

Yet another week at the University

It's back for the second time this year: yes, it's "Alcohol Awareness Week" — again. But you probably weren't aware, or else, didn't really care.

Today marks day two of the four-day event. The events scheduled throughout the week are an attempt to provide alternative forms of entertainment that don't involve alcohol. Certainly they will be a hit — or at least a nice conversation topic at the bars.

On Monday "mocktails," drinks that look like they should contain alcohol or else be served out of a Slurpee machine at 7-Eleven, were being served just outside the EMU. The line for the event mirrored students' interest in it.

Today, just in front of Johnson Hall, there will be an ice cream social. This event provides the opportunity to rub shoulders with the campus elite. Professors, coaches, deans and student leaders will all be on hand to discuss the ailment of alcohol and students. Certainly this is an alternative event taking the place of alcohol consumption for many Friday nights to come.

Wednesday, just when your fun scale was nearly pinned, there will be a 5K run at Alton Baker Park. Runners will wind through the Alton Baker park trails trying to prove once again there really are alternative fun things to do instead of consuming alcohol.

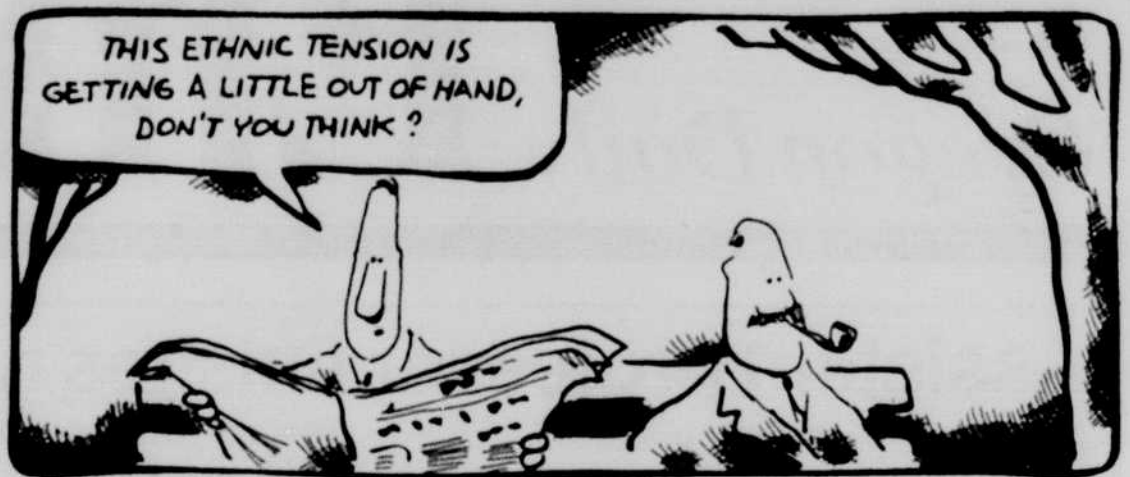
Running as fast as you can for just over three miles is fun, really. And it's more fun than sipping a beer with other friends sipping beers. Certainly the last thing on many of the contestants' minds will be a cold beer while profusely sweating their way through Alton Baker.

And the grande finale of "Alcohol Awareness Week" (for the second time this year) will be a concert featuring Curtis Salgado on the EMU East Lawn. This does have an entertaining value worth considering: the same kind of live entertainment that many of the local bars offers, minus the alcohol. But since when do you have to consume alcohol while listening to a band at a bar?

Presenting ideas to college students that don't involve alcohol is a kind thing to do, but the ideas presented as alternatives, for the most part, are not alternatives worth relishing.

Alcohol and college students have been linked throughout history. Not only do most legal-aged students drink, many have embarked on underage drinking once beyond the reigns of a parental figure. Abuse and addiction are two wicked words that certainly go on to haunt many students. But singling out a week (or two weeks) to get through to the college drinking crowd by offering ice cream socials and fun runs will, for the most part, miss the target audience.

