

Racism problem in 4-J needs attention

A recent study of the Eugene school district revealed that minority students are not doing as well in school as white students are.

A previous study, released last May, showed that racial harassment and discrimination are serious problems in the 4-J school district.

This should come as no surprise.

Racism is now and always has been a problem. Recently there has been an increase in community concern over the issue of racial equality and the school district is following suit.

In 1987, after reports of racial harassment in the school system, the Racial Justice Task Force was created. The study released in May was done by a Portland company at the request of the task force.

The recent study was instigated by Superintendent Margaret Nichols to find out whether there was a difference in achievement levels between white and minority students. Of course there was.

Minority students scored lower on SATs and standard achievement tests and make up the majority of students in special education and remedial classes. One of the most frightening statistics showed that the percentage of minority students who score low on these tests increases as the students get older.

Now the RJTF is recommending that the school district hire a full-time racial equity specialist from outside the school district. Nichols does not seem to agree with the task force's idea of what the specialist should do.

An equity specialist could cost the school district around \$30-\$40,000 a year. These are hard times for 4-J. It has had to make faculty and budget cutbacks in the past, and it seems likely it will have to make more again this year. School funding is not an easy thing to come by these days, but racial equity is something the school district needs to invest in.

The school district should hire an outside equity specialist, but the person has to be a proven talent. We would support a person who is trained and experienced in the educational system, child development and racial issues. The person would need to look into the *why* of the racial problems and try to find solutions, in addition to ensuring that schools deal with racial problems and incidents.

The specialist would need to work with minority students and their families to help solve communication and discrimination problems and perhaps work with individual schools reviewing curriculums to ensure equity in class offerings and content. The job would require a person with unique skills, but if the right person could be found he or she could help solve some serious problems.

But, the school district cannot rely purely on one person to solve all its problems. The equity specialist should therefore help to instigate a program of reform that the school district can follow.

After all it is the school districts responsibility to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students.



"ISN'T THAT SWEET... ALL THE KIDS ARE DRESSING UP LIKE LITTLE GANG MEMBERS THIS YEAR."

Essay SAT wouldn't work; keep it as is

All college students have gone through it at one time or another. The sweaty hands. The dry throat. The dread realization that the next few hours will heavily influence the rest of your life.

It is the Standard Aptitude Test, commonly known as the SAT.

The SAT has come under fire the last few years. Several allegations about the test have been made: it's racially biased and it really doesn't test knowledge, just to name a few.

This Saturday, teachers union president Albert Shanker launched another attack, demanding the immediate end to the test's multiple-choice format. Shanker said test results are misleading, and may be hindering school reform efforts.

To reform the SAT, Shanker wants essay questions to be included in the test, to get away from the current "yes-no" mentality. He said multiple-choice questions don't require the degree of intellectual difficulty that essays and multi-step math problems have.

Shanker brings up some good points, but doesn't stop to consider the implications of his actions.

Certainly, the SAT is not the perfect way to test knowledge and intellectual ability,

and essay questions are preferable to multiple-choice. But Shanker fails to realize the logistical problems a standardized essay test would bring.

First off, literally millions of high school students take the test each year. A computer can grade a multiple-choice test, but not an essay. For essays, you would need human graders. Where a computer is unbiased (you either get the question right, or you don't), a person grading an essay would not be. A student's test score would rely on an opinion.

The only possible way to grade all the essays would be to have strict guidelines to which the student would have to stick to. Shanker's method would only add to the "yes-no" mentality he's trying to avoid.

In addition to the SAT revamping, Shanker said he would like to see students tested only once every five years, as opposed to annually. Apparently, he wants to give educators more freedom to reform school programs, by easing testing restrictions.

It won't fly. Failure on the SAT and other standardized tests can partially be attributed to student nervousness over the testing process.

By making the tests only once every five years, that would only put more pressure on the students who don't test well.

Letters

Tone down

It's obvious the police are paying more attention to the campus area this year, but why isn't it doing more good?

A Eugene police officer on a motorcycle pulled me and my bicycle over on Alder Street last week and gave me a rather disconnected lecture on the perils of overconfident bicycling. It seems I didn't have both hands on the handlebars.

Looking at the beefy, helmeted officer with his black leathers and nightstick, and the big Kawasaki 1000 behind him, I began to understand why Eugene police officers have had trouble around the University this year. There's a bit of arrogance being projected by the cops, and it can make some people mad — sometimes fight-

ing mad.

How about a "kinder, gentler" approach? Why send out the heavy police cruisers, motorcycles and riot shotguns for every noisy party or obnoxious transient? Sometimes the display of force only makes things worse.

In Seattle and Portland, the police have begun to ride bicycles on their patrols. It's cheaper, keeps the officers physically fit, and can actually be more effective in stopping crime. And of course, any exercise like bicycling will put a person, even a police officer, in a better mood.

Earlier this year, Eugene's city manager revealed under questioning that the police did own some working bicycles. Of course, no one at that City Council meeting could remember seeing an officer on a bicy-

cle, but that shouldn't stop President Brand from asking the Eugene police to make their campus-area patrols on bicycles.

Randy Prince
Eugene

Accuracy

This is to bring to your attention a glaring omission in your recent article on resale clothing shops, featured in your Fall Fashion issue (Oct. 18). You state, "There are two stores in Eugene that specialize in vintage clothing."

You neglected to mention The Vintage Clothing Shoppe, at 760 Blair Blvd. Obviously your research is far from thorough. Simply checking so basic a source as the telephone directory Yellow Pages reveals only one listing under "Clothes and

Accessories, Vintage," and that is The Vintage Clothing Shoppe.

Furthermore, The Vintage Clothing Shoppe has occasionally advertised with the *Emerald*.

After being snubbed in this manner (a snub I must consider this, as opposed to being a simple oversight, seeing as how we are clearly listed in the telephone directory, have advertised in the *Emerald* and University students constitute a strong percentage of our clothing customers), plans for any future advertising in the *Emer-*

ald have been canceled.

At least we at The Vintage Clothing Shoppe need not feel alone in being slighted by the incomplete and incompetent reporting of the *Emerald*. Eugene's newest and possibly classiest vintage clothing shop, Puttin' On The Ritz, at 420 Pearl St., was also ignored.

Perhaps in the future your writers and reporters might try to cover their topics more thoroughly, and your editors might check the articles more closely for accuracy.

David Dellinger
Eugene

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.