

Rise in hate crimes paints bleak picture

After the recent election of a black mayor in Seattle, a city with a mostly white population, it would seem the future looks promising for eradication of racism and violence against minority groups in the Northwest. However, don't throw a party celebrating the end of ignorance just yet.

Hate crimes in the Northwest are increasing rapidly, according to a report by the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment.

Out of five states examined in the study, 263 hate crimes were committed in 1989 up to Sept. 30. Oregonians may be shocked to discover that out of the 263 crimes, 135 of them — more than half — were committed in our state.

The hate crimes reported ranged from assaults, cross burnings, threats, defacement of property and one that resulted in murder. The second annual report by the Coalition shows a 338 percent increase in crimes motivated by prejudice from 1988 to 1989.

While the Coalition takes into consideration that new, improved methods of tracking such crimes could contribute to the drastic increase, that doesn't completely account for the rise. A 338 percent increase is more than substantial cause to worry about the racial health of our region. Moreover, it is an undeniable fact that many hate crimes are never reported or publicized.

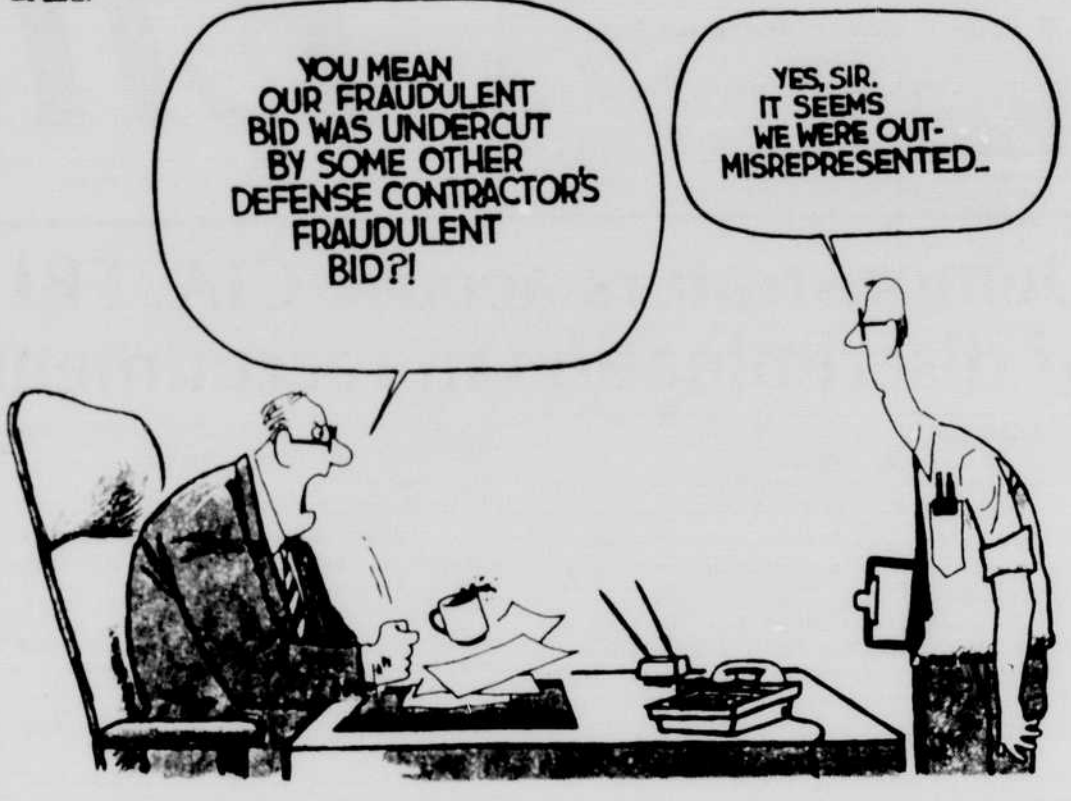
Such depressing news about continuing rampant prejudice shows that simply because a state or region is thought to be largely open-minded, this perception could be proven wrong in the harsh light of reality. Just sitting back and hoping that perpetrators of hate crimes will eventually be eaten away by their own senseless ignorance is unrealistic.

Only two hate crimes were reported to have occurred in Idaho, one of the five states examined in the survey. The low number of incidents is attributed to stiff anti-harassment laws and the presence of state task forces on human relations. The Coalition's president, Tony Stewart, also feels that education from an early age will alleviate incidents of hate crimes.

Most people wouldn't think that Idaho, a state often associated, unfortunately, with the Aryan Nations white supremacist group, would show drastically fewer incidents of racially or religiously motivated crimes than Oregon.