And maybe, just maybe, students would rather have a week at the University that is not a week at all. Students have been bombarded with weeks—"Gay Pride Week," "Safe Sex Week," "Earth Week," "Alcohol Awareness Week," "Dead Week," "Finals Week," and the list, undoubtedly, goes on. A week without a name at this school is as common as college students attending an ice cream social on the steps of Johnson Hall with deans and professors.



COMMENTARY

An ounce of crime prevention

By Peter DeFazio

Criminals should pay the price for breaking the law. We've abandoned this philosophy in America. Prison overcrowding and an overburdened justice system allow violent offenders with long rap sheets to escape serious punishment.

I respect the president for focusing on the devastating impact of the rising epidemic of violent crime on our streets and in our communities.

Oregonians came face to face with this epidemic not so long ago when three individuals viciously beat two women at the Dari Mart in Eugene, bludgeoning one to death. This heinous crime was committed during the theft of \$50.

Unfortunately, this was not an isolated incident. The possibility of an American becoming a victim of a crime is 19 percent higher than 10 years ago. Every year five million people are the victims of violent crime — murder, rape, robbery, assault burglary, and larceny-theft.

But on average, criminals serve only 45 percent of their sentence. The average violent offender is sentenced to 7.8 years, but only serves 3.1 years in prison. The average murderer serves 8.7 years in prison. Criminals are walking out of jail and returning to our streets to commit more crimes.

For the first time in years, there is a serious commitment in Washington to helping states keep violent criminals in prison. In a variety of ways, Washington has finally decided to get tough on criminals and get smart on preventing crime.

More police officers equal less crime. This measure provides for the hiring and training of at least 50,000 (potentially up to 100,000) new police officers in communities across the nation. Oregon's under-policed rural areas especially need more

"Cops on the Beat." Measure 5 has unfortunately left law enforcement organizations in our state with too little dollars for too big a job and its time for the federal government to help out.

We shouldn't be a nation that builds more prisons rather than schools. But facts are facts. There simply is not enough prison space today to keep violent criminals in jail. This legislation allocates \$10.5 billion to state correctional facilities to pay for the incarceration of repeat violent offenders. Additional funds are specifically directed toward putting youthful offenders into boot camps — not on probation.

Violent crime against women must be stopped. Reported cases of rape and spousal abuse have risen dramatically in the recent years, but women have often faced a justice system ill-equipped to adequately address this kind of violence. It does not make sense that we live in a nation with three times as many animal shelters as shelters for battered women. A step in the right direction, this measure provides grants to state and local governments to reduce violence against women, authorizes rape prevention grants, and grants to encourage arrests in situations involving domestic violence. It also establishes new federal crimes of interstate domestic violence and stalking.

The lesson we have learned is that it costs far less for America to invest in a child early than it costs to lock them up later. I particularly advocate provisions

that target young people — the Police Corps program that gives young people college scholarships in return for a four-year commitment to serve on a local police force; the Midnight Sports program which takes kids off the streets and puts them on the playing fields; and anti-gang programs that target at-risk youth in crime-ridden areas. In addition, "ounce of prevention" grants will assist social service organizations that handle delinquency, gangs, substance abuse, unemployment, school dropouts, and teen pregnancy in a coordinated approach.

These innovative measures are only a few of the bold steps being taken to combat crime in America. We are past the point of "hot air" crime proposals — it's time for sweeping changes in the criminal system that incorporate swift and sure punishment and smart crime prevention techniques. This means locking up violent criminals, but it also means getting to kids at an early age — before they get in serious trouble.

This \$28 billion crime package is the largest federal commitment in history to preventing violent crime. Unlike a number of other crime bills in recent years, this package is a real and credible attempt to address a problem whose answer has in the past eluded our elected lawmakers. It's tough, it's smart, it's progress toward a safer Oregon and America.

Peter DeFazio is an Oregon Congressman.

COMMENTARY POLICY

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Commentaries should be between 600 and 800 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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