

Solidarity message fails with Jeans Day

The message behind the Gay and Lesbian Alliance's Pride Week Jeans Day was a worthwhile one, certainly, but somehow the message got mixed, and negated, in the translation.

According to GALA, the purpose of Jeans Day was for awareness — to be aware of lesbians and gays and the need to combat homophobia. To achieve this goal, people were to consciously demonstrate support of gays and lesbians and civil rights by wearing jeans.

And for those who didn't know it was Jeans Day, it was hoped these people (who either live in caves and don't know anything, or who deliberately decided to avoid wearing jeans) would feel something of the bigotry and hatred felt by those who are gay, lesbian, or supporters of gays and lesbians.

The result, however, was the abuse of something common.

In the '70s, when long hair and bell-bottoms were in fashion, gay men adopted straight-leg jeans, short hair and polo shirts as a uniform of protest. But jeans have become high fashion in the '80s — nearly everyone wears them at one time or another, consciously or not.

And the more we thought about it, the more it seemed that Jeans Day carries negative baggage with it. The Pride Week flyer stated, "Demonstrate support for gay rights by wearing anything denim; homophobia by doing everything you can to avoid denim; nothing by wearing what you usually wear."

But somehow the logic is lost when one is asked to prove non-discriminatory behavior by performing a discriminatory act.

There should be some way to show solidarity for GALA, and for civil rights, but there must be a less negative and confusing way to go about it. GALA did suggest picking up a pink triangle from the Pride Week table in the EMU to show support, and this seems to be a much better idea. The pink triangle, a symbol of gay and lesbian culture, is nowhere near as common as are jeans, and it stands out better in a crowd as a show of support.

There will always be people who will fight defiantly for their causes, but certainly some people prefer not to be coerced into solidarity. Jeans Day failed to prove to anyone the message of support we had hoped that it would.



Chinese students battle for human rights

Chinese students on campus have taken a courageous political stand against their country's government, and they deserve our support.

Approximately 50,000 students in China have begun demonstrating in the streets of Beijing for greater freedom of expression and an end to government corruption. Forty-five Chinese students here at the University have started a letter-writing campaign to show their support of the Beijing students' fight for democracy.

Dozens of copies of the letters will be mailed to several different addresses in China so as to avoid discovery and punishment by government officials. University student Xin-nian Wang, the leader of the campaign, has said this fear of future troubles with the Chinese government has kept nearly half of the students who are writing letters from signing their names, even though all support the cause.

And so do we.

The Beijing students have boycotted classes in an attempt to gain a "freedom of

the press clause" in the government's constitution and to force government officials to publicize their salaries. Wang also pointed out that freedom of assembly and freedom of speech are included in the Chinese constitution, but are not openly practiced.

Perhaps the Chinese government will choose to ignore the students. But it would have to put on blinders to do so.

The students and their supporters have made their feelings known, and their battle proves the unmitigated unrest among Chinese citizens over government control.

The student protests also have spotlighted human rights issues, making it impossible for the Chinese government to continue ignoring them.

We add our support to the Chinese students' causes, and wish them success in their venture. It may be awhile before something positive comes from this recent commotion, but through the continual fight for human rights, the voices will be heard — and perhaps respected, as they should be.

Letters

Domination

The Clark/Wyckoff ASUO executive ticket was surprised by its overwhelming win in the primary. I don't understand why that was so. They had the Greek endorsement. So why were they surprised?

When the Greek endorsement came out, without even knowing who the ticket was, I predicted that team would win. The reason for my conclusion is quite simple. For quite some time, many within the campus community believed that Students for a Progressive Agenda was the dominant force on campus. I argue a counterpoint that the Greeks are the dominant force.

Let me give a few examples to illustrate my point. What do all of these ASUO presidents have in common: Julie Davis, Lynn Pinckney, Steve Nelson, Kasey Brooks and Karen Gaffney? Give up? They all had the Greek endorsement. Also, did you know that no SPA presidential candidate in the last six years won without the Greek endorsement?

The Greeks are clearly the dominant political force on campus. The reason why people

haven't known this is because in the past, the Greeks acquiesced their role on campus to SPA. SPA hasn't endorsed Greek IFC candidates, so why does the Emerald now call for bipartisanship? The Greeks don't need SPA; they never did.

The Greeks now have their sixth consecutive win, smashing the myth that SPA dominates the ASUO. I have argued for years that only the large Greek community could bring the campus back into alignment with the real world. We will now see if I was right. Good luck, Clark/Wyckoff.

Ron Munion
Eugene

Return shots

In response to Kristi Strother's letter regarding cheap shots (ODE, April 25):

I ran for a one-year Incidental Fee Committee position and was defeated soundly, but at no time did I publicly take a cheap shot at any of my opponents.

Were you at the Candidates' Forum for IFC seat seekers April 11 at the EMU? Were you at the law school endorsement hearing? Please show us docu-

mentation of these allegations.

Reading your letter, I perceive your stance as follows: you think that no candidate should personally attack any other candidate. However, you are grouping us, the candidates, together and accusing us (sometimes with no factual basis) of damaging or "injurious" remarks, reminiscent of the national presidential race last fall. Is it fair for you to accuse me without knowing the facts?

I suggest to all students that we put our differences behind us. The elections will be concluded this week. Let's worry about the issues that demand our immediate attention!

Let's work together to make our campus safer. Let's stop and prevent rape. Let's address the lack of affordable housing around campus. Let's attack the rising racism on campus through education and intermingling. Let's address the parking problem that has existed for more than ten years because of a disorganized Office of Public Safety. Let's address the issue of affordable day care for the non-traditional student.

Again, I suggest to all students to put their differences aside, forget the election last week and work together to

solve these problems for the benefit of all students.

Peter Bellerby
Senior, political science

His views

In response to Patrick Roelle's letter (ODE, April 25):

I respect Patrick's right to voice his opinion. However, the views expressed in his letter represent neither Phi Delta Theta nor the Greek system.

Michael Sudlow
President, Phi Delta Theta

Into the night

I want to respond to Lindy Holt's letter (ODE, April 25) for all the women at this university who haven't yet understood what the real goal of our education is. Either I missed it, or it escaped me with all the women's studies courses I took.

A degree, self-confidence or knowledge is not what a woman is supposed to get out of this institution. No, the true goal is the answer to "How should a woman behave correctly?" with the threat of "Otherwise you gonna get raped," follow-

ing directly afterwards. We heard it often enough: Don't go out at night alone, especially not at midnight!

I'm one of these women who still enjoys walking at night and cherishing the stillness of the blue night sky. As much as I appreciate Lindy's concern for women, and her awareness of the danger of rape, her solution to the problem victimizes women as much as rape does.

Yes, this campus is no safe place for women, not only at night and outside of buildings, but all the time, everywhere.

Instead of making women responsible for taking precautions (and, if they fail to do so, blaming them for being raped), why don't we have something like an annual rape prevention workshop for the male members of the campus community?

Instead of pushing women back into the helpless role of seeking protection from the predominantly male authorities, why are women not encouraged to rely on their own strength, to discover and increase it in women's self-defense courses?

Lisa Kuppler,
Graduate, history
Friday, April 28, 1989