

New policy on Haiti will assist refugees

Although Haiti's authoritarian government isn't likely to be affected, a change in the U.S. policy toward refugees of the small island nation represents a step in the right direction.

President Clinton announced this weekend that the Navy and Coast Guard would no longer be required to turn back boats of Haitian refugees, as the old policy dictated. Instead, the boats will be directed to a specific location (as yet unnamed) on American soil where passengers' applications for asylum will be processed.

The processing center will be charged with the task of determining whether the refugees are fleeing Haiti for political or economic reasons. Political refugees may be granted asylum and allowed to remain in the United States. Economic refugees will be returned to Haiti.

The plight of the "boat people" has been played out in dramatic fashion on TV news programs. Many refugees have endured tragic hardships in crossing the 200 miles of water that separate Haiti from the southernmost tip of Florida. Some have died in the process; others have made it almost all the way on tiny, crowded, almost unseaworthy craft, only to be turned back in the last few miles.

Now they won't be turned back, either in the last few miles or the first few — at least not by American ships. Many refugees eventually will be forced to return anyway, if it is determined that they are fleeing Haiti for economic reasons only, but at least now those few individuals with a legitimate case for political asylum will be given a hearing out.

It is unfortunate that the United States can't be a haven for all the refugees, but Haiti has the lowest standard of living of any country in Latin America. If America opened its doors to all who wished to enter, the inundation of immigrants would have serious negative repercussions in those states forced to accept them.

But it is important that the U.S. remain a country open to those who are politically persecuted — and Haiti has a lot of those. Since the overthrow of Haiti's first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in 1991, the military government of Haiti has continued to suppress its opponents' voices in the country. Those individuals who run the risk of being imprisoned — or worse — for nothing more than their opposition to an illegal government, should have a place here.

But that shouldn't be the end of the story. The United States and the rest of the world community need to adopt harsher sanctions against Haiti to help bring about the return of Aristide to power. Only then will the political refugees stop coming; only then will the economy of Haiti be allowed to grow and raise the standard of living for Haitians; only then will the economic refugees stop coming.

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LETTERS

No killing

I would like to take issue with a statement made by Michael Jette in a recent *Emerald* article about kidney donation (*ODE*, April 21). Jette's comment that Sacred Heart "makes a killing" on dialysis couldn't be further from the truth. Dialysis (the process of mechanically filtering blood — a task usually performed by healthy kidneys) is, in fact, one of several services that the hospital provides to patients for which it receives relatively little compensation.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1993, for example, Sacred Heart lost \$1.03 million serving dialysis patients. Previous years' statements tell a similar story. Hardly a killing, as Jette suggests, but nonetheless a service we will continue to provide as long as there is patient need.

Beverly Mayhew
Director, Public Affairs & Communications
Sacred Heart Health System

Think again

In his letter, "Don't talk" (*ODE*, April 22) Matthew Hasek makes it painfully clear that he is ill-advised as to what equality really is. Matthew believes that since there are no physically challenged members in the greek system, we don't know anything about "lack of sensitivity."

Well, the truth is that Matthew is ignorant as to what the greek system is all about. I can't speak for the greek system as a whole, but I can assure you that the reason Matthew did not receive an invitation to join Sigma Phi Epsilon was not because of any physical characteristics.

When Matthew came through Fall Rush three years ago it seems he had a desire to prove the stereotypes right. He didn't. When he entered the house, he was loud and abrasive to all of us, he talked about women in ways we don't tolerate and made it clear that he only wanted a place to party. No man would receive an invitation behaving in this manner and thus no further explanation is needed. However,

with views as skewed as Matthew's, I write.

Sigma Phi Epsilon stands for three cardinal principles, one of which is virtue. To hold virtue is to keep all relationships honest, never using another person. Inviting Matthew to join regardless of his inexcusable behavior would go against everything we believe.

Matthew closes his letter, "If you can't walk the talk, then don't talk!" This leads me to believe that he wants to be accepted for his physical attributes, not as an equal. When Disability Awareness Week came around and the greek system got involved, getting ridiculed is not what I would have expected. A simple thank you would have been sufficient.

Lee H. Kole
Exercise and Movement Science

Invisible

When I wrote my letter, I assumed some would question it. But because I wrote to student newspaper, do you assume that I am half your age?

My political career began in 1978, when, aged 15, I went door-to-door educating voters about a California ballot initiative designed to outlaw gay and lesbian teachers. I participated in the Harvey Milk Riots by rolling police cars. My two best friends from high school, with whom I shared these experiences, died from AIDS more than 10 years ago.

Yes, many names have been used for gays and lesbians, and each offended some who are called those names. But truthfully, no one individual is average, and a huge range of behavioral variations are all normal.

At 30 and with long hair, I share your campus invisibility. I wear my life-long clothing preference: baggy pants, t-shirts and flannels—that now peg me as an aging grunger. Ironically, this was the lesbian "uniform" when I came out. The uniform changes with each generation, and I'll pass on piercings or short hair. But when my life partner and I hold hands in Valley River Cen-

ter, we are anything but invisible.

Betsy McCluer
Pre-journalism

Wotton Ward 4

A very important decision faces voters of Ward 4, a choice between Peter Wotton and Laurie Swanson-Gribskov for Eugene City Council.

These candidates are easily distinguished on the basis of crucial environmental issues, such as the ozone initiative. Peter supports it and Laurie opposes it, along with the others who charge it is redundant. Don't be deceived by this argument. The federal government has an established record of poor regulation in the face of well financed lobbying efforts.

If the measure is redundant, why are the makers of CFCs, which destroy the ozone layer, contributing large sums of money to defeat the measure in Eugene? We are carrying out a dangerous, unnecessary, and poorly advised experiment on our earth; while humans who are not careful may get melanoma; animal and plant life can't put on straw hats.

Charlie Ogle, chair of the Many Rivers Group of the Sierra Club, states, "Peter Wotton is the superior candidate by far." Wotton is also endorsed by Commissioner Jerry Rust and the League of Conservation Voters.

Wotton imposed a campaign limit of \$5,000 for his campaign, with no contributions over \$50. Swanson-Gribskov is spending more money on her campaign than both the candidates together spent in the 1990 Ward 4 election. She said she would limit individual campaign contributions to \$50, but has accepted "in kind" contributions in excess of this limit.

I intend to vote for Wotton because he has thought deeply about the important issues facing city government and will be an effective proponent of a more livable Eugene.

Howie Bonnett
Biology

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