

own people? It tells him that his own people don't know anything because if they did, they would be teaching him."

Cota said Robbie Robinson's exclusion from school will keep minorities out of the community. "Parents are going to be reading about this and they are going to say, 'I don't want to move to Eugene. My kid might be accused of being a gang member just because he's from Portland or L.A., and he's going to get kicked out of school,'" he said.

4-J's decision to have Robinson blocked from school created a new conflict in the community. Schools are considering changing their dress and conduct codes, and the American Civil Liberties Union is concerned about the constitutionality of the district's decision and about future decisions.

David Percy, administrative assistant to the superintendent of 4-J said the district is holding preliminary discussions about policy changes including dress codes. "The one thing we know is that whatever we develop we want it to be the same for all schools," he said.

Percy believes a public debate will be needed before any decision can be made. Students will be involved in any policy change decisions, he said.

Opposition From The ACLU

Dave Fidanque, spokesman for the local ACLU chapter said his organization "would oppose" a change in dress code prohibiting the

wearing of gang colors in school.

"We do not think that schools can prohibit people from attending school because they are wearing clothing that is attributed to some organization," Fidanque said.

The Constitution prohibits taking actions based on presumptions, he said. "There is a certain amount of racism involved in this situation," Fidanque said.

"The way the community responded to Mr. Robinson's case has fed that racism instead of undercutting it," he said.

Jackson also was concerned about the effects of the school district's decision.

"I don't like the idea of kicking a kid out of school who only needed a couple of credits. People just want to overreact," Jackson said.

"Even if the kid wanted to sell drugs or recruit, what's going to stop him by kicking him out of school? If you've got him there maybe you can work with him," Jackson said.

"Give the kid some clear messages instead of just seeing him flash his colors, find out about his history and kick him out," he added. "To me that's saying that we as a society and a community just give up on kids."

"We are here to salvage kids, we're here to try and educate kids," Jackson said. "When you just kick them out and give up on them completely, you give them the message that they might as well be a drug dealer and a gangster."

Eugene prime area for gang incidents

By Denise Clifton
Emerald Associate Editor

Gangs on campus. It's a scary thought considered unlikely or impossible by many students and community members.

But the recent appearance of drug gang graffiti in one of the residence halls indicates gangs may be closer to the University than anyone wants to think.

On Oct. 24, the University Office of Public Safety reported graffiti found in Douglass Hall's stairwell between the second and third floors. The security officers took pictures of the message and gave them to the Eugene Police Department to analyze.

"The graffiti was 'WP B' with a 'C' crossed out, followed by '187,'" said EPD Detective Ken Saxon, who is well-versed in translating drug gang graffiti. "What that says to me is that it was by a member of the Woodland Park Bloods (Portland gang) who wants to kill a Crip."

The "187" represents the California penal code for homicide, Saxon said.

Although drug gang graffiti often is imitated by people who are familiar with the slang but aren't involved in gangs, Saxon said the Douglass graffiti was "the real thing."

"I think it's fair to say that is gang graffiti," he said.

However, it's almost impossible to determine if the graffiti was written by students or visitors, said OPS security officer Suzie Hunter.

But Douglass resident assistant Jennifer Nelson said she believes the graffiti was written by University students.

"I don't know who did it, but I've seen a couple of people who might have done it," she said. "I've seen them on campus so I think they might be students."

Black Student Union director Ernest Brown said it's dangerous to assume students are members of predominantly black gangs.

"I know athletes here who've been stopped just because they are black and wearing a red jacket," Brown said, adding that such paranoia causes un-

comfortable discrimination against black students and community members.

"I really don't see the University having anything to worry about because if a real Crip or Blood was on campus, you'd know," he said. "It would be very obvious and then they'd be gone."

The University should be more concerned with white supremacist gangs, Brown said.

"I've seen more skinheads in the Eugene area causing problems than any other gang people," he said. "And they (EPD) are not even keeping a file on them."

White supremacist graffiti has been appearing around the University for months, Saxon said, and it's become so widespread "that we just can't keep up on it now."

But drug gang messages are a threatening new addition to the problem, he said.

"The graffiti isn't new," he said. "It's the amount and the messages that's new."

The possibility that students wrote the Douglass graffiti can't be dismissed because some drug gang members are college-age, Saxon said. However, he said most University students are older than the average gang member.

"In the Northwest, it's the kids under 18 who especially do the violent crimes," he said. "They know the judicial system and they know not much will happen to them."

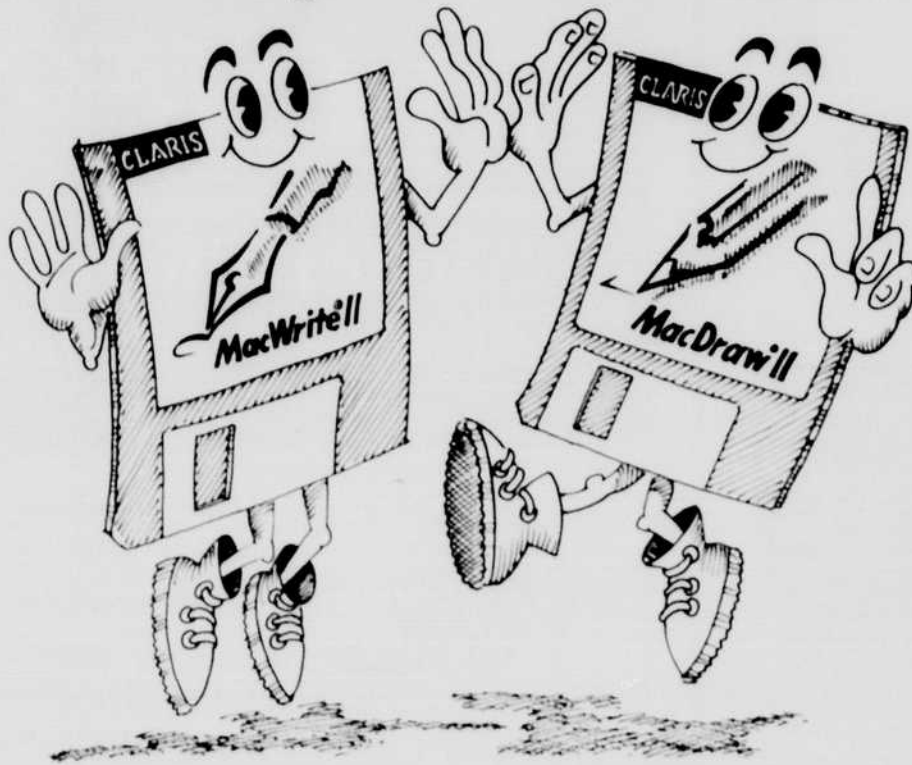
It's also unlikely students are gang members because gangs usually don't spend their money on college, said Portland Police Department public information officer Dave Simpson.

"And people who are spending money to get themselves educated aren't typically going to run around and do gang-type activities," Simpson said, adding Portland State University has had little trouble with gang violence.

"Part of that is because the majority of the (gang) activity is in the North and Northeast Portland areas, and the school is in the Southwest area," he said. "But part is that the majority of gang members are under 20."

Turn to Graffiti, Page 18

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