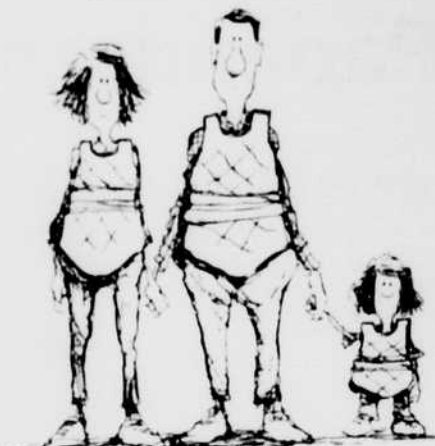
We admit some stiff penalties have been leveled against the Beta Theta Pi fraternity as a result of the Jan. 15 melee, and from here on out the Betas will be walking a pretty thin line. But if Olum is hoping the Betas will do "all that is necessary to turn (themselves) into something approximating gentlemen," he shouldn't hold his breath. And he certainly should have revoked their charter when the opportunity was presented.

Q. WHICH WOULD BETTER PROTECT U.S. CITIZENS?

A) STAR WARS MISSILE DEFENSE



B) 245 MILLION BULLETPROOF VESTS



Letters

Inaccuracy

I am infuriated by the slanderous attack made by Steve M. Nasset in his letter regarding gun control (ODE, Feb. 7). Please, Mr. Nasset, learn to read before attempting to write. I made no statement "defending the right of Patrick West to own a semi-automatic assault rifle." You quoted me totally out of context, even putting words in my mouth where you couldn't twist my own around to say what you wanted.

In regards to the part of your letter which actually addressed the issues: What gives you the right to decide for everyone else what a legitimate shooting sport is? There are many people who would say that any gun ownership is completely unnecessary. Would you want them making laws restricting your rights? I personally think that hunting for sport is a disgusting idea. When I hunt it is for food. Would you have me impose my beliefs on you?

Tell me what's right and wrong until you're blue in the face, but don't force me to follow your advice if I disagree.

Furthermore, what makes you think that these rifles are too inaccurate for hunting or target shooting? Whether they are accurate or not, what makes you think they are more accurate when aimed at a human being. U.S. Military personnel can often shoot a 10-inch shot group at 300 yards for the full capacity of their magazine with this type of gun, is this inaccuracy?

Regardless of your opinions, in the future, don't attack me in order to make my beliefs look bad. Just attack my beliefs!

Jeffrey A. Hawkins
Eugene

Beta scarred

Don't expect me to shed a tear for the frat brats who got little more than a spanking for their inter-fraternal rumble. I lived next door to the Beta boys for several years and have plenty of battle scars from the continuous wars they waged against my house and others.

Our house repeatedly had its windows smashed by beer bottles following one of their parties. When they got bored with throwing bottles, they used garbage, feces and other crap wrapped in foil to pelt our house.

Then came the time they built a slingshot from rubber tubing and a bra cup (from one of their "panty raids," no doubt) which they used to bombard the whole neighborhood: passing cars, pedestrians, but mostly my housemates. They made the mistake once of using marbles to snipe at our windows; the police didn't need their ballistics expert to determine that the holes in the glass lined up directly with the Beta house. We've seen them beat up a homeless person and throw him and his cart of possessions into the Millrace sewer.

The list of insults and assaults could go on and on. Does it sound like I'm bitter? You're damn right. How many times can the Beta boys go through the fraternity kangaroo court before the University community decides that the Beta house should be abolished?

Tim Ingalsbee
Student

El Salvador

The current events surrounding the U.S. supported war in El Salvador have reached a critical point.

In support of the "moderate" Christian Democrat government under Jose' Napoleon Duarte, the U.S. has poured over \$3.6 billion into this dirt poor country resulting in 70,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands left homeless or in exile. Our policy of "low-intensity warfare" against the Salvadoran people is seen as a disaster from all sides of the conflict.

left or right.

Our man Duarte is dying from cancer, and with the ultrarightwing ARENA party looking to take power in the march elections the foreign policy options for the U.S. have really come down to three.

One: support the soon to be in power ARENA party, a party that has been linked to the El Salvadoran death squads and the brutal deaths of Archbishop Oscar Romero and four North American church women, not to mention the murdering of thousands of Salvadoran citizens.

For the moment anyway, both the Congress and the North American people do not seem too keen on this idea.

Two: sending in U.S. troops to "crush" the people-supported FMLN opposition. Even those in the Pentagon realize that this would mean another war like we had in Vietnam, something our country would rather not experience again.

Three: work for a negotiated and peaceful end to this horrid war; one that would create an environment for free and truly democratic elections. The result would be a victory for both the majority of the Salvadoran people and the North American citizen — whose tax dollars have funded this "dirty little war."

The time to act is now!

President Bush has not yet come out publicly with his future policy towards El Salvador. We, as concerned citizens and students, need to let him and our congress know that the only reasonable option is the third one mentioned, a negotiated end to this United States-supported war.

Kyer Wiltshire
UO/UES Sister University
Project

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.