

## Solution to Freemen? FBI should be patient

■ **OUR OPINION:** The U.S. should wait out the standoff in Montana

Attorney General Janet Reno and her 100-agent FBI army seem to be handling the Montana Freemen standoff with kid gloves.

With memories of David Koresh and the self-proclaimed messiah's entire Texas compound disappearing behind a controversial explosion of fire and smoke, the AG's caution is understandable.

The hurry-up-and-wait strategy is probably the best thing to do.

While it is undoubtedly time consuming and expensive to pay, feed and house 100 FBI agents to stand around and watch while a handful of anti-government rednecks thumb their noses

at and play war games with the most powerful nation on earth, any other action by the feds would probably play right into the hands of the anti-government group.

These people can't be pushed. By nature, many militias and groups like the Montana Freemen are already intensely paranoid of big government. They see a conspiracy in every government-related agency or event.

But when the government makes mistakes like it did with Waco, it just gives little men like Timothy McVeigh all the more reason to believe their illusions and become blinded by their hate, and then act on it with devastating results.

It is better to walk softly, as the FBI is now doing, and carry a big stick.

## These good ol' boys slept in Sunday school classes

■ **OUR OPINION:** Deacons in Thomasville, Ga., need to read their Bibles

It could have been a sad story buried somewhere in the back pages of a small newspaper in the 1860s.

But it turned out to be a story that ran on the front page of almost every newspaper across the U.S., right here in 1996.

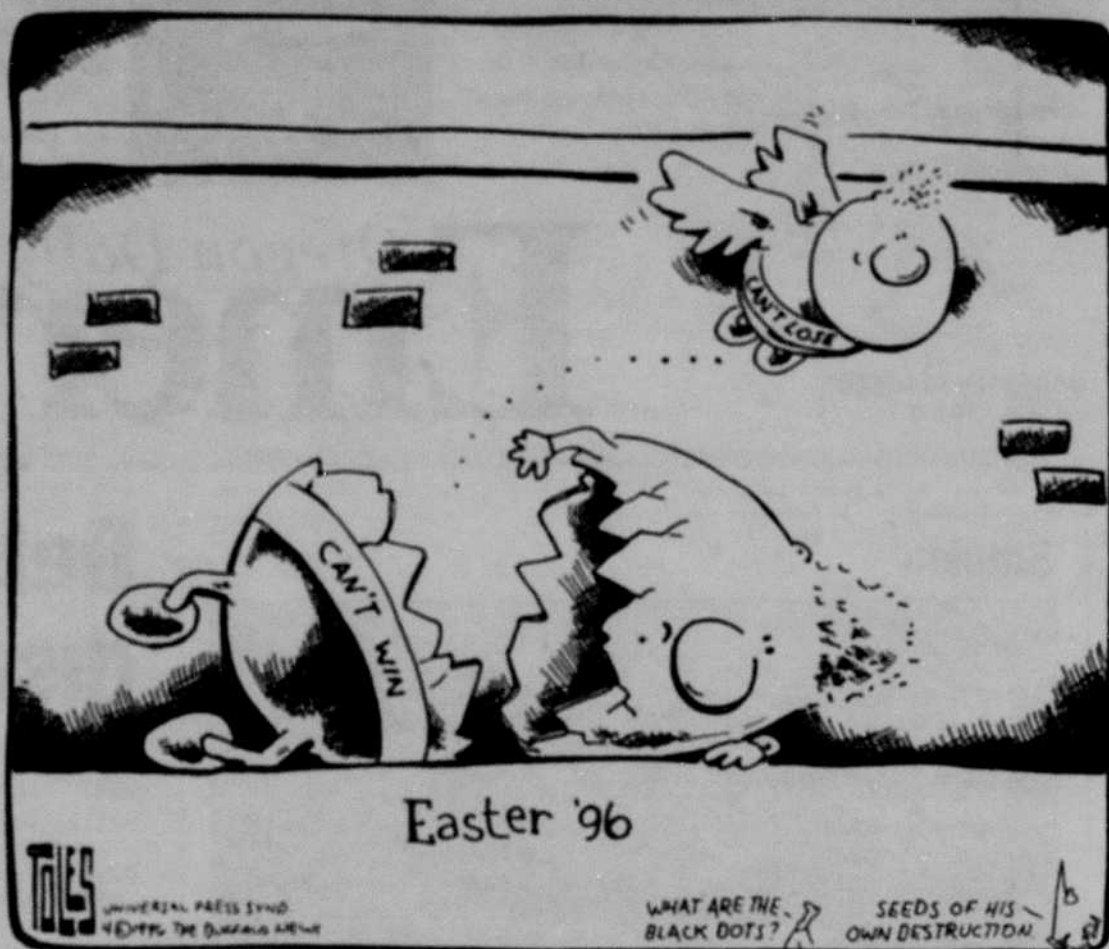
Deacons of the Barnett Creek Baptist Church in Thomasville, Ga., recently asked the relatives of a mixed-race baby girl that had been buried in the church's all-white cemetery to exhume the body because some of the deacons wanted only white people there.

