

Give people of LA benefit of the doubt

If you thought Los Angeles looked like a war zone last spring, take a look now.

New LA police chief Willie Williams is preparing the city for a potential repeat of last April's mass riots that left 54 people dead and caused nearly \$1 billion in damage. Police have installed a 3-foot-high concrete barrier around the federal building to block unruly crowds. Inner city communities are being stocked with militia and blockades, just in case.

In addition, several military units, including the Marines and the National Guard, have practiced riot drills. The Marines, in an exercise that sounds frighteningly aggressive, stormed a mock town as part of a "just in case" urban assault drill.

In an effort to maintain calm in anticipation of the Rodney King beating verdict, LA police are actually doing their best to incite tension and fear. In many communities, increased police activity means greater unrest because police are regarded as enemies. Within these neighborhoods, people are wary of what will happen if violence occurs. Will it start a war between police and citizens? Will police know the difference between promoting calm and heightening tensions? It's unbelievable that the police force doesn't recognize the uneasy fears it's causing.

Police have an obligation in this country to protect people without setting up confrontations.

The problem is that Williams is essentially telling citizens within heavily-patrolled areas to watch their every step. Don't react hostilely to the verdict, or you will pay. He isn't giving credit to the citizens' intelligence — they don't want to destroy the city again — or their rights. This isn't a prison Williams is arming; it's a community.

The question then becomes: what does it mean to an individual to be considered a suspect before even committing a crime? How will that person react if there is episodic violence? Will he or she side with the police or rebel against the authority that may have caused last year's riots in the first place? No one knows quite yet, but we must remember that police attention is rarely welcome in South Central LA, regardless of the reason.

Williams and his forces should leave well enough alone. Within Watts and Compton, community leaders are urging calm. They are talking with people, making sure everyone realizes what's at stake. And they do. Most activists say the only uneasiness in these communities so far has been from police activity.

Police have an obligation in this country to protect people without setting up confrontations. In this case, using military force may be asking for trouble — they are training their forces to be aggressive in case of unrest, rather than protective, which may light a fire under a community that dislikes police anyway.



LETTERS

Equal gifts

I have no problem with Stephanie Sisson expressing her views (*ODE*, April 5), but I do take issue with her misquoting the Bible and her quoting the Bible out of context. I found the verses to which she was referring in Romans Chapter 1, Verses 26 and 27.

First, it is important to note that Jesus spoke no words of condemnation against homosexuals.

Next, the Apostle Paul's teachings must be read in the context of his Hebrew culture in which non-procreative sex acts were equated with paganism. In that culture, males who did not procreate were devalued and given the already-devalued status of women in that society; same-gender sex acts among them were ignored.

There are many homosexuals who follow Christ. People don't choose homosexuality. The Apostle Paul also spoke of the subordination of women in the first letter from Paul to Timothy, Chapter 2, Verses 9 through 15. Surely Sisson has no problem critically analyzing these teachings in today's society?

Finally, I was surprised at how quickly Sisson dismissed the Old Testament and its laws as "laws given to the Jews." That book and those laws are still part of the Bible she claims to believe in. (I also sensed in that comment an underlying tone of anti-Semitism, which I find to be very disturbing.)

Maybe the next time Sisson picks up the Bible, she will pray for understanding of what she is reading. Christ, as I understand him, is about love, forgiveness and salvation; and the gifts of the Spirit are available to all persons equally.

**Gregory E. Torrence
Law**

By the way, Sisson, there will always be opposition out there to cut you down. Don't let them bother you — write on!

**Tony Gunderson
National Student Exchange**

Mammon?

If, as some contend, a woman degrades and prostitutes herself by posing nude for money, what can be said of people who subject themselves to a minimum of four years of stress and overwork, merely to gain an advantage in the universal practice of selling one's self to the highest bidder?

Students Awake! Beware the moral peril into which you venture; not just a folly of youth, soon forgotten, but a lifetime of sin and misery. Prostrate before the one true god, Mammon.

Students Arise! Reality is the curse of the thinking class. Throw off thy shackles while yet there is time. Burn thy diplomas and subsist in righteous purity upon the bread and water of moral indignation.

Students of the world! Unite your slogans! You have nothing to lose but your minds.

Whee ...

**Graham Lawrence
Biology**

Apology

This letter is in response to the April 13 article, "Candidate may have violated ASUO rules."

I want to apologize for any misunderstandings regarding my fall-term enrollment status and clear up some confusion concerning this issue.

After having been assaulted this summer, I was emotionally overwhelmed and unsure if I would remain in school or in Eugene. In the meantime, I was still holding the position of multicultural advocate I was appointed to in the spring of 1992.

By the time I was sure I would remain at the University, the enrollment deadline had passed. However, I still fulfilled the hours necessary to earn six credit hours through the Dean of Students Office and a practicum in the Women's Center.

Since winter term, I have been in the process of petitioning to regain my financial aid, my scholarship and these credits so

that they can be officially added to my fall 1992 registration transcript, thereby fulfilling all ASUO Constitution rules. The supervisors for both practicums are helping me petition these credits.

If the petition is in fact unsuccessful, I will of course return the stipends that I received for fall term.

Once again, I would like to apologize for the way in which I handled this situation during fall term, and I hope that the University community can now focus on the relevant issues of the upcoming election.

**Diana Collins Puente
ASUO vice presidential
candidate**

Hunger cleanup

The Ninth Annual Hunger Cleanup will take place throughout the Eugene community on Saturday, April 17. The volunteers in this effort will take part in a nationwide campaign to heighten the community's awareness of the problems of hunger and homelessness that face thousands of Americans everyday.

Hunger and homelessness ravages our community as much as anywhere else in the country. In Lane County alone there are 2,000 people who are forced to live and sleep every day on the streets because of the lack of affordable housing and shelter. About 65,000 people in our community are on emergency food assistance. These problems will continue without widespread popular support and a cohesive plan committed to helping people obtain a safe home and a consistent source of nutritional food.

The Hunger Cleanup is a "work-a-thon" that gets people to volunteer four hours of their time to help out at various local public service organizations with the dual purpose of completing community work service projects and taking pledges to directly raise money for the hungry and homeless. So get involved!

To lend a hand, stop in the OSPIRG office in Suite 1, downstairs in the EMU, or call 346-4377.

**Arron Goldweber
English**

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