This report is far from being a definitive barometer of prejudice levels in each state, but it does show that Idaho is doing something right and we are not. For a state such as Oregon, normally known for its progressive attitudes and opinions, this report can be taken as a sharp slap in the face.

SKELLEY
EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



Don't cut student financial aid package

Take a look at the world around you. It's more complex and complicated than ever. To succeed, education is a necessity.

Politicians repeat that statement over and over: Education, especially one gained in college, is the key to everything.

If so, why does Congress keep making it harder for underprivileged students to get to college?

This year, Congress cut more than \$1 billion from the Pell Grant budget. This federal student aid program is extremely important for students, as it helps them go to college when they otherwise might not be able to go.

Analysts are predicting 217,000 students nationwide will lose their Pell Grant funding next year. Of those 217,000 students, a substantial portion of those will not be able to afford tuition.

Last week, the ASUO and United States Student Association participated in a nationwide phone-in campaign, designed to inform Congressional delegations about the budget cuts and student's plights.

University students pelted Sen. Mark Hatfield with phone calls, demanding he

help support increasing federal student financial aid.

Pell Grant allotments fall under the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriation bill. Because of the Gramm-Rudman Act (the federal deficit reduction bill), Congress cut \$16 billion from the appropriation bill, \$1 billion from educational programs.

Once the country could pride itself on having an educational system in which anybody who wanted to attend college, could. Grants and financial aid were available, and no longer was a college degree a sole possession of the wealthy.

What we're seeing today is the death of that system.

Unless there is a major overhaul of higher education, we risk a return to the system of our grandparents, where only the rich could afford college. This elitist attitude toward higher education was eventually changed, by making available federal dollars. But if we continue to gut Pell Grant appropriation, federal financial aid will cease to exist.

Letters

Do nothing

Spike Lee says "Do the Right Thing." The *Emerald* says "Do Nothing."

Isn't something wrong when 1,100 students thirsting for information or racism show up for a film and discussion sponsored by the ASUO, and the program doesn't even make the student newspaper?

Congratulations on another article that "got away."

Lauri Kriva
Student

We can't forget

I was dismayed at the lack of compassion depicted in Kelly Johnson's "Take a Stand" (*ODE*, Nov. 7).

The homeless present a real problem not only in the Eugene area, but in the country itself. By shutting these people out of our community, aren't we also shutting them out of our minds?

Our college world is sheltered enough. I doubt that much crime on campus is caused by transients. Granted, many aren't pretty to look at, but they sure do remind us that the world isn't made of classes, partying and weekends.

We can't forget the homeless. It's time we started thinking about reality and what we can do to make things better.

Lynn Gibson
Student

Tired of it

In response to Gary Darby's letter (*ODE*, Nov. 6), women are tired of being afraid in their homes and on the street. Women are tired of earning less in the workplace. They are tired of sexual harassment.

They are tired of being depicted in the media as submissive sex symbols. They are tired of not always having a choice as to what they do with their bodies (i.e. birth control, sterilization, abortion).

They are tired of language that places them second in so-

ciety (i.e. "history of mankind"). They are tired of educators teaching about great men in history, science, religion, etc., but not great women; and women are tired of being made to feel guilty for speaking out against this oppression.

It is oppression, even if not every single man is guilty of it. Slavery was (is) a similar type of oppression, and I'll bet slave owners got pretty tired of being "brow-beaten scapegoats" too!

No one likes having their place at the top challenged. Finally, I don't think asking for an end to these injustices is "everything under the sun."

Jill Freidberg
Anthropology

Worth covering

On Monday, Nov. 6, the EMU held a showing of Spike Lee's controversial film *Do the Right Thing*, and a discussion on racism.

The film forces people to re-evaluate their ideas and beliefs on this serious issue. So many people took on this challenge

that a second showing of the film had to be set up.

To me, this turnout demonstrated a concern and a desire to learn more about the problem of racism. Even Myles Brand saw fit to put aside his Monday night plans to attend both the film and discussion. He felt what people had to say was important and he stayed to listen.

It amazes me the *Emerald* gave this event absolutely no coverage in the Nov. 7 issue. Wasn't this event newsworthy? Isn't racism an issue that deserves coverage? Isn't it a problem that is important to the University community?

Brand, I commend and thank

you for attending this event. It isn't often we are presented with a politician who supplements his/her words with actions. As for the *Emerald*, I am appalled at your lack of coverage. I can't believe you could ignore something as important as racism.

Because of the volatile nature of the issue, negative press seems to be the norm when discussing racism. It's too bad an event that generate peaceful discussion and even some hope for change wasn't given any attention at all.

I am at a loss for a single reason why there was no story.

Jennifer Cohen
Pre-Journalism

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.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.