

## Don't judge a slide by its label

The University Knight Library is beginning to change the references of Japanese sources from the abbreviation JAP to the abbreviation JPN, but it is a useless change.

An article that appeared in the *Emerald* Jan. 27 introduced the idea that JAP, which was used as an abbreviation in the Japanese collection at the library, was a racial term for Japanese. Of course the library had not intended to cause racial tension on campus — if anything it instigates diversity — just look beyond the label. But the idea caught on, and now the library is beginning to rename the collection.

Librarian George Shipman said, "The library is happy to make the change in the spirit of diversity, sensitivity and respect."

The fact may be argued as to the happiness involved in changing three letters on more than 25,000 labels.

Racial issues at the University are sensitive ones, maybe too sensitive. The collection, like every other collection like it, is named by the first three letters of the country's name — MEX abbreviating Mexico, for example.

The abbreviation system has been used in the library for nearly 45 years. There has not been any successful attempt, or any attempt, to change the system before. Is the issue of racism progressing in a positive forward direction or is the promotion a useless sense of change?

The JAP abbreviation occurs on more than 25,000 slides in the collection. Changing the collection will take years and a large effort by the library staff.

But as the world continues to evolve and diversity continues to expand, is the simple abbreviation on a slide collection really important in the big picture of diversity? At least we are lucky enough to have a collection that represents many countries and their cultures available to the students and the community. That incorporates diversity itself. The old saying "Don't judge a book by its cover" is a good one.

Changing labels is simply changes labels. If racism is the issue, the root dwells far beyond the label. It seems ironic that the labels are the issue of change. The actual substance of the collection is one of the most diverse and interesting means of experiencing the Japanese culture or any culture that is available in the library. It adds insight into the culture. All one has to do is look beyond the label.

Years of work spent to change the slide labels in an attempt to "change in the spirit of diversity" is not a useful change. The time spent changing could be time spent further incorporating Japanese culture into the United States.

The library staff should be commended on its efforts to incorporate the change and its willingness to compromise. But the staff should evaluate the time involved, the money that will be spent, and then consider if the change is one that will best serve all of the library users or simply the few that have responded to the article.

The collection that exists is a tremendous service to the users — a service that must continue to be maintained. But the center of the issue should be the content, not the label.



## LETTERS

### Some crow?

Let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.

— Jimi Hendrix

As I write this letter, I am seeing through tears. It's Valentine's Day, and instead of composing a message for a beloved one, I'm forced to respond to the boys whose letters desecrated me.

The core issue burning at the stake is this:

*George Kokis' academic freedom stripped me of my civil rights as defined by Title IX!*

The Attack, April 1, 1993: I was reclining against a tree. The student/assailant stealthily stalked near, pounced, landing on top of me. He forcefully pressed his body against mine, gripping my shoulders, shaking me, growling. I perceived this as a rape attempt!

Mr. O'Connell (*ODE*, Feb. 9) dismisses the crime by citing a stream of stats praising the class, then declares the harassment never occurred. Mr. Lehrman's affirmative action inquiry (*ODE*, Feb. 9) was a travesty of justice. They implied that I was an unreasonable woman, and therefore no sexual harassment took place. The administrators who agree with their determination are Brand, Davis, Wong, King, Swan, Degidio.

Lehrman implied I lied in my testimony concerning the negative reaction from Mr. Wells at affirmative action when I phoned him April 16, 1993. Lehrman said "No decision is ... made on the basis of a telephone inquiry." The fact is Wells did not make an appointment with me to file a formal complaint because, as explained by Lorraine Davis, "Mr. Wells had determined that nothing discriminatory took place."

Uhhmm, would you boys care for some crow?

Devon Gray  
Eugene

### Thanks

I'd just like to thank Mitchell Tan and Susanne Steffens, an

interracial couple featured in "Interracial couples breaking stereotypes" (*ODE*, Feb. 8), for dispelling the myth that an Asian who dates a Caucasian is attempting to upgrade his or her status.

I believe that people who still hold on to this notion believe that whites are the superior race, and that by associating with them a non-white person is trying to obtain more respect, and perhaps admiration from the society at large.

This way of thinking shouldn't be tolerated; it simply reflects a close-minded society that doesn't realize that forming multicultural relationships is a means of discovering and experiencing this wide world.

Asian/white relationships are frowned upon in many societies, and like Steffens said, this may not be because of racist reasons but ignorance. Asian/white relationships should indeed be encouraged to foster a better understanding of both cultures. More importantly, however, such relationships would help settle the many falsehoods that whites have about Asians.

I am glad that there are couples like Tan and Steffens who have found each other and, as a consequence, discovered whole new worlds. By getting together, they are not only finding happiness for themselves, but also educating those around them.

I empathize with their struggle to improve the lackluster support they are receiving from their homelands, and I support their efforts to maintain their relationship.

Yasmin A. Hamid  
Singapore

### Censorship

James Patton (*ODE*, Feb. 14) says "The OCA is not trying to ban books or authors," then he says the Oregon Citizens Alliance does not want to ban books "except in the classroom." OCA employee Scott Lively (*Register-Guard*, May 26, 1992) says, "(The OCA) will scrutinize schools and public libraries for material it considers objectionable. ... If we find that a book about homosex-

ual lifestyle ... is in a library, we will do everything we can to get it out of there." The OCA wants to take away my right to go to the library and check out books I want to read. I call banning and removing books from libraries censorship.

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler says, "What we have to fight for is the security ... of our race and our people, the nourishment of its children ... for the fulfillment of the mission which the Creator of the universe has allotted also to them ... everything has to be examined and to be employed or to be rejected according to its usefulness."

In 1933, Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels encouraged students at the University of Berlin to burn books "which act subversively on our future or strike at the root of German thought, the German home, and the driving forces of our people."

I don't want any group to censor what I may or may not read. Do you?

Heidi Walcutt  
Eugene

### Moved

Randy Shilts was a courageous, inspired, and memorable individual, though I was stricken by painful embarrassment in the manner in which I was informed of his life.

Climbing the last step leading to a junction where an enormous lecture class had just been released, I noticed a copy of the Feb. 18 *Emerald* on the floor. Directly underneath the headline "Nationally known alumnus dies" and across what I soon learned to be Randy Shilts' face were the words "DEAD FAG" in thick black ink.

Intrigued, I picked up the paper and read the article. This is the first experience I have had on this campus with overt backwardness. I wonder if I would have been as strongly moved if I had not been shook up by the defacing. What were you thinking?

Kevin Aaron  
Anthropology

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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