

## Pope 'supports' women's rights

Pope John Paul II apologized for the Roman Catholic Church's "shortcomings" regarding women and women's issues Monday, but failed to elaborate on what those "shortcomings" are. In an open letter to the women of the world, the pope said that history had short-changed women, but he refused to budge on the two church policies that have done more to dismiss the value of women than any other church doctrine: abortion and women priests.

In an announcement conveniently timed before the United Nations' conference on women in Beijing this September, the church is striving to cushion itself from the blow likely it's likely to be dealt on issues of over-population, equal opportunity and reproductive choice. But the pope's "apology" is little more than lip-service.

The pope praised early feminists for their "courage" and voiced support for equal pay for women and fairness in career advancement. Of course, he represents an institution that maintains an unapologetic glass ceiling. Apparently, women deserve equal opportunity everywhere but within the Catholic Church. After all, the pope said, women cannot be priests because all of Jesus' apostles were men. "The presence of a certain diversity of roles is in no way prejudicial to women ... but is rather an expression of what is specific to being male and female." Translation: men are pure enough to be priests and women are not.

In another "breakthrough" statement of support for female equality, the pope condemned sexual violence against women, but maintained that rape does not justify the "grave sin" of abortion. So, while the church "supports women's equality in every area," it continues to adhere to the very policies that keep women from having control of their bodies and their careers. As such, the pope's letter is nothing more than hypocritical head-patting. Thus, the Church's new "pro-women" message is this: We still consider you impure vessels of man's seed, but we just wanted you to know that we appreciate you.

## Right to frisk may not insure safety

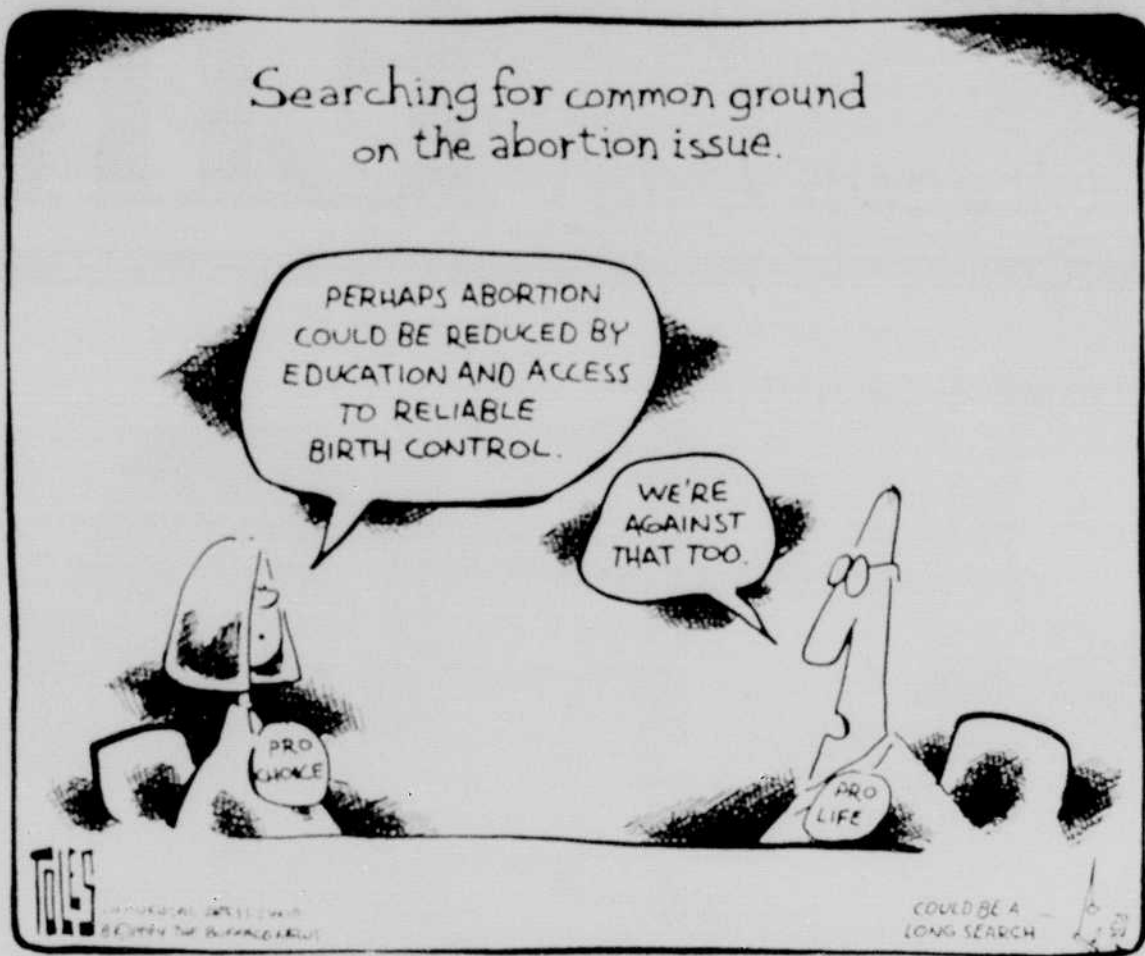
It's nighttime and you're walking across campus to your dorm room. Suddenly, like something straight out of a poorly written detective novel, you hear what sounds like two men fighting. As you turn the corner, you see a campus public safety officer struggling to subdue another man.

