

City won't let homeless set up temporary home

OUR OPINION: The City Council is leaving the homeless out in the cold

OK, class, take out a piece of paper. This is a short pop quiz in basic economics, sociology and compassion.

Compare and contrast the solutions a city should come up with when it has:

- 1) \$5 million in surplus city funds.
- 2) A large and structurally sound empty building (possibly more than one).
- 3) A small population of homeless citizens who live in parks or in cars because they have no other place to live.
- 4) An entire community and a network of churches willing to work closely with the individuals listed above.
- 5) An approaching winter season that will probably present a severe hardship for the individuals listed in number three if they are unable to find shelter.

Time is up. Please hand in your papers. Your quizzes will be graded and returned to you immediately. Right now.

You get a score of 100 percent if you chose to use some of the funds to convert the large building into a temporary winter home for the homeless.

You still get an "A" if you came up with a variation of the above that included help from church groups, private citizens and other communities.

If you are the city of Eugene, you get an automatic "F."

Eugene shouldn't worry about its transcripts because it might end up with a headache bigger than anything a nasty report card could give.

The city might end up in court.

Tom Musselwhite, executive director of the Homeless Action Coalition and Project Recover, is gathering documentation for a possible lawsuit against the city.

The City Council said no to Musselwhite's request to turn a former parks-maintenance building, located at the base of Skinner Butte at 255 Lincoln St. in Eugene, into a temporary shelter for homeless people.

Musselwhite had everything going his way until the City Council Grinch squashed the plan. City Councilman Shawn Boles is against the idea and believes that Eugene shouldn't have to take care of all the homeless people in this area. He has a point. It would be great if other communities would pitch in to help people in need. As far as other Lane County cities helping the homeless? We don't know why they haven't given much support but our guess is that the "situation" is too controversial.

Back in Eugene, even the executive committee of the Whiteaker Community voted 8-1 a month ago in support of Musselwhite's plan.

Why can't we help these people? The answer is that we can, but it's a matter of getting tough and getting a little roughed up — like Musselwhite.

There will be no car camp on Centennial Boulevard this year, so where can the homeless live? This is the real thing now, with real people involved.

It's no longer just a test.



Women don't need affirmative action

Rarely do 75 percent of Americans agree on any major issue. It is generally impossible to get a majority, much less three-fourths, of adults to agree on anything. According to a March 1995 poll by the *Washington Post*, however, 75 percent of American adults are opposed to "affirmative action programs that give preference to minorities and women in hiring, promotion and college admissions. ..."

In this situation, I am willing to be lemming-like and follow the popular tides. As a woman, I feel uncomfortable with being given an unfair advantage just for carrying the double-X chromosome.

Never in my academic career have I noticed a bias against me for my womanhood. Instead, I have seen males around me penalized for simply being male. Who ever heard of Take Your Sons to Work Day, or events specifically designed to lure men to college?

In fact, I question the mere existence of programs meant to help women as "minorities." The word minority refers to a small group that could be overlooked by the majority. How does this apply to women?

Not only do women outnumber men in the "real world," but many colleges report a higher percentage of women enrolled than men. Women study and work in virtually every field, and yet we are still represented as the downtrodden.

I do not respect or appreciate that image, and I definitely do not conform to it. It is as alien to me as is the image of the all-powerful male.

What surprises me is that statistically, most people agree with me, and yet the system remains static. Unlike the myths, my supporters are not only upper-class white males who want to return women to their "rightful place." In fact, according to the *Washington Post* poll, 69 percent of women agree that women should not be supported by affirmative action programs.

At one time, society needed these programs. When my mother was in high school, a college education was an abnormality for women. At that time, though, an average family, supported by an average male, could make an average living.

That way of life is gone.

Fifteen years ago, when my sister was considering what to do with her life, college was not considered an option, but a necessity. Her gender was not an issue; her future was. When I went through high school in the early '90s, I couldn't comprehend the concept that I was being "oppressed" by the men I surpassed in many skills and subjects. That equal opportuni-

ty extended schoolwide.

The advanced classes were equally populated by both sexes. The highest SAT scores were earned by women. Females led the school paper, the underground paper and the yearbook. A vast majority of student body officers were female, two of the three valedictorians were women, and half of the salutatorians. This is the society that doesn't give women leadership opportunities? My female friends went to good universities based on their achievements as people, not as rewards for being oppressed.

I do not feel oppressed. I feel in control of my own destiny. As a science major, I am supposed to feel embittered by my lower education in the math and sciences and feel forced to study liberal arts instead. I don't. No one needs to reimburse me for the injustices done to my mother and grandmothers.

If women must be considered a minority, at least let it help the women who were hurt by a sexist society. None of my peers were. To atone for past deeds, why can't this society seek the forgiveness of those who were wronged? Why not give the scholarship money earmarked for today's young women to the women who actually suffered?

My mother's generation was not given a fair shot at additional education. Give the scholarships and apologies to her and other generations that lack the money to finance a college education.

For-women-only scholarship money given to women directly out of high school is playing to untrue stereotypes. Use the money to compensate the women who were wronged and to educate women of the next generation about their rights and responsibilities.

For many kids today, including my nieces and nephews, both parents work and the financial burden is carried by both genders. Many children are members of one-parent homes. How could they feel that women are incapable of supporting a family or holding a good job when they are raised by women who do?

Learning about that antique system of treating women like second-class citizens is the only way this next generation will be alerted to the sexism that once existed. It is the only way to truly overcome past discriminations and leave that system where it belongs — in the past.

Kay Krautscheid, a sophomore majoring in biology, is a columnist for the Emerald.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* welcomes your opinions on this and other issues. You may submit a letter no longer than 250 words to the Emerald offices at Suite 300 in the EMU or send us your thoughts via e-mail at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board; signed columns represent the opinion of the columnist.

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