

Tel Aviv suicide bomb kills more than people

OUR OPINION: Israel and Palestine may have too many enemies of peace to stop the hate, violence

The fractured terrorist group Hamas has brought itself and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process one step closer to annihilation with the suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv Monday.

Incredibly, outlaw organizations such as Hamas fail to have enough foresight to see that their murderous activities usually backfire by making the situation they tried to change more intolerant of change.

In this case, Hamas is enraged over the Palestinian-Israeli peace accord because it wants no formal, let alone civil, relationship with Israel. In fact, Hamas, and other militant groups,

want nothing less than a Palestinian state with a capitol in Jerusalem.

In its attempts to achieve its goals, however, Hamas is actually destroying any support base that would give its people, the Palestinians, a better social and political position in the Holy Land.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor Party and the entire Israeli nation were poised on the brink of finalizing the 3-year-old peace agreement with Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat and his people. Now, there are no guarantees for peace.

Although most of the blood lately has been shed by Hamas, Israel has its own factions of intolerance for a peaceful coexistence with Palestine. Yitzak Rabin's assassin told the world that himself.

Members start jumping OCA's off-course ship

OUR OPINION: A dwindling membership proves Oregonians dislike hate-motivated injustice

The Oregon Citizens Alliance, that ultra-right wing sounding board of intolerance and injustice, has lost a huge chunk of its membership base during the past six years and is currently struggling to get enough signatures to put its latest anti-gay rights initiative on the November ballot.

The obvious lesson is that hate can only be peddled for so long before it starts to really stink up the place and turn people away.

Even conservative Christians who once supported the OCA are publicly

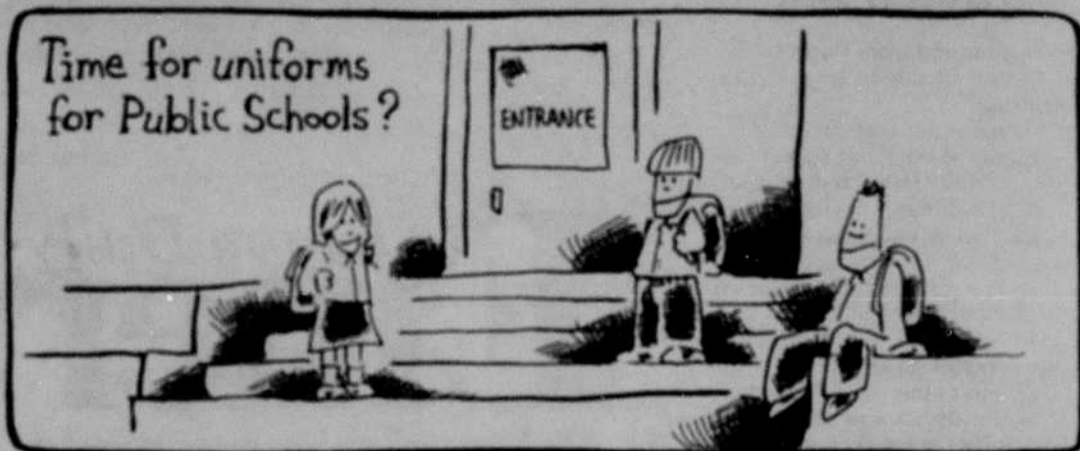
denouncing the organization and putting as much distance between themselves and the embattled alliance as they can.

OCA founder Lon Mabon admits his organization's latest anti-gay rights effort is not as strong as the 1992 and 1994 initiatives, having gathered only 10,000 signatures so far.

What a thrill it would be if we could have an OCA-free election this November.

Instead of defending basic human rights against indefensible ignorance, the citizens of this state could actually turn their attention toward the issues that are important to Oregon's future.

Hit the bricks, Lon. You've been found out.



Terror and trembling: The end is near

Hurricanes, tsunamis, monsoons — there is an emblem of catastrophe for every part of the world. Because folks aren't too fond of going through these disasters, much attention is given to those who can predict them accurately.

In California, Mother Nature's gift of calamity is the earthquake. Want to find the state's Seismic Soothsayer? See Jim Berkland.

Jim is a feisty old soul who claims to know when the big one is coming. Be forewarned that the investigative methods of the 64-year-old geologist are a tad bit unorthodox. Oh sure, Jim does the normal scientific stuff like looking at moons and measuring tidal fluctuations. But to predict when the next terrible trembler will occur, Jim firmly believes in the power of the canine.

Yes, dogs. Each day Jim curls up with his newspaper and meticulously reads the lost-dog report. When too many rovers have gone on the loose, Jim says an "earthquake window" has opened.

Jim believes that dogs can sense seismic disturbances. The impending doom of an earthquake triggers something inside them. They become agitated and antsy whenever a trembling change is about to occur.

Well, Jim isn't respected much by the scientific community. In fact, he was so ridiculed by the U.S. Geological Survey that he had to quit his job and accept the role of renegade.

"It's a shame that high science ignores all these clues," Berkland said as he unveiled his latest batch of seismic forecasts. "[They] say you can't predict them. That's hogwash."

And believe it or not, our prophet is usually right. Having correctly predicted the 1994 Northridge quake and the 1989 Loma Prieta trembler, Jim is far more reliable than the experts who mock him. Unemployed, he now works out of his San Jose home.

If only the wayward oracle could find his way to our University. He would learn that a "graduation window" has opened in Eugene, and every anxious senior walking down 13th Avenue shows the signs.

Like Berkland's panicked pooches, there is a sense of impending doom in their eyes. The graduates-to-be are consumed by an uncertain future. Restless and annoyed, they howl at night, disturbed by thoughts of what June will bring.

My friends and I have not been immune to these anxious times. While each of us responds to the pressure of graduation differently, our collective angst remains constant.

There is the friend who obsessively applies

for as many jobs as he can. JCPenny's, Macy's, Nike — he cannot become a citizen of Corporate America fast enough. He plans to start working three days after graduation.

Then there's the one who says he's "gotta start looking" but never does.

And then there's I who hates even thinking about what the future will hold. Every visit to the Career Center and rewrite of the resumé brings me closer to a decision I'd prefer having another four years to make.

There is a growing tension between all of us. We get on each other's nerves and wonder why this year has been so damn different than the rest.

We get reflective and reminisce about the "carefree" days of our first few years in Eugene. Days when thoughts about employment were as common as days of sobriety. Days when finals meant Scantron, and studying meant footnotes.

And we seem haunted by the mystery that awaits us. We think about terms like "glory days," and wonder if these were they. We visit our parents' home and see a world of remote controls and Lazyboys, and wonder if a personal devolution is at hand.

Will pints of dark micro-brews fade to cans of Coors Light? Will life-giving friendships turn to distant phone calls? Will passionate love someday become routine monotony?

I realize that these thoughts are based in melodramatic fantasy. In my heart I know the days of tomorrow will possess the same variance as the days of today; they will be a tumult of victories and defeats, highs and lows.

Today I participate in the innately human tendency to romanticize the past and demonize the present. We forget about the pains of yesterday and ignore the joys of tomorrow.

We are like Jim Berkland's puppies. We struggle with this time of seismic flux. We scratch, and we claw, knowing that something big is about to occur.

We are like Berkland himself, being thrust into a world of many doubters and few supporters.

Every moment brings us one step closer to the day of reckoning. A day when we will step into the abyss and face the change alone.

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