After striking the officer in the stomach with an object, the man knocks him to the ground and turns toward you. He has a knife; he's high on some drug, and now he's after you.

Of course, the story is only fiction this time. But we wanted to make a point.

While the security services offered by OPS are vital and necessary to the campus community, it is possible that the recent decision to allow campus security officers to frisk people suspected of carrying weapons could jeopardize the safety of OPS personnel and University students.

After all, if OPS officers are still not allowed to carry weapons themselves, exactly what are they supposed to do when they find a weapon on someone else?



### ■ OPINION

## Fishing for simple wisdom



KEITH CUNNINGHAM

Standing on the bank of the stream, I was more than ready for the first cast of the day. Oh, how the fresh air felt. The sun in my face. Just me and my stream, ready to share a few moments of perfect isolation with each other.

Of course I wasn't totally free. Like most people, I had to constrain myself with the usual barrage of deadlines and requirements that were awaiting my return. I had allotted exactly four hours for fishing, in which time I needed to catch five good-sized rainbows and then hurry back to Eugene for whatever engagement I had going that night.

The hook couldn't have been in the water for more than 15 seconds when he showed up. A boy with shaggy hair and an engaging smile appeared out of the forest and sat on the opposite bank to watch the show. Great, I thought, now this little brat has to interrupt my solitude.

After a few minutes and several casts had passed, I reeled in the first trout of the day. Except for the fact that my little, smiling observer was still sitting across the stream, things seemed to be going well.

The ceaseless smile continued. "Hi, I'm Derrick." I barely nodded. "You know what?" Oh great, what? "I got a couple downstream 'bout an hour ago."

I tried to ignore him, but I couldn't. The fish stories continued.

Time went by, and I don't know how, but Derrick slowly opened my shell and I started listening to him. It was fascinating how friendly he was. His smile

really was captivating. He told me story after story as if we were best friends playing catch with his tales.

He'd throw the story to the friend he had won over. "Yesterday I brought in this big old fish. He must've been this big." The arms mimic the size, and the proud smile widens. *Catch.*

"Wow, look at that fish down here! I'm gonna get him." The grown-up can't overcome the magnificence of the childhood awe. *Catch.*

How strange his behavior is, I thought. I remembered a time when I used to talk to strangers with the same openness. But it seemed so far away.

Now as grown-ups we cherish our isolation from outsiders. On the sidewalk we avoid the dreaded eye contact with the passing stranger. On the elevator we prefer to look at the numbers as they rise, rather than at each other. On the plane we hide inside a magazine and pray that the person next to us won't start talking about their unseen grandchildren in Duluth.

Derrick continued throwing his stories and I continued catching them until all of a sudden, in one cast, I committed the ultimate faux pas of fishing. I cast my entire pole into the stream. This was no shallow stream, mind you. It was well over eight feet deep and running swiftly. The pole sank into oblivion.

I expected the laughter from Derrick to begin at any moment. Already figuring out where I would buy a new pole, I lifted my eyes from the spot of my misfortune and was met with the most determined glare I'd ever received from an 11-year-old. Derrick quickly stood up, surveyed the situation and confidently declared, "Don't worry. I'll get it for you."

He vanished for a moment, but quickly returned with goggles in hand and dove into the stream. Now, remember, I really wasn't exaggerating about the size of the stream. I certainly had no intention of jumping into a rapidly

moving mass of snow run-off.

But this was an adventure for Derrick. Big breath. Down he went. He scrutinized the river floor, came back up for air and quickly dove down again. All the while he was assuring me, "Don't worry. This isn't that hard of a river. I'm fine."

Several minutes later, as I was envisioning the *Emerald* headlines reporting the charges against me for drowning an 11-year-old, Derrick popped out of the stream with his continual smile and triumphantly said, "See, here it is!"

It was simply a game for him. Helping me was just a lot of fun. To me, his unconditional giving was like perfection. But, being the grown-up I am, I broke the perfection. As I was leaving, I tried to hand Derrick a few dollars for his good deed.

Derrick's look of incomprehension was blinding. I was his friend. He was just helping me. Why in the world would I pay him for something that was just fun to do?

I no longer felt like racing to catch my five fish, impressing anyone or hurrying home for whatever I was in such a rush for. I just felt like swimming. I wanted to dive into the very spot that I had feared a moment ago.

Derrick was my teacher that day. He taught me that we grown-ups tend to growl too much and not play enough. He taught me that as we get older, we somehow accept an ominous age limit on simple joys and the requirement for sterner souls.

His lesson is so clear and yet seems so hard for grown-ups to understand. And so we dismiss him as a simple child while we continue running our race. If only we could stop our scurry just long enough to listen to the wisdom of an 11-year-old. That it's OK to smile at the eyes of a stranger. That we can help someone without thinking anything of it. That we too can possess a small fragment of Derrick's beauty.

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