The head deacon eventually apologized, but the damage had already been done.

Even church members condemned the deacons' actions, and an official with the Southern Baptist Convention went as far as calling the racist request an "embarrassment to the gospel of Christ."

The deacons' request comes only one year after Southern Baptists made a public apology to African-Americans for slavery.

Apparently, these particular deacons have never read the part in the Bible that says "Love your neighbor as yourself."



### LETTERS

#### Right oppressive

Trent Donelson's critique (*ODE*, April 1) of Alexandra Berwick's "Fight the Right" letter (*ODE*, March 18) ignores a very important point.

Berwick's critique of the Right Wing movement does have merit.

Donelson conveniently ignores White America's sordid past, electing instead to overlook hardships endured by American minority groups for centuries.

His rhetorical stance seems to me all too indicative of a pervasive ideology, not uncommon among young White Americans, that because they themselves did not participate in past atrocities they have license to dismiss distasteful appraisals of our collective past.

By invoking high ideals, i.e. his allegiance to "equality and the human race" as evidence of his enlightenment over his ancestors, Donelson ignores the amply documented White oppression of the past. This only recreates the American White habit of disregarding American minority history, which, in effect, continues an oppression which soils our nation's history.

Timothy Silva  
History

#### Books too spendy

About three weeks ago, I put up flyers advertising various text books for sale. No one called. I know people take these classes and need these books. Are people choosing to spend two to three times as much for the same book at the bookstore? Why?

For the last two terms I have heard numerous complaints about this University — OPS, bad professors, high tuition, etc. But the most common complaints are about buying a book and then only getting back a fraction of the purchase price. Why do we continue to include a middle man (i.e., Smith Family and the UO Bookstore)?

I rarely see fliers such as mine on the plethora of poster boards on campus. All these complaints are shallow. If the students of this campus truly care, they will find a way to fix the problem.

My suggestion: A Web Site Bookstore perhaps?

Elizabeth A. Kearney  
Biology

#### OSPIRG pitches in

I came to campus last September as an AmeriCorps volunteer with Neighborhood Green Corps working on a project called Streamwalk.

As one of our national partners, the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group adopted our project. From there, Streamwalk took flight as the most successful project group on campus.

Since last fall, hundreds of students have volunteered to do clean-ups, stream and habitat restoration, water quality tests and environmental education — and more than 50 students have

participated in OSPIRG's internship program with Streamwalk. With manpower like this, we have been able to collaborate with local organizations and agencies like: the Nature Conservancy, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Mount Pisgah, Willamalane Park and Recreation District and Eugene and Springfield on large-scale projects.

So far, we have pulled more than five tons of garbage out of local waterways, eradicated thousands of invasive plants, planted more than 500 native trees and plants, taught 700 elementary students about crucial environmental issues and have monitored and surveyed our rivers, streams and wetlands weekly.

More than just the tangible accomplishments, Streamwalk has offered an opportunity for students previously unavailable at this level to pilot, coordinate and participate in active field work.

Most important, OSPIRG's Streamwalk project has enabled students to develop and strengthen links between campus and community.

My hope is that this opportunity for students will continue to be made available. OSPIRG is the group that will make Streamwalk happen now and in the future.

Deborah Mikulina  
AmeriCorps Volunteer

#### Society still ill

Ideally, if we lived in a country where there was no racism, prejudice, discrimination or inequality of any sort, and people did not "judge people on what they are or where they come from" as Trent M. Donelson does (*ODE*, April 1), we would not need affirmative action, gay and lesbian rights, reproductive rights or any civil rights for that matter.

However, to think this is so in 1996 is ludicrous. In actuality, we live in a society infested with these very same social ills: racism, prejudice and discrimination. These are as vivid today as they ever have been. And unfortunately, they seem to be most perpetuated by the conservatives, Republicans and Christians who are striving to take away and diminish protective rights for the oppressed, women, minorities and gays.

In this great country of freedom and opportunity, all persons do not have equal life chances. Because of race, sex and sexual orientation, along with our glorious history of slavery and oppression, people are negated equal opportunity.

These social ills are massive, and they can only be remedied through heavy, constant and aggressive litigation and protest. It is exactly for this reason that we must rise out of our apathy and fight back against the forces that wish to eternalize social inequality. The San Francisco "March to Fight the Right" event is a clear means to do this and should be supported and encouraged by all persons that believe in true social justice.

Claudia A. Villena  
Sociology

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