

Prejudice inhibits productive ability

Discrimination is a word we hear far too often in our conversations, in the media and even in the pages of the *Oregon Daily Emerald*. Although it is important to bring discrimination out in the open, it is distressing to see people use it as a method of closing others out.

There are more than 100 groups on campus, each with its own purpose and direction. There are many occasions for groups to work together to put on events, create awareness of specific problems or just to get things accomplished faster.

Unfortunately, discrimination or presumed discrimination can keep groups from working together or even communicating with each other.

But sometimes it seems that people will use a presumed discrimination to avoid working with a group or organization. If a group feels that an organization is "homophobic" or "sexist," for example, they will avoid contact with that group and affix a label to them.

The *Student Insurgent* is a good example. Minority student groups have decided to publish their own newsletter instead of publishing in the "racist" *Insurgent*. Now the *Insurgent* is angry because it had hoped to be a voice for all voiceless student groups.

Some also complain that the Survival Center makes too little effort to attract minority student involvement, and that is a predominantly white male establishment.

The topic of a workshop last weekend was "Sexism in the Peace Movement." It was open to 20 women; no men were allowed. This seems only to further the separation between the sexes, causing men in some campus groups to jokingly say they would have a male-only workshop.

All campus groups are subject to some kind of discrimination complaint, whether it be that they are white, liberal, conservative, racist, sexist, whatever. It is almost unavoidable. We develop a stereotype of an organization and greet each member with that stereotype in mind. This is a form of discrimination.

When we emphasize the differences between each other, we only create a deeper rift that will be harder to bridge. Racism, sexism, homophobia or any kind of discrimination creates a blockade in communication.

It is vital that we work together on projects, because it's the only way to have an effective impact or cause any real change. We need to stop discriminating and perpetrating ideas that cause discrimination. We can not let it keep us apart.

This is *not* to deny the validity of a discrimination complaint. Rather it is to point out that the only way to solve these problems is to step beyond labeling, and work to create open lines of communication and understanding between all groups.



County expects economic slump to come

There's little optimism to be found in county government nowadays. Lane County commissioners have been saying recently that an economic downturn is about to hit this area, and about to hit hard, too.

In a major *Register-Guard* article (Feb. 19), commissioners Jerry Rust, Steve Cornacchia and others pointed at length to the trouble they saw brewing.

The problems commissioners see on the horizon are definitely alarming. And while it's disheartening to hear the news, we can be glad that at least the county hopes to be prepared for the downturn.

Why the downturn now, in this time of unprecedented, spectacular, sure-to-last-forever, etc., Reaganomics economic growth? Part of the reason includes a 16 percent county general fund expenditure increase over last year. But the major reasons center around serious decreases in expected revenue.

- The county's major sources of revenue appear unusually vulnerable right now. For example, federal timber receipts for the sale of lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management are expected to drop \$1.5 million next year.
- There's also concern regarding Lane coun-

ty's income from state and federal agencies. That money represents about a third of the county's general fund. But federal expenditures for local governments are expected to drop as forced Gramm-Rudman cuts take away from the money available. So much for that unprecedented, spectacular, ad nauseum growth.

• Finally, the county's tax base isn't enough to cover for the rough times. The \$7 million tax base covers about 3 percent of the county's total budget. That tax base has not been substantially increased since 1919.

There will also be debate over the county's tax base. Some folks are feeling the squeeze as is and don't want taxes to be increased. Others, like Rust, maintain that after 70 years it's time to update the base. Without the tax base update, it's likely county residents will be asked to approve more special levies for basic services, such as the three-year, \$11 million levy on the upcoming ballot for law enforcement and corrections.

It's not enough now to just realize a downturn is coming. Economic cycles being what they are, one was due eventually anyway. The debate must now begin on how best to meet that downturn.

Letters

Syllogistic

To address Eric Eckman (*ODE*, Feb. 16): Why is it always pointed out that being gay or lesbian is a conscious choice? As a lesbian, I just didn't decide to love women while mulling over a bagel and coffee one morning at breakfast. It has been a process of self-realization and acceptance.

Sure, I've been told many times that it is my choice. I have the choice to deny my feelings. Right, I have the choice to be perfectly miserable. Thank you so much. Isn't it interesting how this question would never be asked of a heterosexual?

Eckman, what was the purpose of stating that "most spies in the British and American governments have tended to be homosexuals?" What would you have one deduce from your slanderously syllogistic reasoning?

You also point out in your letter that "a combat unit with a known homosexual shows a much lower efficiency rating."

I would think that any type of nonconformity would have this effect. Why else would they make soldiers sport crew cuts and wear the same uniforms?

I would just like to say that if it is permissible (under federal law) for federal agencies such as the CIA to be openly discriminatory, and deny individuals their civil rights, then there is something wrong with the law.

Monica Garrison
Student

Progress

In the 10 years since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, Nicaraguan politics have been multifaceted and dynamic. The pluralistic involvement and heated debates did not begin with the recent campaign, nor is the political landscape so simple as the *ODE* in its Feb. 15 editorial.

In that editorial, the *Emerald* states that Nicaraguans can "choose from one of two candidates (for president)." Actual-

ly, there are 10 candidates on the ballot representing the broad range of political interests within Nicaragua. At this point, most polls indicate that the Sandinista Front holds a substantial lead over UNO (the U.S.-backed opposition) while the other eight candidates are further behind.

Also, in contrast to its historical domination by the Pacific coast, the Atlantic region will participate for the first time in regional elections this Sunday. Known since 1985 as the Autonomy Project, this process will allow people of the Atlantic Coast to govern themselves on regional issues, and will give representation to traditionally unrepresented groups, such as the Rama Indians.

To say that these elections have "the Sandinista's blessings" does not reflect the fact that the Sandinistas are the primary supporters and organizers of the autonomy process; one which is not supported by UNO.

Most importantly, these elections are for only the Nicara-

guans to decide. Regardless of the outcome, the U.S. should accept it and acknowledge that a democratic revolution is progressing in Nicaragua.

Lise Nelson
Latin American Support Group

Ludicrous

Eric Eckman (*ODE*, Feb. 16) makes a very familiar and inaccurate argument in support of the University's policy of enabling the discriminatory policies of the CIA. He argues that humans choose their sexual orientation, and thus lesbian and gay men choose membership in a group that will suffer discrimination.

How ludicrous! Why would 12 percent of the population choose to subject themselves to beatings or discrimination? Many lesbians and gay men feel they don't have a choice about their sexual orientation — the only choice we have is to acknowledge it or repress it.

Lesbians, gay men, people of color, women, people with disabilities and non-Christians all

suffer from the same system of oppression. If this university chooses to protect the rights of any group, it is morally obligated to protect the rights of the others. This university must not allow any organization that discriminates to remain in campus facilities.

Eric, civil rights legislation is designed to protect all Americans from the few who desire to destroy all diversity. They protect even those who do choose affiliations — specifically religion (not a genetic characteristic). So why not protect lesbians and gays?

Jennifer Bills
English

Correction

In yesterday's *ODE* Letters section, there was a letter attributed to Sue Simonitch. Simonitch did not write the letter. The *Emerald* regrets any problems this error has caused.