

Campsite is a start in homeless solution

It's a start.

The Forest Service has proposed a campground for homeless families that may open as soon as March. The site is the old Blodgett Creek rock quarry, located 25 miles east of Cottage Grove in the Umpqua National Forest.

About six campsites for 25 people would be available, with a host family assigned to monitor the 10-acre clearing. Potential campers would be screened, and stays would be limited to about 90 days.

The plan is said to be the first of its kind for the county and state, and perhaps the nation.

It's a step in the right direction, showing that someone out there is thinking of ways to address the growing homelessness problem; the Forest Service should be commended for that. This issue has for too long been in the dark, shuffled off in the corner and ignored.

It's good to see the problem pulled into the light, with an attempt made at dealing with it. The intentions are good, though there are drawbacks that must be considered.

The location is isolated. Without transportation, campers will be far from schools, jobs and various assistance resources, making it hard for them to get on their feet.

Conditions will be harsh as well. The site sits 2,000 feet up in the hills where winter storms rage. Campers will have to bring in their own water while also transporting their garbage out.

One upside to having this campground, however, revolves around the fact that many homeless people now camp illegally in surrounding forests; these people will now have a legal place to stay.

One can't help but suggest that something be done within city limits for homeless people, considering this is where most are situated and it's where they can more easily find employment, education and/or assistance resources.

A beginning — yes. The final answer — no. The problem of homelessness is now larger than life in this country, growing daily by leaps and bounds. The campsite idea is not perfect, but then nothing ever is. It must be validated, for what it is — a start, an important start.

Homelessness isn't going to disappear; it must be dealt with, step by step. The first has been taken with this proposal — ready for the second?



Labels

Recently, it has been brought to my attention that the general public needs to be educated properly. I am a sophomore here at the University and a history major. Throughout my educational career, I have been insulted at the term "Indian" when people discuss natives who inhabited the continent before Columbus came.

The other day, while I was in U.S. History, the professor offended all the Native Americans in the class by repeatedly using that word. To be exact, in a 45-minute lecture he used that word 51 times, but only used "Native American" three times.

He was feeding students the lie that it is all right to misplace ethnic labels. This college, which prides itself on being ethnically and socially aware, should have a faculty that consciously makes the distinction between Native Americans and Indians.

It is not only the Native Americans who are getting increasingly infuriated with this term. Indians also are disgusted with the flagrant use of this term because in doing so, they have nearly lost their identity. This sentiment regarding the proper use of ethnic labels has reached out in the mainstream of American society. People of European and other heritages have been increasingly more open to the term "Native American."

Andrew Taylor
Student

Disgusting

I am writing in response to the article written on Michael Patrick Ryan. I found it disgusting and inappropriate the way in which he was portrayed as a "king of kids" and a trusted

nice guy.

This man raped two women and he was presented in the article as someone who just had problems and was trying to get his life together. I ask you, how are the women he raped going to get their lives together?

One woman stated Ryan was a "generous man who cared about the safety of women," and that there were several times when he could have taken advantage of women but didn't.

So what! Are we supposed to give that man a medal? When is our society going to realize that what happened to those two women was not about sex. It was an extremely violent act against them and nothing short of such a crime.

There is no reason to give such a positive memorial to a man who has contributed to the abuse and violence of women.

Zoe Pargot
Sociology

The sequel

What does a crazed bus driver look like? Is it in the eyes? Or how about the choice of clothing or the haircut? If someone could give me an idea so I know whom to look for, I'd feel so much better.

In the meantime, I'm stuck in a fog and my untrained eyes can't pick out the crazed bus driver from a crowd of decent bus drivers to save my life. To save my life! To save my life!

Yes, I'm wary. I have to be, because even if I promise to relax and give up all my crazy notions that any bus driver could run me over with a bus, my chances of being run over with a bus won't diminish. In fact, they would probably increase. And if I were run over by a bus, would I suffer severe brain damage? Would I get flattened in certain parts of my anatomy? Would I be mentally

and physically ruined for life? Maybe. So I'm stuck with worry. I'm not morally superior to bus drivers, I'm just stuck.

Well, if no one can give me a decent answer to the above questions, then I wish to God people would stop being angry at me for my fears about any bus driver I don't know well enough to ride his/her route. I wish they would start redirecting their anger toward the people who really deserve it. If crazed bus drivers even deserve to be called people.

Tucker Murdock
Student

Elvis lives

With regard to the Police Beat story on the guy who was arrested for public indecency (ODE, Jan. 22) on 15th and Agate:

Yes, public indecency is a serious crime and the guy got what he deserved, but did we have to read three paragraphs describing the man's penis, and how police caught him with his pants down, so to speak? Read the third paragraph:

"The student told police that when the man drove by, she had seen his penis and that he had an erection. She also said that the man wasn't wearing any pants. Police reported the man had an erection when they approached him."

Give us a break! That kind of outstanding journalism should land your reporter a great job at the *National Enquirer* or maybe *True Detective*, but then, do we expect anything less from the *Emerald*?

Steve Buck
Student

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